

Sunday Message

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE WORD

Year A • 30 April 2023 • Colour: White • Psalter Week 4

OUR COMMON VOCATION JOHN 10:1-10

One of the most enduring Christian images is that of the Good Shepherd, who lays down his life for his sheep.

The image of God as shepherd is very strong in the Old Testament. Yahweh is Israel's shepherd leading his people like a flock. When the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt, the Lord led them from exile, "guiding them like a flock in the desert, leading them safe and unafraid, while the sea engulfed their enemies" (Ps 78:52-53).

The Good Shepherd is a beautiful, reassuring image of Jesus. A good shepherd is someone who knows his sheep, looks after them, protects them, and seeks out any lost. Jesus, our Good Shepherd, knows us individually, loves us, and cares for us. We are called to stay close to him, to listen to his voice, and follow him as he shows us the way to fullness of life. ■

REFLECT

On 12 September 1979, an innocent, 17-year-old Limerick youth joined the Redemptorists. For some time during my last year in school, I had been thinking of priesthood, and then the Redemptorists came to my parish to preach a mission. Impressed with what they did, I wrote to the Redemptorist vocations director and ended up in the seminary.

Today, Good Shepherd Sunday, is Vocations Sunday, a day the Church prays for vocations. As in my case, it's impossible to say where exactly vocations come from or how the Holy Spirit works. Who can say what divine chemistry causes a spark to catch flame?

But if you think you don't have a vocation, you are wrong.

Everyone in the church has a vocation. We may live out our vocation in specific ways – as priest or religious, as single or married, pursuing particular careers – but every one of us has a vocation rooted in our common baptism.

And no matter what direction our life takes or what specific vocation we live, some common characteristics underline our Christian vocation.

First, to be people of love. This is the most basic vocation we have as Christians. Jesus said: You must love God and your neighbour as yourself. Love was at the centre of all Jesus did. If I do not reach out every day in love to others, then all my church-going and prayers are hollow. We Christians are nothing if we are not people of love.

This is difficult, and we fall short all the time, but many people have shown me

how to live the vocation to love. Like Maximillim Kolbe, who in Auschwitz sacrificed his life for a man he did not know. Would I be able to love like that? Would you?

The second characteristic of the Christian vocation is compassion. Remember how Jesus healed the ten lepers, how he spoke to the woman at the well.

Being compassionate is difficult, and we fall short all the time, but many people have shown me how to be compassionate. I think of a religious sister who works with young women caught up in the sex industry. She is there for them, very often as their only advocate. She shows me what compassion is all about.

The third characteristic of the Christian vocation is prophecy. We must be prophetic people. Jesus witnessed to the Kingdom values of justice, peace and love, no matter the risk to himself. He preached the truth even though it upset many people and led to his execution.

In today's secular society, it takes courage to witness to the Gospel. It can take courage to proclaim publicly what we believe. To say you are a Christian is to risk being sneered at or dismissed as a religious nut. This is why, now more than ever, we need to be prophetic, happy to witness to the Gospel, notwithstanding the cost to ourselves.

Many people who stand with the poor and witness to the Gospel with extraordinary courage and commitment show me what it means to be prophetic.

On his Vocations Sunday, think of your vocation to be more loving, compassionate, and prophetic and ask the Lord to help you. ■



LEARN

It is through Jesus that we enter into the life of God

Jesus is our good shepherd

We all have a common vocation rooted in our baptism

PRAY

Say this prayer for vocations:

God our Father, hear our prayer for all your children's needs. Grant that each of us may hear your gentle invitation to do your will in whatever way you wish. Help us to trust you. Give us the strength to follow the guidance of your Holy Spirit. Enable us to walk with your beloved Son Jesus Christ, so that, in all things, we may give you glory and help build up your kingdom of truth, peace and justice. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SAY

"Lord, you are my good shepherd. Help me to follow you always. Amen."

DO

Examine your life. Where do you look for happiness and meaning? Do you really believe that Jesus offers you fullness of life?

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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30th April 2023 Fourth Sunday of Easter

Weekend masses

Sat 6:00pm Dechomet 7:30pm Leitrim
Sun 9:00am Gargory 11:00am Dromara

Weekday masses

Mon 9:00am Leitrim 7:30pm Dechomet
Tues 9:00am Dromara
Wed 7:30pm Leitrim
Fri 7:30pm Dromara

Cemetery Sunday 21st May

Gargory after 9am mass Dromara 12 noon
Leitrim 3pm Dechomet 5pm

Anniversaries

Dechomet

Sat 29th Paddy & Phil Turley
Arthur & Mary Burns
Sat 6th Susan Greeran

Leitrim

Sat 29th Jim Joe O'Hare
Clare McCrickard
Sat 6th Tommy & Joe Bannon
Theresa & Charlie O'Higgins
Martin Brown
Barnie Cowan

Dromara

Sun 30th Joe & Margaret Rice
Fri 5th Nan & Vicky Burns & Francis Rogan
Sun 7th John & Mary Drake

Gargory

Sun 7th John Donnelly

Dromore Diocesan Pilgrimage to Knock Sat 3rd June

led by Archbishop Éamon Martin, *in conjunction with Archdiocese of Armagh and All-Ireland Rosary Rally.*

Bus leaving Lurgan at 8:00am; bring packed lunch, drinks and snacks, evening meal in Sligo on return journey. Cost £40 per person.

"Lady of Knock, my Queen of Peace!"

Alternatively, bus leaving from Newry at 7:00am in conjunction with the Knights of St Columbanus (£20, no evening meal). Booking forms available through Newry Parish Office, tel: (028) 30262586

Accord NI Catholic Marriage Care Service

recruiting volunteer Marriage Education Facilitators to provide Sacramental Marriage Preparation.

For further details and an application form, please contact Brenda at:

(028) 9023 3002 or email info@accordni.com

Collections

Parish Dromara Drumgooland
£371 £985

The **sick and housebound** will be attended this week. If anyone is no longer able to come to mass, please let me know and I will call.

First Holy Communion

Sat 6th - May St Mary's - 11am
Sat 13th - May St Michael's - 11am
Sat 20th - May St Matthew's - 11am

We welcome into Drumgooland Parish Annie May McAlarney

Dromara GAC Senior Camogie Team are hosting their 3rd year of the **Darkness into Light** walk on **Sat 6th May** at Slieve Croob. The walk is planned to commence at **4:30am** in the hope to see sunrise. Everyone Welcome.

Donations greatly received at:

<https://www.darknessintolight.ie/fundraisers/dromaragac>

Fontenoy's Charity Sunrise Walk Sat 6th May
Meeting at Dolly's Brae car park at **4:15am**, we will be making our way towards Slievenaslat for Sunrise. The walk will be approx. 5.5 miles return. Everyone Welcome.

First Saturday Devotions Please join us, beginning 6th May in Dechomet chapel, for The Five Consecutive First Saturday devotions, where we will participate in Confessions, 15 minute meditation, the Rosary and receive the Eucharist, in order to make preparation to Our Lady's Immaculate Heart and respond to Her plan for peace as requested in Fatima. Confessions available from 5:30 pm but can be obtained within 20 days.

Meditation and Rosary will be offered a few minutes after 6 pm Mass ends. Everyone is most welcome to stay on and join in.

Leitrim Cleaners Fri 5th - Bridie's Team

Gargory Altar Society May - Helen & Patricia

SVDP: Drom 07738838191/Drumg 07825419067

Safeguarding Contact: P Carville 07789917741

Artificial grass available - a person has donated the end of a roll, if any person wishes to obtain a section, please contact Fr Peter.