



Sunday 26th April 2026

The Fourth Sunday of Easter

Vocation Sunday

Gospel Reading

John 10.1-10

‘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.

Other Readings:

Acts 2:42-end

Psalm 23

1 Peter 2.19-end

Homily

At the midpoint of the Easter season in 2026, the Church of England has placed Vocation Sunday, on a day also known as ‘Good Shepherd’ Sunday. Right at the heart of our Easter joy is a reminder that all are called not to follow a stranger, but to listen intently to the voice of the shepherd of the sheep. The sheep follow his call, they recognise his voice immediately. But there are distractions and dangers all around, voices that would lead us astray to entice us or harm us. Jesus refers to them as thieves and bandits who seek to steal and kill and destroy. But he says that the sheep did not listen to them, they responded to the only one who is able to safely gather them into the sheepfold.

If you are slightly bemused by Jesus’ figure of speech, you are not alone. Even the disciples did not understand what he was saying to them, at least in the moment. Through his death and resurrection, the disciples would come to understand that this Jesus is the one who is able to refresh the soul within, he is the one who protects us and fights for us when enemies and evil are close at hand. This Jesus is able to comfort even when we are walking through the valley of the shadow of death. And he doesn’t stop there. He leads us to another sheepfold, another gate, that we may dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

In a sense, just as every Sunday is a celebration of Easter, every Sunday is Vocation Sunday. If you are baptised, you have a vocation, just like every Christian. Our calling is simply this: listen to the voice of the shepherd and guardian of your soul, and follow in his steps. Our vocation is first and foremost about listening and responding, trusting that the one who calls is faithful. Christ the shepherd has called you by name and has made you his own. He has the words of eternal life; listen to him. Nurturing our vocation is made possible through living as disciples of Jesus, recognising his voice amongst the clamour of competing voices for our attention.

Through an ongoing friendship with Jesus, we may find that our calling has a particular shape, that there is a response that you feel compelled to make. Often when people say that they have found their vocation, it has come only after years and years of discerning, sifting, and listening. Hearing other people speak of their vocation can bring all sorts of emotions within us; as much as we can feel excited and pleased for them we can be tempted to feel jealousy and even anger, wondering why God hasn't called me in that particular way. Whatever emotions might be provoked within us when we consider vocation, offer those thoughts and feelings back to Jesus, the good shepherd. Keep listening to his voice.

Elsewhere in the Gospel of John, Jesus says, abide in my love. In all of our striving, searching, and doing, Jesus wants us to simply be. He tells us that he came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. Ultimately, there is no greater vocation than to seek after the life that Jesus has promised to every person: abundant life, resurrection life. Abiding in his love shapes and moulds us into people who are able to respond to God's call in such a way that, whatever we do to build up the life of the church for the sake of the world, we do so not in our own strength, but in the strength of the one who breathes his life into us, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Conversation Questions

1. What do we mean when we say that all the baptised have a vocation?
2. Have you experienced times in your own life when your vocation was really clear?
3. Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you?
What is it?
4. What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today? #everydayfaith

Prayer

Spend some time in prayer, responding to what you have heard today and listening to what God might be saying to you.

Collect of the day

*God our Father, Lord of all the world,
through your Son you have called us into the fellowship
of your universal Church:
hear our prayer for your faithful people
that in their vocation and ministry
each may be an instrument of your love,
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

(or)

*Risen Christ,
faithful shepherd of your Father's sheep:
teach us to hear your voice
and to follow your command,
that all your people may be gathered into one flock,
to the glory of God the Father.*

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