

Fourth Sunday of Easter 21st April 2024 (Day of Prayer for Vocations)

	Gospel (John 10:11-18)	First Reading (Acts 4:8-12)	Second Reading (1 John 3:1-2)
Context	John's gospel confirms that Jesus is the Son of God and that all who believe in him will have eternal life.	The Books of Acts describes the work of the Holy Spirit through the apostles, who faced intense persecution in doing God's work.	John's letter was written to reassure Christians in their faith and counter false teachings in the church.
Key verses	<i>"...the good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep."</i>	<i>"...this is the only one by which we can be saved."</i>	<i>"...when it is revealed we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is."</i>
Key themes/ messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good shepherd looks after his sheep because he loves them. In a similar way, Jesus looks after us because he loves us. • Jesus is the good shepherd who knows us individually. After his resurrection, Jesus appointed Peter as the good shepherd. In modern times, the Pope, as well as bishops and priests, act as good shepherds in caring for the flock (God's people). • Jesus freely laid down his life to save us from our sins. To "take it up again" makes it clear that he would rise from the dead. • The "other sheep" are non-Jews. Jesus died for the sins of the entire world, not just the Jews. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before becoming followers of Jesus, the apostles were known locally as ordinary and uneducated men. • Peter's strong testimony responded to questions posed by religious leaders who were skeptical of Jesus and those who were faithful to him. • Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Peter spoke boldly to the religious leaders and rightfully acknowledged that healing a lame man had been made possible through Jesus. • The Jews had previously rejected Jesus, the "keystone" of our church and salvation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As believers, we can be confident that God loves us. • Believing that we are "God's children" gives us a sense of self-worth and belonging in Christ's church. We are all part of God's family. • The world '...does not acknowledge us' because as believers, we are expected to have different values and perspectives which are more spiritual than "worldly". • As believers, John tells us that we are becoming reflections of God as we grow in our faith.
Questions / application to our lives	<p>Why did Jesus say: "...the Father knows me and I know the Father"?</p> <p>Just as Jesus said "...there will be only one shepherd", there is only one God. Why is it important for us to listen to his voice, and how much time do we devote to listening to God's Word in our daily lives?</p>	<p>Historically, the religious leaders felt threatened by Jesus and his apostles, as they put their self-interests ahead of God. When people reject Jesus today, do you think they do so for similar reasons?</p> <p>What is the importance of this reading on Vocation Sunday?</p>	<p>When John wrote about the future of believers, why did he say "when" it is revealed rather than "if" it is revealed? Does knowing that we are part of God's family (especially on Vocation Sunday) give us more confidence in sharing our faith with others?</p>
Further reading	Catechism 754, 764, 2665	Catechism 756	Catechism 104, 239, 1692, 1709, 2009, 2736