

## Fourth Sunday of Easter Year A 3 May 2020

### Introduction:

With their abundance of images and metaphors, the scriptures invite us into a playground of the imagination. Often the images tumble together untidily to further confound strict logic and open up fresh possibilities for engaging with the Divine Mystery.

Today's gospel text is no exception. Jesus describes himself alternately as the 'gate of the sheepfold' and as the 'shepherd of the flock'. As we entertain these distinct but complementary images, that of "gate" might remind us of Jesus' claim to be the one and only Way to the Father (Jn 14:6). The early Christian movement was also called the Way (e.g. Acts 9:2). There's food for thought here: is our way of life the Way of Life that Jesus offers?

**Priest: Dear friends, as Jesus said to Nicodemus long ago, he came to offer the world boundless life. Let us pray for the whole of creation to share fully in this divine gift.**

- For Pope Francis, chief shepherd of the flock, and all who are pastors in Jesus' name, that they will care for those entrusted to them with life-giving love.
- For Christian communities in every land, that God will call forth dedicated men and women to serve as ministers of gospel life.
- For world leaders, that their cooperative response to COVID-19 will bear fruit in effective common action to protect the planet from climate change.
- For citizens everywhere, that they will emerge from the coronavirus pandemic with a new awareness of and commitment to our shared humanity.
- For all who walk in a valley of darkness, that they may be delivered from fear and led to peace.
- For all in positions of political and economic power, that today's World Press Freedom Day will persuade them to protect, not interfere with, the freedom of the press.
- For Buddhists around the world celebrating the birth of Buddha, that the Festival of Light will renew their devotion to lives of wisdom and compassion.
- For the leaders, staff and volunteers of the International Red Cross, that their humanitarian service will continue to promote unity and peace in the human family.
- For family members unable to grieve together for loved ones who have died, that they will find ways of comforting and supporting one another through this time of loss.
- That our Parish Pastoral Team, may be filled with the gifts of wisdom, knowledge and understanding and be brought to unity in their decisions that God's Will may be done.
- For the recently deceased, especially those who have died from the coronavirus and for those whose anniversary of death occurs around this time, that the risen Lord will shepherd them to eternal life.

**Priest: All-loving God, you sent your Son to lead us to pastures of peace. Keep us close to him until we rejoice for ever at the banquet of eternal life. We ask this through Christ our Lord**