

'JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD, THE MAN BORN BLIND, & US'

4th Sunday of Easter – 12th May 2019

WE REMEMBER

At the beginning of Mass today we remember today as **Mothers' Day**.
And we light a candle as we pray for the **people of Sri Lanka**.
Later in Mass today Helen will remember **South Sudan and Blackall/Tambo Parish**.

SUCH BEAUTIFUL SMILES

At last weekend's Parish Masses,
the children preparing for their First Communion in a few weeks,
returned to sit with their families
and asked their parents/carers the question
that Jesus asked Peter in the Gospel passage of the day –

'Do you love me?'

And the responses that they received from family
evoked such wonderful smiles in the faces of the children.
The community could see their radiant faces.

MOTHERS' DAY

Today on Mothers' Day,
we remember the mothers and grandmothers and others
with a maternal influence in our lives.
In light of the Gospel today, we name them shepherds, good shepherds.
We now invite the maternal shepherds in the community to stand
as we pray for them and ask God's blessing on them this special day.
[pause for blessing]

As a faith community, let us show our appreciation
to the **mothers and all maternal shepherds**.

[applause]

THE SHEPHERDS IN OUR LIVES

The Gospel passage today is famous,
Jesus the Good Shepherd
We think of all the people who have been
caring and loving and inspirational **shepherds to us**.
Let us pause and quietly **name them in our lives**.

[pause]

And let us quietly thank God for them,
and ask God's blessing on them.

[pause]

VOCATION SUNDAY

One of the house blessings in the parish community yesterday

was the blessing celebration of the home where two Good Samaritan Sisters, Sr Trish and Sr Judy have come to live. We thank God for their presence in the community. On this *Vocation Sunday*, as we pray for vocations, we thank God for community members, Sr Annette, a Presentation Sister and Sr Dorothy, a Charity Sister, for Clint and his family, as Clint continues his formation for diaconate, and for Gerard and Michael from the Holy Spirit Seminary, who join us in thanksgiving to God on Sundays.

Let us pray for them and for vocations.
Let us pray for those in our community who may find God prompting them to follow a vocation.

[pause and pray]

In Brisbane today we pray for the Jubilarians in the Sisters of Mercy.

GOSPEL OF JOHN CHAPTER 9

Jesus reveals that he is the Good Shepherd in John's Gospel, chapter 10. There is so much to celebrate each year on the fourth Sunday of Easter, *Good Shepherd Sunday*.

We celebrate each of our own vocations from God.

Let us quietly name our vocation and describe it to God in a sentence of two.

[pause]

In the chapter 9 is an example of how Jesus lived as the *Good Shepherd*. It is only after the account of healing and faith response of the man born blind, that Jesus calls himself the *Good Shepherd*. Both chapters are connected, yet often we miss the connection. Sometimes we can be tempted to quote from Chapter 10, without any reference as to why the chapter of *Jesus the Good Shepherd* comes after Jesus healed and invited the man born blind, to faith.

Let us recall the event with a few quotes from the chapter.

'As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth.'

The disciples and Jesus speak about him.

Jesus is shepherd to his disciples and has time to answer their questions.

Then Jesus says

'As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.'

Jesus reveals Himself, both as *Light of the World* (chapter 9)

and as the *Good Shepherd* (chapter 10)

The Gospel continues:

'When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes,

saying to him,
'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent).
Then he went and washed and came back able to see.'

Jesus, as light and shepherd, healed him.

'The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?'

He identified himself **'I am the man'** and tells the story.

He could see but the Pharisees refused to see,
they refused to acknowledge the healing power of Jesus.

The parents testified who the man was:

*'We know that this is our son,
and that he was born blind;
but we do not know how it is that now he sees,
nor do we know who opened his eyes.
Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.'*

Again he was interrogated.

And he witnessed to Jesus as he exclaimed:

*'Never since the world began has it been heard
that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.
If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.'*

*They answered him, 'You were born entirely in sins,
and are you trying to teach us?' And they drove him out.'*

We are healed in our own lives by Jesus, the shepherd and light.
And we are called to come back and witness to others about our healing.
We don't just disappear.

But it is not only physical and emotional and psychological healing.
Jesus deepens our faith, our understanding of the meaning of life,
our relationship with God,
and offers us the gift of salvation.

*Jesus heard that they had driven him out,
and when he found him, he said,
'Do you believe in the Son of Man?'
He answered, 'And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.'
Jesus said to him,
'You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.'
He said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshipped him.
Jesus said,
**'I came into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see,
and those who do see may become blind.'***

The chapter concludes:

*Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him,
'Surely we are not blind, are we?'
Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would not have sin.
But now that you say, "We see", your sin remains.'*

GOSPEL OF JOHN CHAPTER 10

Earlier in Chapter 10, Jesus says that he is the gate for the sheep and that he is the good shepherd.

*"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."*

*'I am the good shepherd.
The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.'
The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep,
sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—
and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.
The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the
sheep.'*

The authorities interrogated the man born blind, who had been healed, They refused to believe him and refused to believe in Jesus.

WERE THE AUTHORITIES 'THE HIRED HAND'?

WERE THE AUTHORITIES 'THE WOLF'?

WERE THE AUTHORITIES BOTH 'THE HIRED HAND' AND 'THE WOLF'?

Jesus continued:

*'I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,
just as the Father knows me and I know the Father.
And I lay down my life for the sheep.
I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold.
I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.
So there will be one flock, one shepherd.'*

Just as the man born blind was questioned again, so we hear that Jesus was questioned again by people who do not believe. The first time they are divided in their responses. The second time they want to stone Jesus for blasphemy.

You are invited this week to read both chapters 9 and 10.
And then reread chapter 9, seeing Jesus as the Good Shepherd
And the man born blind as a member of his flock.

We ask ourselves

HOW AM I LIKE THE MAN BORN BLIND?

CAN I IDENTIFY MYSELF IN HIS JOURNEY?

CAN WE "SEE" BOTH THE HEALING POWER OF JESUS IN US AND THE INVITATION TO BELIEVE?

GOSPEL OF JOHN CHAPTER 10:27-30

Today's Gospel passage from John 10:27-30 says

*'My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me.
I give them eternal life, and they will never perish.
No one will snatch them out of my hand.
What my Father has given me is greater than all else,
and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand.
The Father and I are one.'*

The man born blind, is healed and later follows Jesus.

Not only seeing, but also hearing the voice of Jesus.

'My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me.'

This Vocation Sunday we celebrate Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

May we journey in prayer and reflection throughout this week

with Jesus and the man born blind,

and discover more about how Jesus heals us and how he deepens our faith.

And we respond again to the question of Jesus – *Do you love me?*

Let us pray.

Fr. Gerry

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/120519.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook12052019>]



MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE. I KNOW
THEM, AND THEY FOLLOW ME.
I GIVE THEM ETERNAL LIFE, AND
THEY WILL NEVER PERISH.

Good Shepherd Sunday

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