

~ Notices ~

**Ukraine Appeal** [clareanglicans.ie](http://clareanglicans.ie) or: [www.christianaid.ie](http://www.christianaid.ie)

**Turkey and Syria Earthquake relief - Bishop's appeal**  
[www.bishopsappeal.ireland.anglican.org/give](http://www.bishopsappeal.ireland.anglican.org/give)

**Future concerts:**

**Genie Ensemble** – Friday 5<sup>th</sup> May – 7.30pm - St Columba's

**People's College Choir** – Sat 13<sup>th</sup> May, 4.00pm Spanish Point

**Concertina Youth** – Sun 21<sup>st</sup> May 5.00pm, St Columba's

**Clare Music Makers – end of year concerts**  
Sat 27<sup>th</sup> & Sun 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1.30pm, St Columba's

**Clare Music Makers – Student recitals**  
Sat 3<sup>rd</sup> & Sun 11<sup>th</sup> June, 1.30pm, St Columba's

**Jaskane Trio** – Sat 10<sup>th</sup> June – 5.00pm – St Columba's

**Living the Questions Course** – sign-up sheet in church

**Meditation- St Columba's** – Every Thursday 7.30pm

**Lectio Divina** – please let me know if you would be interested in forming a group who would meet to read and reflect upon scripture together. See sign-up sheet.

**Book Club** - 1<sup>st</sup> (or 2<sup>nd</sup>) Tuesday of every month – please ask Sue or Carolyn (St C) or Clare (SP) for details.

**Confirmation** - Please let the Rector know if you are thinking of becoming confirmed in 2020 – I have three names so far.

**Invitation**– I am being installed as Canon at St Mary's Cathedral Limerick, confirmed for Sunday May 7<sup>th</sup> at 4.00pm.

**Website:** [clareanglicans.ie](http://clareanglicans.ie)

**YouTube:** [www.youtube.com/c/clareanglicans](http://www.youtube.com/c/clareanglicans)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/clare.anglicans](http://www.facebook.com/clare.anglicans)

**Rector:** Email: [frkevinobrien@me.com](mailto:frkevinobrien@me.com)

**Tel:** 065 672 4721

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# 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter 2023 (Year A)

## Readings and Hymns

### Collect

God of all power, you called from death our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep: send us as shepherds to rescue the lost, to heal the injured, and to feed one another with understanding; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

### Suggested Hymns

*In conjunction with the online service you might like to view these hymns on YouTube - with internet links and lyrics so that you can sing along:*

1) In Christ there is no East or West (522)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P7Xd65iq4WU>

2) The King of Love my Shepherd is (20)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v1Gc9TgH8xc>

3) How sweet the name of Jesus sounds (92)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KmlMau0WtSE>

### Acts 2: 42-47

Many were baptized and were added to the community. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

### Psalms 23

The Lord is my shepherd; ♦  
therefore can I lack nothing.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures ♦  
and leads me beside still waters.  
He shall refresh my soul ♦  
and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.  
Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil; ♦  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.  
You spread a table before me  
in the presence of those who trouble me; ♦  
you have anointed my head with oil  
and my cup shall be full.  
Surely goodness and loving mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life, ♦  
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

### 1 Peter 2: 19-25

For it is to your credit if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, where is the credit in that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called,

because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.

'He committed no sin,

and no deceit was found in his mouth.'

When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross,\* so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds\* you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

#### **John 10: 1-10**

Jesus said to the Pharisees: 'Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.' Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

#### **Commentary**

##### **Acts 2:42-47**

The apostles and the Jerusalem crowd have witnessed the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Peter, on behalf of the apostles, has interpreted the event. Based on Joel, he has shown that the final age is here, and that salvation for all whom God calls and who call on him is happening now. He tells the crowd that Jesus, the Messiah, is our access point to salvation. To be saved from adverse judgement, repent and be baptised in Jesus' name! Tell the good news to all who will hear, so that they too may have new life in Christ. Many do turn to Christ and are baptised. The first part of Acts is made up of example stories and summaries. Our reading is the first summary; it gives us a glimpse of the very early church, of the response of the newly baptised. In accepting the good news, they whole-heartedly embrace learning about the faith, responsibility and love for fellow Christians, "breaking of bread" (an extension of Jewish festive meals to re-presentation of the Lord's Supper) and "prayers". God predicted through Joel that "many wonders and signs" (v. 43) would be seen in the end times; an example is Peter healing a lame man (3:1-11). In these early days, they have "all things in common" (v. 44), but a little later such sharing was not the universal rule: see 5:4. As faithful Jews, they visit the Temple daily (a forum Jesus had used) and share in the Eucharist "at home" (v. 46). As God has already increased their numbers (v. 41), so he continues to do. Later animosity developed with adherents to Judaism.

##### **Psalms 23**

In the ancient Near East, the king was seen as shepherd (vv. 1-4) and as host (vv. 5-6). God faithfully provides for his sheep, and constantly cares for them. He revives our very lives ("soul", v. 3), and guides us in godly ways ("right paths"). Even when beset by evil ("darkest valley", v. 4), we have nothing to fear. God's "rod" (a defence against wolves and lions) protects us; his "staff" (v. 4, for rescuing sheep from thickets) guides us. The feast (v. 5) is even more impressive, for it is in the presence of his foes. Kings were plenteously anointed with oil (a symbol of power and dedication to a holy

purpose). May God's "goodness and mercy" (v. 6, steadfast love) follow (or pursue) him (as do his enemies) throughout his life. He will continue to worship ("dwell ...") in the Temple as long as he lives.

#### **1 Peter 2:19-25**

It seems that the first readers were seen as inferior socially by their pagan neighbours. The author has exhorted them to "conduct yourselves honourably" (v. 12), even when maligned (as they are), for God wills that they live blameless, ethical lives – thus inviting their neighbours to examine the Christian way. Being "servants of God" (v. 16), they are "free" from the burden of sin; they should use this freedom for good. The Greek word translated as "servants" also means slaves, so what the author says now applies equally to Christian slaves and other Christians. (The early church saw no inherent evil in slavery. All Christians were free spiritually and members of "the family of believers", v. 17.) "Slaves" (v. 18) are to obey their masters, whether they are considerate or "harsh". Being beaten for wrong-doing is to be expected, but God notices when slaves endure wrongfully inflicted "pain" (v. 19). Of this, Christ is the great "example" (v. 21): accept it as he did, as predicted in Isaiah. Christians see the Servant Songs of Isaiah as predicting the events of Jesus' life. Isaiah 53:5-9, part of the fourth Servant Song (quoted in part in vv. 22-25), foretells his suffering and death: when "abused" (v. 23) he entrusted himself to God's care, "the one who judges justly". Jesus carried our sins on the cross, thereby enabling us to live "free from sins" (v. 24) and to attain union with God ("righteousness"). Through Jesus' suffering they have access to eternal life. The addressees have turned their lives around by accepting Christ (v. 25a). The "shepherd"-flock image of God and his people is found in today's psalm and elsewhere in the Old Testament; in the gospels, Jesus is the shepherd. In this book, the image is applied to Christian leaders and those in their care. Later the Greek word *episkopos* ("guardian") came to mean bishop.

#### **John 10:1-10**

In Chapter 9, Jesus has raised the ire of some religious leaders by giving sight to a blind man on the Sabbath. Some of them have heard Jesus say "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind" (9:39). Some have asked him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" (9:40), to which he has replied. "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains." (9:41) Thinking themselves worthy makes them unworthy in God's eyes. Now Jesus uses a metaphor to expand on his point (but no metaphor works perfectly). In Palestine, sheep belonging to villagers roamed freely during the day but were confined to a common enclosure at night, to protect them from predators. Each morning, each shepherd called his sheep who followed him to pasture. While "this figure of speech" (v. 6) is hard for us to understand in detail (as it was for those who heard Jesus), we can get the drift. So irate does the metaphor make the leaders that they try to stone him (in v. 31) and, in v. 40, Jesus flees across the Jordan. As he explains (v. 7), he is the "gate" of v. 2, so presumably the thieves and bandits are the Jewish religious leaders. Jesus, both the "gatekeeper" (v. 3) and the "shepherd" (v. 2) is the true leader. He calls the faithful to follow him (v. 4); they don't follow a "stranger" (v. 5). The people listen to him and not to the "Pharisees" (9:40), "all who came before me" (v. 8). He is the only "gate" (v. 9) to eternal "life" (v. 10), to freedom ("come in and go out", v. 9, a Jewish idiom), and to nourishment beyond measure ("find pasture ... abundantly").

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