

### Living the Word: Psalm 23

The intimacy of David's language is noticeable here. Not 'The Lord is a shepherd', or 'The Lord is our shepherd', but 'The Lord is my shepherd'. David knows the Lord of all creation not as a distant higher power, but as his shepherd. He knows this God personally, as the one in whom he can put his trust. David can be at peace, because he can entrust every day, every step, to the one who guides his feet, and leads him along right paths. Sometimes what lies ahead will be tranquil, and full of joy – the green pastures and the still waters; sometimes what lies ahead will be far harder – the darkest valley, even death itself. But wherever that path leads, David declares to God, 'you are with me'. We too can trust God with our life, and with our death, knowing that he is our Good Shepherd. For in Christ, he has walked our path ahead of us, and laid down his life for us, so that we might dwell in his house forever.

### Elements of the Mass: Tabernacle

The word Tabernacle literally means a 'dwelling place' or 'tent'. In the Old Testament this would be the tent of meeting or the tent in which the Ark of the Covenant was stored. In churches the Tabernacle is where the Blessed Sacrament is stored. It can be a very elaborate or very simple large locked box placed upon the main altar of the church or on a side altar. The Tabernacle might be highly decorated in itself but very often it is covered with cloth made in various liturgical colours (but never black). Inside the Tabernacle there is a silk curtain behind which the Blessed Sacrament is placed and the box is lined in white cloth or silk.

This is reminiscent of the Jerusalem Temple where the Holy of Holies is found behind the curtain. It is normal in churches where there is a Tabernacle for people to genuflect towards it in honour the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. It contains the most precious thing to be found in each church, the Blessed Sacrament, it is thus central to our life of worship and faith.

21<sup>st</sup> April 2024

Fourth Sunday of Easter



In today's Gospel the Lord Jesus speaks of intimacy with his flock; he is bound to them and they to him. It is a relationship of such communion and closeness that 'no one will ever steal them' from him. The imagery of shepherd and sheep speaks profoundly to the Church of the in-dwelling intimacy of the Father and the Son in the love they share, the Holy Spirit. As the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity each live for and in the other in the ecstasy of divine self-giving, so the Church intimately partakes of Trinitarian Love through her union with Christ, the Good Shepherd. By laying down his life for the sheep, the Good Shepherd has opened up the very heart of God to those who wish to share in Trinitarian Life through the Paschal Mystery of Christ's dying and rising as it is lived in the Church. What the Good Shepherd has won for his flock is fullest participation in the very life of God.

*Today's Gospel: St John 10:11-18*

### Collect

*Almighty ever-living God, lead us to a share in the joys of heaven, so that the humble flock may reach where the brave Shepherd has gone before. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.*