

Sermon Summary

4th Sunday in Easter

29th April 2012

- We all understand the differences between promises which are made and promises which are delivered thanks to our electoral system.
- The Good Shepherd parables look as though they are promises which are made- and will take place in due course.
- They should however be read as *mashalim*, that is, Hebrew parables which often function as a commentary on the story in which they are placed.
- When this is done, the Good Shepherd is seen to be a collection of promises which have been made:
- Knowledge and intimacy with God and Jesus as seen in hearing and recognising the voice of the Shepherd.
- The scattering of the sheep – when Jesus is arrested.
- Not one of them being lost- as in the arrest.
- The Shepherd laying down his life for the sheep- in the Passion.
- All of this is designed to give us increased confidence in God; what he promises has been done, and may be done again.
- It reminds us, too, that talk about God and talk about how our lives are changed because of our faith will have a much greater effect on others if they are borne out by lived experience and practice.
- So we thank God for the various church and parish programmes which convey the love of God in this way, and for the many spontaneous acts of kindness through which Christians affect the lives of those around them.

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