

## PARISH OF ST. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN MORECAMBE

21<sup>st</sup> April 2024 – Fourth Sunday of Easter – Good Shepherd Sunday

### Parish Clergy

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### Parish office admin:

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Parish office hours: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 9 am till 12 Noon

## GOSPEL REFLECTION:

The fourth Sunday of Easter is also called Good Shepherd Sunday. In each of the three lectionary cycles, our Gospel is taken from the 10th chapter of the Gospel of John. In Cycle B, we hear the middle verses of this chapter. Unless we consider this chapter in the greater context of John's Gospel, we will miss the radical nature of the statement Jesus makes when he declares himself to be the Good Shepherd.

This chapter of John's Gospel follows Jesus' healing of the man born blind and the rejection of this miracle by the Jewish leaders who question Jesus' authority to heal. Jesus responds to this challenge by calling himself the Good Shepherd. He is criticising the leadership of the Pharisees and the other Jewish leaders. The Pharisees and other Jewish leaders are so angry that they attempt to stone and arrest Jesus (see John 10:31,39). This controversy with the religious leaders continues until Jesus' death.

In the portion of the chapter that we hear proclaimed today, Jesus describes his relationship with his followers as similar to the relationship between a good shepherd and his sheep. As a good shepherd will risk and lay down his life in order to protect his sheep, Jesus willingly sacrifices himself for the sake of his sheep. Jesus contrasts the actions of the good shepherd with the actions of the hired shepherd who abandons the sheep in the face of danger. In the verses following Jesus' teaching, we learn that the Pharisees and the other religious leaders understand that Jesus is referring to them when he describes the hired shepherds.

The concern of a good shepherd for his sheep is part of the shepherd's job. Jesus says, however, that the actions of the good shepherd are based upon the relationship that develops between the shepherd and the sheep. This is at the heart of the difference between the good shepherd and the hired shepherd. The good shepherd knows the sheep and therefore acts out of love. For the Good Shepherd, this is never simply part of a job; this love-in-action is integral to his identity.

As with so much of John's Gospel, one hears in this passage John's particular focus on Christology. As the sheep are known by the Good Shepherd, the Father knows Jesus and Jesus knows the Father. There is an essential unity between the Father and the Son. The freedom with which Jesus acts when he lays down his life is rooted in the unity that he shares with his Father.

In this context, Jesus also refers to others with whom he shares a relationship. By this reference, John probably understands the eventual inclusion of the Gentiles in the Christian community. Our modern ears hear this as a reference to Christian unity. The work of ecumenism is to restore unity among all Christians so that we form one flock under one shepherd, as God desires.

## MASS INTENTIONS:

Saturday 20/04	St Mary's	10.00am	Jane and Archie Conlon Special Intention
	St Patrick's	6.00pm	People of the Parish
Sunday 21/04	St Mary's	8.30am	Deceased members of the Kenny, Morrison, Bailey and Morgan families
	St Mary's	10.30am	Pamela Ann Murray RIP
Tuesday 23/04	St. Patrick's	10.00am	<b>NO MASS</b>
Wednesday 24/04	St. Mary's	10.00am	<b>NO MASS</b>
	St Mary's	7.00pm	Lyndsey Humphries Bday RIP
Thursday 25/04	St Mary's	12.10pm	Jim Hayes RIP
Friday 26/04	St Patrick's	10.00am	Liam and Eileen Ronayne
Saturday 27/04	St Mary's	10.00am	Danny McAbe and family
	St Patrick's	6.00pm	Dominic Clayton (Birthday)
Sunday 28/04	St Mary's	8.30am	People of the Parish
	St Mary's	10.30am	Wayne Marshall (Birthday)

This Sunday is **Good Shepherd Sunday** which is the **World Day of Prayer for Vocations**.

**PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK:** Maria Ruscillo, Irene Benson, Archbishop Patrick Kelly, Dean Brownlee, Davina Tetteh, Edgardo Hecate, Dee Rowley, Mary Walsh, Pam (Mary) Clark, Rev Jim Murphy, Winnie Coupe, Zoe Jarman, Karen Guerrero, Win Cowell, Tony Manley, Jennifer Doherty and the sick and housebound in the parish and those in local hospitals and nursing homes.

**1<sup>ST</sup> ANNIVERSARIES:** Please pray for all those whose first anniversaries occur between 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> April and all those names on the anniversaries' list for April which are on the noticeboards in each church porch.

**LATELY DEAD:** Kenneth Walter Cardwell, Joan McCrickett, Rev Anthony Ingham

## FUNERALS:

**Kenneth Walter Cardwell**, Wednesday 1st May 2024 at 3.30 p.m. at Beetham Hall Crematorium.

**Joan McCrickett**, Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2024 Requiem Mass at 11.30am followed by committal at Lancaster and Morecambe Crematorium.

**WEEKLY COLLECTION:** £1,321.75      **ATTENDANCE:** 303

## EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT:

Wednesday 9.30 a.m. till 9.55 a.m., followed by 10.00 a.m. Mass, Thursday 11.00 a.m. till 12 noon followed by the 12:10 pm. Mass and Saturday 10.30 a.m. till 11.00 a.m..

## **FEAST DAYS:**

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April – **St. George**, Martyr, Patron of England

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April – **St. Mark**, Evangelist

## **ST GEORGE:**

St. George was a soldier of the Roman army who was tortured and beheaded for his Christian faith in the year 303, in Lydda (in modern day Palestine). He was likely born in Cappadocia. At the death of his father (possibly martyrdom) he moved to Palestine with his mother where he joined the military and apparently served with some distinction, meriting several promotions in rank.

One account of the martyrdom of St. George is Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, which relates that when the emperor Diocletian issued an edict "to tear down the churches to the foundations and to destroy the Sacred Scriptures by fire...a certain man, of no mean origin, but highly esteemed for his temporal dignities, stimulated by a divine zeal, and excited by an ardent faith, took it as it was openly placed and posted up for public inspection, and tore it to shreds as a most profane and wicked act." This act of intransigence and holy audacity enraged the emperor who had the man tortured and killed. This man "of no mean origin", i.e. of nobility, has been identified by more than one ancient source, including Eusebius, as St. George, though most modern historians of the period state that this is unlikely.

St. George is usually depicted in Christian art as a soldier on horseback killing a dragon with a lance. This image is a representation of a popular legend of St. George which first appears in 1265 in a romance titled "The Golden Legend," in which he saved a town terrorised by a dragon with one blow of his lance. The image, however, is also, and more significantly, a powerful symbol of the victory of Christian faith over evil (sometimes interpreted more contextually in the early Church as "paganism"), personified by the devil who is symbolised by the dragon according to the imagery in Revelations.

St. George is invoked as a patron of military causes, not only because he was a soldier, but also, and primarily, due to his appearance to the Christian armies before the battle of Antioch, in which they were victorious, and to King Richard the Lionheart of England during his crusade against the Saracens.

The cult of St. George, while universal, remains strongest in the Eastern Church where he is venerated as "The Great Martyr." Accounts of early pilgrims identify the seat of the cult of St. George at his burial site in Lydda. The cult has been in existence since the 4th century, soon after his death.

St. George is the patron of soldiers and the patron of many nations, including Palestine; Lebanon; England; Georgia; Malta. He is also the patron of Palestinian Christians and of Boy Scouts. He is invoked by sufferers of skin diseases and snakebites.

**"Rejoice thus, and wherever you are, as long as you are here, the Lord is very near: do not be anxious about anything." (St. Augustine)**

**ST MARK:** Much of what we know about St. Mark, the author of the Second Gospel, comes largely from the New Testament and early Christian traditions. Mark the Evangelist is believed to be the 'John Mark' referred to in the Acts of the Apostles, the history of the early Church found in the Canon of the New Testament. He was the son of Mary of Jerusalem (Acts 12:12) whose home became a meeting place for the apostles. He is also the cousin of St. Barnabas (Colossians 4:10), a Levite and a Cypriot.

Mark joined St. Paul and St. Barnabas on their first missionary journey to Antioch in 44 A.D. When the group reached Cyprus, Christian tradition holds that Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem, possibly because he was missing his home (Acts 13:13). This incident may have caused Paul to question whether Mark could be a reliable missionary. This created a disagreement between Paul and Barnabas and led Paul to refuse Mark's accompaniment on their second journey to the churches of Cilicia and the rest of Asia Minor.

However, it can be assumed the troubles between Paul and Mark did not last long, because when Paul was first imprisoned, Mark, who was at the time in Rome with plans of visiting Asia Minor, visited him as one of his trusted companions (Col 4:10). Mark's hopes to visit Asia Minor were most likely carried out, because during Paul's second captivity and just before his martyrdom, Paul wrote to Timothy at Ephesus advising him to "take Mark and bring him with you [to Rome], for he is profitable to me for the ministry" (2 Timothy 4:11). If Mark returned to Rome at this time, he was probably there when Paul was martyred.

According to Christian tradition, Mark also held a close relationship with St. Peter, who referred to Mark as 'his son' in his letter addressed to a number of churches in Asia Minor (1 Peter 5:13). Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus and Papias all indicate that Mark was an interpreter for Peter. Although Papias states Mark had not personally heard the Lord speak firsthand and, like Luke, Mark was not one of the twelve apostles, some believe Mark was likely speaking of himself when he wrote the description of Jesus' arrest in Gethsemani. "Now a young man followed him wearing nothing but a linen cloth about his body. They seized him, but he left the cloth behind and ran off naked" (Mark 14:51-52).

St. Mark lived for years in Alexandria, where he died as a martyr while being dragged through the streets. Mark's Gospel was probably written between 60 and 70 A.D. and was based upon the teachings of St. Peter. It is believed Mark provided both Luke and Matthew with basic sources for their Gospels. He was probably the first bishop of Alexandria, Egypt and the founder of the Church of Alexandria, although he is not mentioned in connection to the city by either Clement of Alexandria or by Origen. In 828, relics of St. Mark were stolen from Alexandria and taken to Venice, Italy. There they are enshrined in a beautiful cathedral dedicated to the saint.

St. Mark's symbol is a winged lion. This is believed to be derived from his description of St. John the Baptist, as "a voice of one crying out in the desert" (Mark 1:3). The wings come from Ezekiel's vision of four winged creatures as the evangelists.

He is often depicted as writing or holding his Gospel. He is sometimes shown as a bishop on a throne or as a man helping Venetian sailors. St. Mark is the patron saint of Venice.

# PARISH NEWS

**WELCOME TO OUR PARISH:** If you are new to the area, or are visiting us just for the weekend, you are very welcome! Please introduce yourself to Fr Darren or Deacon John.

**BENCHES FROM GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH:** We have now moved ten benches over to St Patrick's church and we still have two more to take over. This means that we have ten benches left that we cannot fit anywhere else. A few people have shown an interest in having a bench for personal use in their homes. If anyone would like one of the church benches please contact Fr Darren. The plan would be that if enough people were interested we would hire a van and deliver the benches to people's homes on the same day. The cost of the van hire would be split by those wishing to have a bench delivered. If people wish to make a donation for the benches is down to the individuals. It will be a first come first served basis.

**GIFT AID:** Now that the Good Shepherd has officially closed, we will no longer be able to claim the gift aid on the loose collection, this will be a loss of £2,000.00 per year. If you are a taxpayer and have not yet signed up for gift aid please do so. If you are not sure if you can sign up or not, please speak to Fr Darren.

**100 CLUB:** This month's 100 Club draw will take place after today's 10.30 a.m. Mass in the Newman Centre. The prize monies are as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> Prize - £270, 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize - £135 and 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize - £81. The 100 Club will raise £180 for Parish funds. If you would like to join the 100 Club please contact the office.

**DEEP CLEANING:** If you will remember last year on the first Saturday of each month a number of us gathered together at St Mary's to carry out some deep cleaning in the church. I would be really grateful if we could do the same this year starting on the first Saturday of May and then June, July, August and September. If anyone would like to join us, we meet at 11.00 a.m. till 12 noon and clean various items in the church like for example the stations of the cross, everything is lifted down by Fr Darren and people clean and Fr Darren returns this items to their place.

**READERS AT MASS NEEDED:** Readers participating in the Liturgy of the Word play an essential role in the Mass, and the parish is looking for more volunteers to read. Pre-Covid there were usually two readers per weekend Mass and we would like to get back to that arrangement again if possible. It would also be wonderful if we could have readers from all age groups - including our young people.

On average people read about once every four to five weeks, and the rota is flexible to fit in with holiday and other commitments. You don't have to have read before and training can be provided. If you want to experience what reading would be like before deciding whether to read regularly, a one-off reading opportunity can be arranged too.

So, if you would like to find out more and give reading a try, please contact the parish office, thank you.

**VOLUNTEER NEEDED:** Currently in both churches we have people who take care of the altar linen that we use at each Mass. We need one or two people to take responsibility for the large altar linen at both churches. These are the linens that cover the altars, every so often they need to be changed, washed and ironed. In general, this takes place for Advent, Lent, Easter and a couple of times during ordinary time, so five times a year in total. If you feel that you are able to help, please contact the parish office.

## EVENTS:

Day	Time	Event	Location
Every Sunday	After 10:30am Mass	<b>Tea and Coffee</b>	Newman Centre
Every Monday	10.00am–11:30am	<b>Playgroup</b>	Newman Centre
Every Tuesday	10.00am	<b>Legion of Mary</b>	St Patrick's
Every Wednesday	12noon–2.00pm	<b>Warm Welcome</b>	Newman Centre
Every Friday	2.00pm–3.00pm	<b>Lectio Divina</b>	St Mary's Presbytery
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> April	7.00 p.m.	<b>SVP Meeting</b>	Newman Centre
Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> April	1.00–3.00pm	<b>Friendship Group</b>	Newman Centre
Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> April	1:30pm	<b>Bingo</b>	St Patrick's
Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> April	10:30am–12noon	<b>Cuppa and Chat</b>	St Patrick's

**SVP PLAYGROUP:** Every Monday 10.00 a.m. - 11.30 a.m. in the Newman Centre. There are lots of activities for the children and singing at the end of the session. The cost is £2 which includes a snack. Tea and coffee are available for adults. Everyone is very welcome. We look forward to seeing you there!

**SVP LUNCH:** The May SVP lunch will take place on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May after 12.10 p.m. Mass in the Newman Centre. All are welcome. Sign-up sheets are at the back of church.

**SVP MEETING:** The next meeting of the SVP will take place on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May at 7.00 p.m. in the Newman Centre.

## OTHER NEWS:

**COME AND SEE WEEKEND:** With the Bernardine Sisters at Hying for single women: 18-45 seriously discerning what the Lord is asking of them. Participants will be able to share in the life and spirituality of the sisters. Date: **Fri 10th - Sun 12th May 2024**. Info from Sister Mary Helen [sistermaryhelen@hotmail.com](mailto:sistermaryhelen@hotmail.com)

**PARISH SURVEY:** Thank you to those of you who completed the Parish Survey. Members of the Parish Council have taken each of the questions in the survey and provided a summary of their findings. Fr Darren will also comment on each question. Over the coming weeks we will provide a summary for you to read. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or the Parish Council members.

## **Parish Survey Results**

**Question 1: Please itemise what you feel should be some of the priorities for the Church and our PPC.**

**Response of parish council member.**

Broadly speaking, the answer came in three main groups:

1. Young people
2. Being welcoming
3. Mentioning something we already do or can change.

The "Young People" aspect is mentioned as one of the priorities, but very little indication as to how or what we should do. The only real suggestion was handing out hymn books or welcoming people on the way in. It would be helpful to ask whether this is the type of role a young person might want to undertake. So, the question is, what do young people want to do?

The Children's Liturgy fulfils a role, but does it prepare children for the actual Mass when they get to the end of it?

Being Welcome created a number of comments- again, without being very specific! It would be interesting to know the unwelcomed experience of people responding here (to the parish? At Mass?), but it may be that answers here are suggestive rather than evidential, to an extent.

Could the unwelcomed be encouraged to make themselves known and become involved in welcoming?

There was a comment that we should invite parishioners from St John's to events in our parish but as events are now largely being concentrated at St Mary's, where the facilities are better, it may not be relevant.

There was a mention of the difficulty in accessing parish news for those without technology - without knowing what they had in mind. It looks like the newsletter (available in church) and actually attending Mass is the only real option here.

A timetable clash in October was mentioned, but we can't really change the universal calendar (Newman) and the diocesan calendar (Education mass).

## Overview from Fr Darren

I was struck by one person who said "Pray for success of PPC and church activities" it was reassuring to know that people are praying. We are not all able to play an active part in parish life, but we can all pray, which should be the foundation of all we do. Another person said "Worship guidance to living our faith. Community support" We try to communicate, via the newsletter, to help and support people in their faith. For example the explanation of the Creed on a week-by-week basis and the biography of St John Henry Newman. We also recently ran a Journey in Faith programme which a core group of 14 people, five of whom became Catholics at the Easter Vigil, attended. If there is something else that we need to be doing, please help us by telling us more. It was really interesting to read the comment "Finding a way to bring younger people and families back to church" Over the last year we have had a number of young families join our community here, which is very encouraging. At this present time, we have an increase in young families due to the first Holy Communion programme, so let us be encouraging and welcoming to these families and everyone who is part of this parish community. This leads to another comment made "Making people more welcome". Let's work together to ensure everyone feels welcome.

There was also the comment "More open about how the Parish is run: expenses, future plans and knowing the members of the PPC". I do try my best to keep people up to date via the newsletter. We now have a page on the website with regard to the parish council. Now that we have reached the financial year's end there will be, in the near future, an overview of the parish accounts. I felt that the comment "Be/stay aware of the vulnerable people" is very important as so often someone stops coming to church and we don't hear anything. It is important to be aware of those who sit by us, maybe get to know their name so if they do disappear, for whatever reason, we have a name and if they are registered with the parish we can make contact with them, to see if we can help in any way.

Another comment that was made "All committees should meet at least every two months - with Fr Darren in attendance to ensure continuity". The fabric and finance committee meet four times a year as do the Parish Council, with me. This frequency is ample for the needs of this parish. Information from these meetings will be distributed to the parish via the newsletter and the website in the future. And last, but not least, there was the comment "I am Happy with everything".

### **THE POPE'S INTENTION FOR APRIL: FOR THE ROLE OF WOMEN**

We pray that the dignity and immense value of women be recognised in every culture, and for the end of discrimination that they experience in different parts of the world.

### **RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

*The stone which the builders rejected  
has become the corner stone.*