

# THE PARISHES OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST AND ST MARY MAGDALENE

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Parish Priest: Fr. Jock Dalrymple:

0131 669 5447

Deacon – Revd Eddie White:

07986 015772

*Pastoral Team: Alice Codling, Jennifer Morris and Chris Vinestock*

*Shared Parish House: 3 Sandford Gardens, EH15 1LP*

*Administrator: Enrico Fertini*

*(Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 10am to 3pm & Friday 11am-4pm)*

Web address: [www.stjohnsportobello.co.uk](http://www.stjohnsportobello.co.uk)

Web address: [www.stmarymagdalenes.co.uk](http://www.stmarymagdalenes.co.uk)

Joint Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/StJohnsandStMaryMagdalenes>

Joint e-mail address for our sister parishes: [stjohnsandstmarymagdalenes@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnsandstmarymagdalenes@gmail.com)

## Fourth Sunday of Easter – 25 April 2021



*This Sunday - 'Good Shepherd Sunday' - is the World Day of Prayer for Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life... and there is an extra/second collection for the Ecclesiastical Students' Fund. (The monthly second collection at St John's for the Tower Fund will take place next Sunday).*

*With this newsletter is a pastoral letter from Archbishop Cushley about the opening of a campus at the Gillis Centre by St Mary's University in Twickenham, in conjunction with the Archdiocese.*

### **Two Family Masses next Week-End – 1 and 2 May**

**Arlene Lauder writes:** 'Next weekend we will be welcoming our young parishioners back to one of two family bubble masses...'

At St John's church on Saturday 1 May at 6:30 pm

...and at St Mary Magdalene's church on Sunday 2 May at 11:15 am.

To book your place please contact me by text on 07950 880 833 or by email at

[lauder.82@btinternet.com](mailto:lauder.82@btinternet.com). Available places will be on a first come first served basis but with plenty of spaces to fill we look forward to seeing as many families as possible.'

NB Since places will not be available for regular parishioners at these Masses, **we are putting on an additional Mass at 4.30pm on Sunday at St John's**. Anyone can book for this Mass or for the 9.30am that morning....

### **Announcing two Baptism Preparation Courses in the Coming Months...**

**This Thursday 29 April and next Thursday 6 May** at 7.30pm in St John's Hall...and also on **Thursday 3 and 10 June** (same time and same venue) .... **please make contact with Fr Jock** by phone or email if you wish to have a child baptised and would like to enrol for the course.

## **Benediction (Livestreamed and also open to all parishioners) – Thursday 29 April - 7pm – St John’s**

**Deacon Eddie writes:** ‘This week, you are warmly invited to join us in St John’s on Thursday at 7pm for Benediction. The service last no more than 30 minutes and will have a balance of hymns, of prayers and readings, and silent adoration.

Everyone is warmly invited to come along, particularly if you have never been to benediction before.

This is an invitation open to all people, of ALL ages too.

Pope St John Paul II made a plea that such Eucharistic Adoration should become a “habitual practice in all Christian communities” with a promise that “in the Bread which came down from heaven, the family will be able to find the support that will keep it united in the face of today’s threats and will preserve it as a bastion of life, steadfast against the culture of death.”

Whether for the family of our community or our own families at home, this unique time in history in the face of the pandemic presents many challenges for many people and families.

If you are able to join us on Thursday, you are welcome and no pre-booking is required.

If you would like to know anything else about the Benediction service, you can contact me on [ewhite@outlook.com](mailto:ewhite@outlook.com) on 07986015772.’

## **A Mass to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Fr Norman Cooper’s Death – St John’s – Thursday 20 May – 7pm**

Fr Norman was a much-loved assistant priest in St John’s in the early 1980’s, who tragically fell to his death on 20 May 1996, climbing in the Cuillins in Skye, while away for a short midweek break in Applecross with his ‘support group’ of priests (including Fr Jock). If you would like to attend, please email ([stjohnsandstmarymagdalenes@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnsandstmarymagdalenes@gmail.com)) or ring (0131 669 5447) the parishes’ administrator, Enrico, from Wednesday 10am onwards to book a place.

## **St John’s Church Portobello Easter Treasure Trail**

### **During Eastertide, searching for the young at heart!**

**Pat Whyte and Lynda Kazimoglu write:** ‘Have you challenged yourself to our treasure trail yet? An excellent adventure for all ages, this easy loop of Portobello will have you spotting parts of our beautiful community you hadn’t noticed before. Why not include it in your daily exercise while we are still living under some restrictions. We are looking forward to warmer weather and lighter hearts, let’s all get into the swing of things. Take in the beauty of our lovely surroundings, the Promenade, the High Street, the history. Grab a hot/cold drink at one of the many fine cafes, or have a picnic on the beach, sit on the wall, watch the world go by. Go on, give it a go - you know you want to!

The entry form was attached to last weeks’ newsletter, but it is still available by clicking the [link](#) (and hard copies can be obtained from the Parish House) and send some of photographs of your adventure.... **There is still time to enter as the deadline has been extended to next Friday 30 April 2021 ...’**

## **BOOKING PLACES AT MASS**

To help us to manage the numbers, if you wish to come to one of the ‘live’ Saturday and Sunday Masses, please contact the parish house (NB THIS WEEKEND ONLY THE 9.30AM AND EXTRA 4.30PM MASS ARE BOOKABLE).

**by phone (0131 669 5618 – a special number) only on**

**Wednesday 10am to 1pm - Thursday 10am to 1pm - Friday 11am to 1pm** or by email ([stjohnsandstmarymagdalenes@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnsandstmarymagdalenes@gmail.com)) **until Friday 1pm.** After every Mass in one

of our Churches, ‘deep cleaning’ has to take place – something that takes a considerable length of time and effort. We are so incredibly grateful to our welcomers, stewards and

cleaners who are making it possible for us to have our churches open – **and always open to new volunteers.**) Please also be aware that you will need to utilize hand sanitisers as you come into and leave the church, and masks must be worn throughout the service.

Due to the COVID regulations we have limited seatings available and therefore **we advise early booking.**



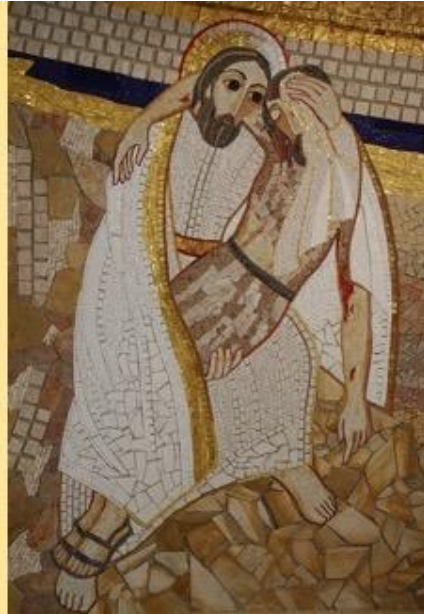
## From Archbishop Leo's Weekly Ad Clerum

**The 50-capacity restriction on places of worship in Scotland is being changed from Monday 26 April.** Capacity will be determined by the size of your church, with the continued requirement of 2 metre physical distancing. Registering the attendees at each Mass and the other mitigations of face coverings, hand sanitiser and one-way systems etc. will still be necessary. It means bigger churches will be able to welcome more people to Mass, which is very good news. Places of worship will be expected to undertake a building assessment to determine capacity. The Scottish Government is developing new guidance on this and I will update you with it when details are issued.

**Weddings/Funerals** - From 26 April the maximum capacity at both weddings and funerals will rise to 50 (it is currently 5 for weddings and 20 for funerals).

**“Being Christian is not first of all a doctrine or a moral ideal; it is the living relationship with him, with the Risen Lord: we look at him, we touch him, we are nourished by him and, transformed by his love, we look at, touch and nourish others as brothers and sisters.”**

(Pope Francis, 18/04/2021)



### THIS WEEK

**Saturday 24 April – Vigil Mass - 6.30pm – St John’s – few seats still available**

#### **Sunday 25 April**

9.30am – St John’s – **Mass** – **fully booked** (livestreamed)

11am – Prayer Room - **Mass** (pre-recorded, streamed)

11.15am – St Mary Magdalene’s – **Mass** – **fully booked**

#### **Monday 26 April**

10.00am – St John’s – **Mass** (livestreamed, no booking required)

4.30pm – Skype – **PEP Group Meeting**.

7-8.15pm – **Zoom Meeting – Gospel Sharing and Reflection – Open to All** - to join in over Zoom, go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87509903551?pwd=NWNXd0xwc2k5NzdqTTJJEV0s3Y3pIUT09>

#### **Tuesday 27 April**

5.30pm – **St John’s Fabric Committee Meeting**

7.00pm – Prayer Room – **Mass** (livestreamed)

**Wednesday 28 April - 10.00am – St John’s – Mass** (livestreamed, no booking required)

#### **Thursday 29 April**

10.00am – St Mary Magdalene’s – **Mass** (livestreamed, no booking required)

7.00pm – St John’s – **Benediction** (open to all)

7.30pm – St John’s Hall – **Baptism Preparation Course** (and Thursday 6 May)

#### **Friday 30 April**

10.00am - St John’s – **Mass** (livestreamed, no booking required)

11am - **Rosary Group** – ‘Anyone can join, especially if you have Facebook Messenger, but also on WhatsApp, or just on the phone. Sometimes it takes time for us all to join in, but we always manage. Please join us. Message Maria Igoe on 07981333219 or [mariaigoe@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mariaigoe@yahoo.co.uk)’

**Saturday 1 May - 6.30pm – St John’s – Family Mass** (livestreamed)

**Sunday 2 May**

9.30pm – St John’s – **Mass** (livestreamed) (**See notice above**)

11.00am – Prayer Room – **Mass** (pre-recorded, streamed)

11.15am – St Mary Magdalene’s – **Family Mass** (**by invitation only**)

4.30pm – St John’s – **Mass** (booking required)

**Next Saturday – 1 May – is the Feast of St Joseph the Worker**



**PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH THE WORKER**

*O glorious Joseph!*

*Who concealed your incomparable and regal dignity of custodian of Jesus and of the Virgin Mary under the humble appearance of a craftsman and provided for them with your work, protect with loving power your children, especially entrusted to you.*

*You know their anxieties and sufferings, because you yourself experienced them at the side of Jesus and of His Mother.*

*Do not allow them, oppressed by so many worries, to forget the purpose for which they were created by God.*

*Do not allow the seeds of distrust to take hold of their immortal souls.*

*Remind all the workers that in the fields, in factories, in mines, and in scientific laboratories,*

*they are not working, rejoicing, or suffering alone, but at their side is Jesus, with Mary, His Mother and ours, to sustain them,*

*to dry the sweat of their brow, giving value to their toil.*

*Teach them to turn work into a very high instrument of sanctification as you did.*

*Amen.*

**NOTICEBOARD**

**A Note from Justice and Peace Group**

**Jim Roarty writes about their finances for 2020-2021:** ‘Normally, we present our finances at the J and P open annual general meeting, but these are not normal times so we thought we would put a brief summary in the newsletter.

The figures can be seen below.



Opening Balance	<b>£742</b>		
Gift Aid Tax Refund from HMRC	£939	Bethany Overnight Welcome Centre food costs	£963
Hunger for Justice Fund (regular donations)	£564	Donations	
Other donations	£2426	- Bethany	£1631
		- UNHCR (Yemen Appeal)	£500
		- St Teresa’s Foodbank	£165
		Closing Balance	<b>£1412</b>

You have responded very generously to our newsletter appeals for Bethany Christian Trust, so as well as being able to pay for the food we serve at the Overnight Welcome Centre for homeless people, we have been able to support Bethany’s work directly.



Our Hunger for Justice Fund has a small number of people contributing a few pounds per month by Standing Order. If you would like to do likewise to support the work of the Group, please me ([jimroarty4@gmail.com](mailto:jimroarty4@gmail.com), 0131 669 0896) who will be very happy to give you a form to fill in.

We are also a registered charity which enables us to claim Gift Aid from those nice people at HM Customs & Revenue who have given us almost £4700 since we registered. If you are donating and haven't already done so (and are eligible), please sign a Gift Aid form to enable us to get more free money!'

### **Communion for the Housebound**

As the Covid situation eases slightly and more of us have been vaccinated, and in response to requests from some of our housebound parishioners keen to receive the Sacrament, a few Eucharistic visits have resumed. These are carried out, of course, under strict guidelines - sanitising, face masks and social distancing maintained as far as is possible. If anyone else wishes to resume - and it is very much the case that both the housebound parishioner and the Eucharistic Minister should be happy to do so - please contact Fr Jock or Jim Roarty/Una Gallagher.

### **Supporting STEKA Children's Home and the St John's Tower Fund all at the Same Time.**

*'Ten sponsors (3 dresses for £10) = £100 is all we require to meet our target of £900.00 for the Tower Appeal. You can make payment to the specially-set up bank account (sort code 608371, acc. no. 02772692) or you may hand your envelope to the Parish House (please write "Dresses" on it).'*

### **A Reflection - Sins of Omission and Commission**

*'More than a few people today believe that the Church need to rediscover the strong sense of sin that was a feature of its pre-Vatican 2 persona. I don't know if I agree with such a view.*

*Yes, there was a strong sense – but there was also a rather narrow and individualistic understanding of sin, along with a focus almost entirely of sins of commission – ie wrongful actions. It resulted in lives that tended to be lived with an 'is it a sin?' mentality rather than ones where the focus was conscious desire to try to live the good life, a life of virtue*

*For me, one of the most positive outcomes of the Second Vatican Council has been a much more positive approach to morality: the world was seen to have been created good, and to have been redeemed: the vocation of the Christian was to make Jesus' love visible in the world by living a life of love oneself. With this approach came a stress of freedom as one of the great endowments of the human race, and a well-formed conscience as the ultimate moral norm – ie a recognition of the need for people to develop consciences which would help them base their decisions on gospel values and the spirit of Christ.*

*This new approach is more not less demanding; and one aspect is that it focuses more on sin and virtue as internal dispositions – and gives equal weight to sins of omission (those sins one commits by failing to do something) as of commission.*

*The question is no longer 'what thing must I not do?' – rather it is 'what must I do?' or even 'what can I do?', morality as creative goodness, or as Bernard Haring, the great Redemptorist moral theologian, defined it – 'fidelity to the human vocation of love'.'*

(Found by Fr Jock while clearing out some papers – sadly, he has been unable to discover the source)

### **Mary's Meal news**

**From their bulletin:** 'Since our humble beginnings, Mary's Meals, named after Mary the Mother of Jesus, has been built on a foundation of prayer and the many little acts of love from those who support us.



This May, the month traditionally dedicated to Our Lady, we invite you to join us in prayer to celebrate the wonderful work of Mary's Meals and give thanks that we are now reaching more than 1.8 million children with a nutritious meal in 19 countries every school day. We also pray for God's

continued blessing on our beautiful mission, that through His providence it will always flourish, enabling us to reach more hungry children.

You could offer your prayerful support in a number of ways such as praying the Rosary for our work.

You will find inspirational resources for our Pray In May campaign, including our prayer card, on [our website](#) or do [get in touch](#) if you would like to arrange a talk for your church about our work.

Thank you for remembering Mary's Meals in your prayers. God bless you all.'

## *REVELATION COMES IN TWO VOLUMES: THAT OF THE BIBLE AND THAT OF NATURE*

*(St Thomas Aquinas 1225-74)*

Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline (24 hours)

☎ 0800 027 1234

### PARISH REGISTER

**Welcome to the world....Zachary, born on 4 March, a little brother for Aria, a son for Venetia and Andrew Cowie, and a grandson for James and Sue Shepherd.**

*Please pray for those who have died recently: Isa McAfferty, Jon Kelly, Kathleen Kay, Pat Hogan (née Thorp) and Frank Judd*

*Please pray for those whose anniversaries occur around this time: Teresa Cannon, Nicola Murrey, William Sellar, Margot Tweedie and Bill Cheyne*

**St John's: Apr.24:-** Harry McGroarty (2005); Helen Loftus (1972); John Bell; **Apr.25:-** Beatrice Lawler (1993); Alice Ashburner; Peggie Desmond; **Apr.26:-** Tanya Simpson (2020); Margaret Connelly (2003); **Apr.27:-** Mary Robertson (1983); James Passmore (1978); William Corrigan; Hans Janik; **Apr.28:-** Teresa Cannon (2018); Margot Tweedie (2013); Christopher Rourke (1995); **Apr.29:-** Iain Wilson (2008); Marion Holligan (2002); Keith Rostant (20010; Jean Flucker (1995); Alexander Hunter (1968); **St Mary Magdalene's: Apr.28:-** Stan Brown (2000); **Apr.29:-** George Cockburn (1995);

**Sick Parishioners - St. John's:** Mike Iannarelli, Ernie Moran, Chloe Sutherland, May Thomson, Joyce Martin, Norah Bruce, Patricia Lawler, James Curnyn, Celia Stone, Eddie Clark, Margaret MacLeod, Sheena Sivell, Catherine Walker, Andrew Farmer, Joyce Martin, Ruth Viso, Mary Grady, Susan Cammach, Pauli Walker, Dolores Jones, Evelyn Oldershaw, Anna Butler, May Flynn, Vincent Knowles, John Cregan, young Saoirse Golden, John Whyte, Frances Cunningham, David Reid, Frank Logan, Charlotte McGregor, Betty Dougal, Anne Thomson, Eileen Brown, Mike Noonan, Sarah McManus, Mike Burns, Sr Jennifer Lindsay, Maureen Low, Pat Hunter, Alan Blyth, Mary Slight, Mary Phair, Rose Thornton, Kitty Dykes, Norman Telfer, Philip Jamieson, Alf MacNamara, Maureen Lawrie, Kathie Gallagher, Erin Corbett, Roz Byers, Marie Angela Crolla and Lorraine Syme.

**Sick Parishioners - St. Mary Magdalene's:** Mgr Tony Duffy, Graham Neilson, Sheila and George Service, Chris English, Jacqueline Marinello, Ray Donnelly, Sam Burns, Clive Davis, Ella Ayers, Isobel Phillips, Denis Davidson, Margaret Duffy, Maria Scott Jnr, Louise Gorman, Ann Dockrell, John Prior, John Newell, Michael McPhillips, Bridget Malone, Charles Malcolm, Margaret Ryan, Jacqueline Hannan, Julie Keegan, Rose McKay, Laurie Wallace, Annie Watson, David O'Donnell, Andrew Banks, Jude Ferguson, and Mary and James Muir.

**Please pray for sick friends and relatives of parishioners, including:** Ray Perrett, William Young, Nick Koning, Kerry Horn, Ann Thorp, John Mackenzie, Alistair Grieves, Tonino Howard, Jimmy McBride, baby Josh Simpson, Maureen McEvoy, Helen McCann, Rhoda Tumboli, Dani Miniette, Marina and Maria Calanna, Alec Hamill, Peter Millar, Annabelle Cervantes, Nan Doig, Rachel Kennedy, Leo Stone, Dago Dinis, baby Baxter Sweeney, Sr May Lewis, Joan Murray Hamilton, Sr Margaret Mary, Billy McPhillips, Jean Nelson, Margaret Anne Marton, Betty Blyth, Lauren Fitzpatrick, Fr Christy Fox, Joe Greenan, Michael Igoe, Katie McAnenny, Robert Shaw, baby Kinsley McMillan, John Walsh, Moira McConville, Margaret and Victoria Roddam, John Williams, Clare Richardson, Karen MacKay, Laura Anderson, Gloria Crolla, Richard Reid, James O'Rourke, Tommy Muir, Janice Todd, Lauli Ridge, Seval Kazimoglu, Anne Young, James Shepherd, Carla Zanetti, Peter Hanley, Jennifer Kay, Janie Low, Ranier Carpo, Marie Baird, Andrew Franklin, Frank Palmer, Paul Henderson, Ellen Green, Andrew Preston, Jamie Mitchell, Eunice Macdonald, Peter Bromley, Audrey Burgess, Kathleen Cawley, Margo Law, Misia Jack, Hannah Muldoon, Emma Bromet, Edward Caulfield, Igor Rekowski, Diana Hibbert, Joan Brooks, Mary Turnbull, Stuart Falconer, and young Ray Donovan Syme

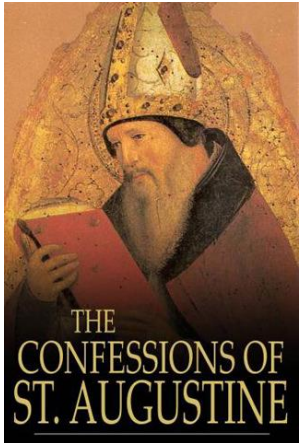
#### Offertory Collections – 18 April 2021

St Mary Magdalene	St John the Evangelist
£181.20 total including Offertory of £136.20 and Gift Aid of £45.00	£1,859.65 total including Offertory of £992.25, Gift Aid of £247.40 and £620.00 Online Donations

*Thank You*

# FINDING THE HIDDEN TREASURE by Benignus O'Rourke

## Chapter 14 – Coming Home



The journey inward which Augustine invites us to make is a kind of homecoming. For Augustine, the heart is not the place of emotions but the place of richest, deepest thought and peace. It is the centre of our being, where we are totally ourselves, our deepest selves. In allowing ourselves to wander outside, we lose touch with ourselves. *'Why do you want to drift so far away from yourself?' he asks. 'Turn back from your idle wandering. Return to your Lord. He is waiting. You have become a stranger to yourself. You do not recognise yourself. And you seek for Him who created you!'*

If we are a long way from ourselves, he is saying, how can we come near to God? To return is to find our true home, to find our paradise on earth.

This is a bold promise. But Augustine's reason for making it is that when we journey inward it is not just our true self that we find. We find God who has made his home within us.

When we return to our hearts, we find rest and peace within in that place of solitude where Christ awaits us to welcome us home.

So, at the start of our journey, we need to call ourselves back from wandering outside ourselves, from always searching outside for happiness and truth. Our opening prayer could be Augustine's *'Come, O Lord, and stir our hearts. Call us back to yourself. Kindle your fire in us and carry us away. Let us scent your fragrance and taste your sweetness. Bid us love you and hasten to your side.'*

Then we try to let our thoughts settle. We cease from effort and allow God to take over. It is a long journey, but he will do everything.

This is a form of prayer, Abbot Chapman reminds us, in which God does all while we wait and wonder.

*'Consequently, give yourself to prayer, when you can, and trust in God that he will lead you, without your choosing your path. Wait for pressure from him. Do not act unless you must. Let him take the initiative ... If you cannot pray in the least, and only waste time, and moon, and wander, still hold on.'* He also tells us: *'It is better to remain with God, apparently doing nothing in particular, than to make the grandest and most elaborate meditations'* (Chapman Letters).

## Chapter 15 – Trying to do all the Right Things

The first time she was introduced to silent prayer a teacher friend of mine in Stafford had a great sense of coming home to God. *'When I came to pray before, all the tenseness in my life seemed to be accentuated. I had had 40 years in a classroom of difficult children,'* she explained, *'and anxiety each evening nursing an elderly relative.'*

*'I was trying to do all the "right" things to reach God and to come into his presence - formal rosaries and litanies, and daily Mass - plus going through stages of adoration, contrition, thanksgiving and supplication. It all depended on me, and my efforts and my concentration. I was exhausted, felt isolated and cut off from the Church, resentment possessing me, faith draining away.'*

*'The first time I tried still prayer, after hearing a talk explaining it, I could not believe the relief as that tension began to melt away. Gradually as I moved into stillness and relaxation, I forgot all about myself, aware only of God's presence in the sound of the wind in the trees, in the sound of the birds. And traffic noises seemed very far away. The more I tried, the more did I feel a part of God's creation, and that it mattered to God that I was there, in it.'*

*'I have now become increasingly aware of the presence of God in the very centre of my being, sustaining me, giving me life. But it is not just a presence. I am aware of a deeply personal relationship, a very intimate and loving relationship with this great God. It is a very real relationship, such that I could not have with anyone else. 'At this moment of prayer, I think it is the only time I am completely honest with God, not trying to be anyone else, to compete with anyone else, not having to hide anything at all from him. I am finding a new freedom from all the things that fastened me down before - resentments, shyness, self-centredness. And above all it is giving me new faith and trust. It brings life and colour to all the other times when I pray, especially during the Liturgy of the Hours and Mass.'*



*'Silent prayer has become a "must" in my life because it seems that God has not only taken over my prayer time for me, but my life as well, healing me of all that has gone before. I feel I have come home to God. All wretchedness seems to dissolve away in his life-giving presence.'*

## **A Reflection on the Gospel for the Fourth Sunday of Easter John 10: 11-18**

Just over a week ago I attended hospital for a cardiac procedure - the first of three which are aimed at giving me a better quality of life. I have nothing but praise for the staff who looked after me. Yes, they were tired and overworked, yes there were times when everything seemed to be frenetic but the quality of the care I received was absolutely superb. I witnessed again the wonderful example of people who do work they are proud of, who care for those in their charge, who work for the love of what they do rather than the lure of a bulging pay-slip. They are answering a call.

In the kitchen we have a very old oil-fired Aga. She came from a farmhouse in Cornwall and was originally solid fuel, subsequently converted to oil. She was here when we came and we quickly learned that she appreciates care and attention. She is serviced twice a year and in return works effectively and well - cut down on her servicing and she becomes quite temperamental. She appreciates her biannual facial and manicure! Two different engineers come to attend to her - and they could not be more different. The one cuts as many corners as he can and leaves with little regard for the soot and carbon that is left behind, the second is an absolute delight. He takes great care and attention, every piece is carefully removed, cleaned and re-assembled and every last speck of dirt is meticulously removed. I would never argue that one could have a calling to be an Aga service engineer but we all have a calling to take pride in whatever we turn our hands to.

In today's Gospel Jesus contrasts the attitude of the hireling with that of the good shepherd. He points out the obvious: the hired man takes pride neither in his work nor in himself. He does not care about the sheep in his charge - he is just a hired man. For the good shepherd, minding the sheep is more than a job - it's a way of life, a vocation. He knows the sheep and he is prepared to do all in his power to protect them.

The good shepherd loves his work. He is interested in his work and dedicated to it. This doesn't necessarily make the job easier. If anything, it makes the job harder because he does it more thoroughly and diligently. He brings more energy to his work and is consequently freer. He enjoys the wage at the end of the week or month but he enjoys his labours, too.

Many of us are fortunate enough to have paid employment. In that sense, we are all hirelings. We may have the perfect job and we may experience real contentment, or we may feel trapped in a dead end job; we may feel undervalued or taken for granted. If we leave those feelings unattended we will very quickly become withered and dried up, bitter and resentful. We will lose pride in our work and ultimately we lose pride in ourselves. If, however, we can bring a spirit of love and service to our work; if we can take pride in our performance especially when it goes unrecognised and unacknowledged - then we are showing the traits of the good shepherd. We cease to be hirelings and we become worthy of our calling as co-creators with God in making this world a better, happier place. Honest toil, done with a happy heart, makes the bread we put on our table taste as sweet as honey.

The challenge is to stop seeing ourselves as hirelings. We don't have to go through life with this mentality. No-one wants a heart that is bitter and twisted by resentment and ill-feeling. Such thoughts corrode our souls. Let us resolve to be like good shepherds who, no matter how menial the task, apply ourselves diligently and caringly, showing ourselves to be people who are generous of heart.