

Closing prayer

Leader: Through the resurrection of Jesus,
God has redeemed us and made us his children.
All: **May he bless us with joy.**
Leader: The Redeemer has given us lasting freedom.
All: **May we inherit his everlasting life.**
Leader: By faith we rose with him in baptism.
All: **May our lives be holy,
so that we will be united with him for ever.
Amen.**

(Adapted from Solemn Blessing for Second Sunday of Easter)

Stewardship link

Stewardship invites us to look at time as one of God's gifts to us. Time spent in prayer is essential to our being formed into good Stewards.

To do

Consider how you spend your time in the coming week. Ask yourself if you are happy with the way you divide your time (e.g. work, family and friends, praying, sleeping, eating...)

Notice what works best for you in finding time to pray. Perhaps you can experiment with a new routine and see if that is helpful for you. Similarly, experiment with a method of prayer you have not tried before.

Take some time to note your responses in your notebook.

Diocese of Portsmouth Stewardship Reflection 4th Sunday of Easter Year C

‘The sheep that belong to me
listen to my voice.’

(John 10:27)

Opening prayer

Leader:
Let us pray
that Christ our shepherd
will lead us through the difficulties of this life.

Response:
**Almighty and ever-living God,
give us new strength
from the courage of Christ our shepherd,
and lead us to join the saints in heaven,
where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.**

(Opening Prayer for Fourth Sunday of
Easter)



To share

What insights have you had in the last week? Is there something in your notebook that you would like to share with others in the group?

To listen

John 10:27-30

To think about

The shepherd is a very potent image in the Gospels. Not only was a shepherd responsible for the safety of his flock, but his voice was known to his own sheep even when the flocks were all mixed up. He did not use a sheepdog to round them up; instead they recognised their own shepherd, even when different shepherds were calling their own flocks, and would follow him.

Shepherds lived on the edges of society - it is no surprise therefore that they were among the first to hear the angels' message at Christmas. There is a strong tradition in the Old Testament of God as the shepherd of his people.

To reflect on

What does Jesus mean when he says 'the sheep that belong to me listen to me; I know them and they follow me'?

How do you feel about being likened to a flock of sheep? Do you feel pride in being a unique individual and reject the anonymity of being one in a great crowd of Jesus' followers? Or do you find something comforting about knowing we are not alone on our journey as disciples?

How can we ensure we spend time becoming familiar with Jesus? What part does prayer play in your life?

To discuss

How we spend our time is often a strong indicator of our priorities. When you think about how you spend your time, what are the non-negotiables in your day and what are the things that get sidelined when time is short?

Where does spending time with God, in prayer, come in your priorities?

What helps you to make time for prayer?

How far do you think the parish / Pastoral Area really does listen to the voice of Jesus Christ? Why? What might happen if it listened even more closely?

What do you do when you pray? (As you share your responses to this question, be alert for any ways of praying mentioned by others that you might like to try.)

