

JESUS THE GATE

(JOHN 10:1-10)



The image of the shepherd and flock is a common one in the bible. This is not surprising, as the sight would be a common one in the society of the time.

So to use the person of the shepherd as an example of a leader of the people would make sense to the audience. Our reading today is the introduction to the well-known teaching of Jesus about himself as the Good Shepherd. Here he gives a contrast between two types of shepherd and the reaction of the flock to each. He is implicitly comparing himself with the religious leaders of his day, with whom he is in growing conflict. In telling them this parable, Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees who were involved in the previous scene with the man born blind.

In the first section Jesus speaks about the true shepherd as one whom the janitor and the flock recognise and respond to immediately in a positive way. The image is of more than one flock in a common fold: the sheep gather round their own shepherd because they recognise his voice, there is a personal bond between them. The flock moves from one place to another behind the shepherd: the sense is one of trust, the individuals in the flock follow, they are not driven.

Shepherds of another kind are described as thieves and brigands, criminals who enrich themselves at the expense of those entrusted to their care. These are the political and religious authorities denounced in the strongest terms by the prophet Ezekiel in the Hebrew Scriptures. The reaction they provoke among the flock is fear and panic, and the sound of their voice causes the sheep to scatter and run into further danger.

The second image Jesus gives is of himself as the gate of the sheepfold. This comes from the idea of another, perhaps smaller and more remote shelter for the flock where there is no gate in the wall: once the flock is inside, the shepherd settles down in the entrance and with his own body closes off access to those in his charge. He himself becomes the gate, so to speak. Jesus offers nourishment and safety to his disciples, life to the full. ■

REFLECT

The biblical shepherd has only his voice to control the flock. There are no dogs, no whistles, no paint-marks on the fleece to distinguish one flock from another in the sheepfold where different groups have been put together overnight for safety. Jesus once again uses an "I AM" saying to describe himself and his relationship with his disciples: these sayings tell us not just who Jesus is but also what he does, in this case provide inner nourishment and salvation for his disciples.

We might reflect for a little on the members of the flock. In English examples, sheep are not used in a particularly complimentary way: we speak about people behaving like sheep when we mean a group within which no-one will take the initiative when something clearly needs to be done. A person's demeanour may be described as sheepish when they have been caught out in some way. But today's Gospel reading presents the members of the flock as being discerning: they can distinguish between the authentic leader and those who use their position for personal gain. They are not passive creatures. The People of God can also distinguish authentic leaders and respond to them in a positive manner. ■

LEARN

The biblical background to the Good (or Model) Shepherd is Ezekiel Chapter 34.

The relationship between shepherd and sheep is based on trust.

The sheepfold is an enclosure, often with thorny branches on the top to prevent predators attacking the flock during the night.

DO

Look at a picture of Jesus the Good Shepherd. How does it differ from our usual impression of shepherds in this part of the world? What does the absence of a sheepdog suggest to you about the relationship between the shepherd and the flock?

SAY

The Lord is my shepherd: there is nothing I shall want (Psalm 22:1).

PARISH OF DROMORE

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Fourth Sunday of Easter

Sunday Mass Times

St Colman's Dromore **All Saints Ballela**
Sunday 11.00am Sunday 9.45am

Weekday Mass Times: St Colman's

Mon, Wed, & Fri: 9.30am: Liturgy of the Word
with Eucharist

Tues & Thur: Mass 9.30am

Ballela Anniversaries

Sun 7: James, Rose & John Savage
Barney & Myrtle McCusker
Willie & Kathleen Rooney

Sun 14: None

Dromore Anniversaries

Sun 7: Larry McGrath
Gerard, Sarah, Patsy & Kitty Mackin

Thur 11: Members of the Hefferon family

Sun 14: Anne Prentice MM
Johnnie prentice
Richard Catney
Kathleen McCrory
William John Mulgrew

Offertory Promise Collection £1068.87

Readers - Dromore

Sun 14: Eibhlin Scott

Cemetery Mass

Dromore - Sun 11th June 3.00pm

Kilwarin - Sun 11th June 6pm

Banbridge - Thur 15th June 7.30pm

Ballela - Sun 18th June 3pm

First Holy Communion

Takes place in St Colman's, Dromore on Sat 13th
May at 10am.

Service of Thanksgiving & remembrance

For parents and families who have been bereaved
through pregnancy loss and the death of a baby
will take place on Sun 14th May at 3pm in the
Seagoe Parish Centre, 46 Seagoe rd, Portadown,
BT63 5HW. For an act of Remembrance you may
wish to bring a flower.

Bank Of England Old £5 Notes

Please refrain from putting the Bank of England
Old £5 notes in the parish collection. Thank You.

Sunday 7th May 2017

Parish Draw Winners Week 2

£100	Katie McAnarney	545
£50	Noel Finegan	184
£30	Marian Coyle	059
£20	Paul Crothers	553

Ballela GAC Lotto

Lotto Numbers: 1 13 21 23

No £10 winner's, Sellers draw: Anglers Rest

Results: seniors - Ballela 2-20, Ballycran 0-10

Seniors V Breadgh Tues 9th May, away 7.30pm.

Camogie- Ballela V Liatroin at home Mon 10th May at
7.30pm.

Winners of Easter Raffle:

Aoife Chambers – Hamper

Mark Cosgrave – Anglers Rest Voucher

Edel Gilligan – Flax @ Turleys Voucher

Simon McCartan – AJ Butchers Voucher

John Rooney– Bann Cryospa Voucher

Ryan Warren – Bronte Steakhouse Voucher

Frank Braniff – Knowledge Fitness Voucher

Connie McAleenan – Rosehip Voucher

Shay McNeill – Lalapanzi Voucher

Caroline Connelly – Eden Health Candle

Catherine O'Hare – Fred Elliott Voucher

Sinead McAvoy – Scallywags Voucher

Gary Hazley – Easter Egg

Patrick McCusker – Easter Egg

Ballela Community Group

We will be holding a coffee morning on **Sun 14th** of
May in Ballela School after 10.45am mass to celebrate
the First Holy Communion of Oran & Ned which will
be held in Annaclone on Sat 13th May. Everyone
welcome. This will be a chance for the parishioners to
see the newly refurbished classrooms.

Lourdes Committee

Mass in Ballela on **Wednesday 10th May @7.30** for all
sick and pilgrims travelling to Lourdes. Annual Lourdes
church door collection will be on **Sunday 14th May**.

There will be a basket for anyone wishing to send
petitions to Lourdes. Anyone attending other Parishes
on that date can give their donation to any member of
the Lourdes committee.