SUNDAY NEWSLETTER

4th Sunday of Easter | ***Good Shepherd Sunday*** | **11th May 2025**

PARISH OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL & ST SIMON STOCK, CARMELITE CHURCH
41 KENSINGTON CHURCH STREET, LONDON W8 4BB

Web: www.carmelitechurch.org Email: enquiries@carmelitechurch.org
Tel. 0207 937 9866 Mobile: 0770 8203 595
@kensingtoncarmelitechurch on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram

Mass Times Sundays: Vigil (Sat.) 6.00 p.m., 8.30 a.m., 10.00 a.m., 12.15 p.m. & 6.00 p.m.
Weekdays (including Bank Holidays): 8.00 a.m., 12.15 p.m. & 6.00 p.m.
Livestream *(All Masses)*: www.carmelitechurch.org & YouTube: "Kensington Carmelite Church"
Confessions: Sat: 11.30 a.m. – 12.15 p.m. & 5.00 - 5.50 p.m. Weekdays: 5.40 p.m. - 6.00 p.m.
Priests in the Parish: Fr Thaddeus Ekuma, Fr Matt Blake, Fr John Williamson, Fr Joseph Odiahi
Safeguarding Rep: Franca Bren (Email: kensington2sg1@safeguardrcdow.org.uk)

Reflection

JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Today Jesus uses the image of a shepherd to depict his nature as our God and the nature of our relationship with him. Even if you have never shepherded before, it suffices to have had an encounter with farmers to understand the extend of the relationship they can have with their flock. This imagery of a shepherd is important in understanding how Our Lord treats us and how we are in turn invited to treat one another.

Jesus underlines three important points about his nature as the Good Shepherd. But before enumerating these points, let us observe how Jesus refers to the flock as "my sheep." There is a sense of ownership and responsibility for the flock that belongs to him. Hence the most significant nature of Jesus as the Good Shepherd is that He lays down his life for his sheep. The extent of his love for his sheep impels him to stop at nothing to protect them. He leads them, feeds them, nurtures and cares for them, and protects them at all costs.

The depth of love that the Good Shepherd has for his sheep is intricately connected to his deep knowledge of his sheep. As the Psalmist says, "He knows of what we are made." The Good Shepherd knows his sheep so deeply that he knows each one by name. This is such a profound thing to say. To say that the Shepherd knows each sheep by name means that he knows each of their unique characters, circumstances, difficulties, etc. He knows everything about them – the entire history of each of them. This is why he is able to care for each one of them individually according to their peculiar circumstances. When any one of them strays he know exactly which one and understands why they might have strayed, and where to search for them. He calls the stray by their name as he scours the forest.

Reciprocally, the sheep know the Good Shepherd. They recognise his voice and are able to distinguish his voice from that of other people who might pose as the Good Shepherd. There are probably other unique signs by which the Shepherd and his flock communicate, for example, the smell of the Good Shepherd. As Pope Francis said, "Pastors should smell like the sheep." And, the Letter to the Hebrews (2:17) tells us that this is precisely what our Good Shepherd did: "He had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect…" In other words, he had to smell like the sheep in order to make himself recognizable as a part of them.

The final point to mention is that because of these characters of the Good Shepherd, the sheep

themselves learn to become shepherds. We often find this happening among a large flock of sheep. One I was driving I came across a flock of sheep crossing the road. One of them stood at the centre of the road, like a traffic warden, waiting for the whole flock to cross. This is the effect of good shepherding. The qualities of the Good Shepherd inevitably rubs off on the sheep.

Now we realize that all this is a metaphor of our relationship with Jesus, our Good Shepherd. Jesus knows each of us by name – he knows our entire history, our individual unique story. Nothing about us escapes him. So he guides each of us along a life path that makes for our unique development. He shepherds us. We in turn must listen to his voice when he seeks us and calls us.

Consequently, this is the day marked out for praying for vocations to the dedicated life of shepherding God's people – to the priesthood and religious life. God continues to seek men and women who will continue the work of shepherd after Christ. Although we all can be shepherds in the manner we have already spoken, priests and religious are shepherds who stand out (a shepherd needs to stand out and be recognizable by the entire sheep). They bear witness in a unique way to the character of Christ our Shepherd. They dedicate their life to the service of the flock in the manner in which Christ did. Do you feel that God is calling you to the priesthood or the religious life? Will you listen to his call?

It is significant that on this Good Shepherd Sunday, we celebrate the election of our new Pope – Leo XIV, the 267th Bishop of Rome. He is the representative of Christ shepherding his church on earth. May God continue to provide good shepherds for his people. Let us support him with our prayers, that the Lord may direct his church through him and bring us and the entire world closer to God.

To follow the Mass Readings on your phone, please scan the QR Code:

NOTICES

PRIEST TRAINING FUND COLLECTION TODAY

This Sunday is Good Shepherd Sunday and our second collection will support the Priest Training Fund. This fund pays for the priestly formation of men for the Catholic priesthood. There are currently **50** men studying at Allen Hall seminary, **13** of whom are from our own Diocese. **2** of these are deacons for Westminster. We also have **2** seminarians at the Royal English College in Valladolid. Last year **3** deacons who studied at Allen Hall were ordained priests.The fund also supports the ongoing enrichment and formation of our ordained priests. Your gift ensures we can provide training for these men responding to Christ's call to dedicate their lives to serve God's people. Please be as generous as you can. Please also pray for vocations and for all our priests. If you do not have a donation envelope, plenty are still available at the back of the church. You can use the QR code to make your donation online or visit www.rcdow.org.uk/donations. Thank you for your generosity.

PULSE CATHOLIC FAMILY RETREATS

Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th June 2025

Children of all ages are welcome. Organised for families by families. The retreat is structured around times of teaching and personal prayer for parents.

Fr Matt Blake, Carmelite, will help the parents (re)discover the power of prayer.

Children participate in a school of prayer specially tailored to their age, under the responsibility of volunteers.

Registrations are now open until 5th May 2025

(pulse-retreats.com)

You may make your offering or donation by scanning this QR Code with your mobile phone
Thank you and God bless!

Collections Last Sunday:	Offering	£1578
	Gift Aid Envelopes	£471

Thank you for your generosity!

Fr Thaddeus