

Reflection on the Gospel- Easter 4A

(John 10:1-10) - Veronica Lawson RSM

My brother and sister-in-law were farmers who woke up one morning to find that all their sheep had disappeared. It seems that some enterprising thief or thieves had managed to load their sheep on to transports and move them interstate in the few hours between dusk and dawn. The unwelcome visitors had actually come in by the front gate, crossed the cattle pit, worked swiftly, and driven out again. In ancient Palestine, the flock would have been much smaller, the entrance would have been guarded and comings and goings would have been monitored closely by the gatekeeper. A thief would have had to scale the wall of the small enclosure and watch carefully for a chance to get away with a few of the sheep.

In John 10, Jesus presents a parabolic image about sheep and shepherds. His hearers fail to understand. This is hardly surprising because of the unusual mixing of metaphors, but also because they are hostile and choose not to understand. He proceeds to offer explanations of various aspects of the image he has created, two of which are included in today's reading. In the image, Jesus is both the gate to the sheepfold and the shepherd of the flock. He contrasts the access he provides as "the gate" with the unauthorized access gained through others "who have come before" him, namely the religious authorities featured in the previous chapter. They are unauthorized shepherds who gain access to the sheepfold on false pretences and lead God's flock into pastures that fail to satisfy.

There are echoes of the Psalms of Israel in this reading. In Psalm 23, God is the shepherd of Israel who leads the people into nourishing pastures and restores life to the depths of their *nephesh* or being. *Nephesh* is the word used in Genesis 2 for the life that God breathes into all beings. God leads the people in the way of justice or righteousness. Psalm 118 sings of God's gate through which the just or righteous will enter and give thanks. As the gate to the little sheepfold, Jesus offers the way to and from abundant life. As the shepherd, he monitors the movement of the sheep so that they are not tempted to stray along the paths of unrighteousness and destruction.

As usual, the gospel text is multi-layered. The images pulsate with life and energy. They invite to vigilance on the one hand and gratitude on the other. They offer yet another way of thinking about Easter. At this time of Earth's distress, we might spare a thought for our farmers who, often in the face of adversity, struggle to care for their animals, to ensure the sustainability of the land entrusted to them, and to provide the produce we so often take for granted.

BULLETIN FOR FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, YEAR A



ST ALIPIUS PARISH, BALLARAT EAST

Including St Peter & Paul's, Buninyong

Parish Address: 84 Victoria Street, Ballarat East. 3350

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MASS TIMETABLE FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING MONDAY, 8th MAY 2017

MONDAY:	No Mass
TUESDAY:	No Mass
WEDNESDAY:	No Mass
THURSDAY:	No Mass
FRIDAY:	9.30 am in Parish Church

NEXT WEEKEND'S MASSES

ST. ALIPIUS	SAT	6.00 PM
	SUN	10.30 AM
BUNINYONG	SUN	9.00 AM

5th SUNDAY OF EASTER, YEAR A

READINGS	First:	Acts 6:1-7
	Second:	1 Peter 2:4-9
	Gospel:	John 14:1-12

RECENT DEATH: Fr. John Murphy SDB

ANNIVERSARIES: Tom & Pat Smith, Helen Ronan, Brian Walsh, Molly Walsh, Lena Clohesy, Maria Di Giovanni, Mary Bettes.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK: Nathan Cambell, Denise Learmonth, Cath Wheelahan, Barbara Keirl, Mick Kent, Terry McGarry, Kevin Walsh, Peter Clohesy, Frank Nolan (Buninyong), Mary Barnett, Fiona Dickinson, Audrey Clohesy, Carmel Doherty.

COUNTING TEAMS:

This Week: **Team 7:** K. Cummins ©, J. O'Meara, B. Hood, G. Duck.

Next Week: **Team 8:** B. McKeegan ©, M. Ridsdale, K. McKeegan.

COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND:



PARISH:	Envelopes:	\$	810.00
	Loose:	\$	300.00
	Direct debits:	\$	<u>365.00</u>
			\$ 1,475.00
PRESBYTERY:		\$	860.00

SOCIAL AFTERNOON

Wednesday, 10th May in the Mercy Centre at 2.00 pm. Please enter via Gent Street.

SICK LIST

Anyone interested in the welfare of Audrey Clohesy may contact her daughter Colleen on 0419 504 029.

WELCOMING VISITING SEMINARIAN

Welcome to Chathura Silva, 4th yr student at Corpus Christie College Seminary, Carlton. Chathura is with us to share his reflections on his vocation and formation for priesthood.

Chathura's visit coincides with this Sunday as "Good Shepherd" Sunday and an opportunity to reflect on how each of us "shepherd" in the name and image of Jesus.

LAY PASTORAL MINISTRY PROGRAM

Offers low-cost opportunities for online and formation for lay workers in the diocese, both employees and volunteers. Registration for the May study cycle closes on 22nd May, 2017—or you can start in July or later in the year. See the details on the diocesan website www.ballarat.catholic.org.au then contact Amanda on 5337 7125 or email amanda.smith@ballarat.catholic.org.au

30th ANNIVERSARY OF EPISCOPAL ORDINATION

Mass to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Connors will be held on Sunday, 21st May at St Patrick's Cathedral, Ballarat at 10.30 am. All welcome.

MOTHERS DAY LITURGY

Will be held next Friday, 12th May in St Alipius Church at 12.00 midday. The liturgy will be prepared by St Alipius School, and all are invited.

**MISSION CONFERENCE 2017 "ONE HEART MANY VOICES"
15-17 MAY**

Mission 2017: One heart many voices is for those who are inspired to strive creatively for justice, peace reconciliation and God's mission of mercy. It is a unique opportunity to listen, converse and experience the many and diverse voices that are the expression of the one heart of mission. The conference will explore the Complexity and issues surrounding leadership, formation, theology and the practice of mission. For more information go to www.mohmv.com.au

"LESSONS FROM THE LONG PADDOCK" ECONFERENCE

The Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes is offering an econference online event called "Lessons From the Long Paddock" on Tuesday, 6th June, 2017. This econference opens the conversation for many people who are curious about what the experience of faith actually feels like in ordinary life. Participants engage with conversations which signpost essential spiritual markers relevant to knowledge about what leads into fuller humanity, Christian, Catholic and Australian life. This econference draws participants to seek Christ at the heart of human experience and nurtures a capacity to trust that individuals have all they need to begin the journey into constant conversion.

The econference has two keynote speakers, Bishop Columba Macbeth Green OSPPE and Fr Frank Brennan SJ, who will discuss Australian and Outback Spirituality. The workshops will be facilitated by Kate Englebrecht, Diocesan Director of Mission. For more information please contact Kate on 0420 309 689 or <http://www.wf.catholic.org.au>

LAST SUNDAY

Open letter to the Bishops of Australia. Many thanks to those who were able to sign the letter to the Bishops. We received 160 signatures and they were forwarded on Tuesday. A number of parishioners asked for information about the group "Catholics for Renewal Inc." The link is www.catholicsforrenewal.org.au or address Peter Johnstone OAM, President Catholics for Renewal Inc, P O Box 178 Doncaster Heights, Vic. 3109.

"The Christian faithful have the right and even at times the duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church and to make their opinion known to the rest of the Christian faithful." (Canon 212)