



## FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

25<sup>th</sup> April 2021

### World Day of Prayer for Vocations

Saint Joseph suggests to us *three key words* for each individual's vocation. The first is *dream*. Everyone dreams of finding fulfilment in life. We rightly nurture great hopes, lofty aspirations that ephemeral goals - like success, money and entertainment - cannot satisfy. If we were to ask people to express in one word their life's dream, it would not be difficult to imagine the answer: "to be loved". It is love that gives meaning to life, because it reveals life's mystery. Indeed, we only *have* life if we *give* it; we truly possess it only if we generously give it away. Saint Joseph has much to tell us in this regard, because, through the dreams that God inspired in him, he made of his life a gift.

The Gospels tell us of four dreams. They were calls from God, but they were not easy to accept. After each dream, Joseph had to change his plans and take a risk, sacrificing his own plans in order to follow the mysterious designs of God, whom he trusted completely. We may ask ourselves, "Why put so much trust in a dream in the night?" Although a dream was considered very important in ancient times, it was still a small thing in the face of the concrete reality of life. Yet Saint Joseph let himself be guided by his dreams without hesitation. Why? Because his heart was directed to God; it was already inclined towards him. A small indication was enough for his watchful "inner ear" to recognize God's voice. This applies also to our calling: God does not like to reveal himself in a spectacular way, pressuring our freedom. He conveys his plans to us with gentleness. He does not overwhelm us with dazzling visions but quietly speaks in the depths of our heart, drawing near to us and speaking to us through our thoughts and feelings. In this way, as he did with Saint Joseph, he sets before us profound and unexpected horizons.

Indeed, Joseph's dreams led him into experiences he would never have imagined. The first of these upended his betrothal, but made him the father of the Messiah; the second caused him to flee to Egypt, but saved the life of his family. After the third, which foretold his return to his native land, a fourth dream made him change plans once again, bringing him to Nazareth, the place where Jesus would begin his preaching of the Kingdom of God. Amid all these upheavals, he found the courage to follow God's will. So too in a vocation: God's call always urges us to take a first step, to

give ourselves, to press forward. There can be no faith without risk. Only by abandoning ourselves confidently to grace, setting aside our own programmes and comforts, can we truly say "yes" to God. And every "yes" bears fruit because it becomes part of a larger design, of which we glimpse only details, but which the divine Artist knows and carries out, making of every life a masterpiece. In this regard, Saint Joseph is an outstanding example of acceptance of God's plans. Yet his was an *active acceptance*: never reluctant or resigned. Joseph was "certainly not passively resigned, but courageously and firmly proactive" (*Patris Corde*, 4). May he help everyone, especially young people who are discerning, to make God's dreams for them come true. May he inspire in them the courage to say "yes" to the Lord who always surprises and never disappoints. Pope Francis

### Annual Collection for the Priests' Training Fund

On the Fourth Sunday of Easter, Good Shepherd Sunday, we will pray for vocations to the priesthood, as well as for our seminarians at Allen Hall and the Beda College, and the priests of our diocese. Good Shepherd Sunday presents an opportunity when we can talk about the life of the priest and invite men to consider this wonderful and grace-filled vocation with its blessings and its crosses. As the result of the lockdown and the pandemic, there may be greater desire for some men to reflect on God's calling and to listen to the Holy Spirit.

I am also writing to ask your help in supporting the Priests' Training Fund with the annual appeal. The collection is due to take place on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> April, and I would most grateful if you would share this important appeal with your parishioners on the weekend of Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> April and Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> April.

I am very conscious that the pandemic has affected everyone's finances and especially those of our parishioners who have been very generous in many different ways. Please thank those who contribute generously, especially on an ongoing basis to this collection. This year we look forward to celebrating four ordinations to the priesthood and three ordinations to the diaconate for the diocese. The cost of the training these men will have been borne by the Priests' Training Fund.

### Shepherd and the Lamb

Israel's mission—to be God's instrument of salvation to the ends of the earth—is fulfilled in the Church.

By the "Word of God" that Paul and Barnabas preach in today's First Reading, a new covenant people is being born, a people who glorify the God of Israel as the Father of them all.

The Church for all generations remains faithful to the grace of God given to the Apostles and continues their saving work. Through the Church the peoples of every land hear the Shepherd's voice and follow

The Good Shepherd of today's Gospel is the enthroned Lamb of today's Second Reading. In laying down His life for His flock, the Lamb brought to fulfillment a new, by His blood freeing "every nation, race, people and tongue" from bondage to sin and death.

The Church is the "great multitude" John sees in his vision today. God swore to Abraham his descendants would be too numerous to count. And in the Church, as John sees, this promise is fulfilled.

The Lamb rules from the throne of God, sheltering His flock, feeding their hunger with His own Body and Blood, leading them to "springs of life-giving waters" that well up to eternal life.

The Lamb is the eternal Shepherd-King, the son of David foretold by the prophets. His Church is the kingdom of all Israel that the prophets said would be restored in an everlasting covenant.

It is not a kingdom any tribe or nation can jealously claim as theirs alone. The Shepherd's Word to Israel is addressed now to all lands, calling all to worship and bless His name in the heavenly temple.

This is the delight of the Gentiles—that we can sing the song that once only Israel could sing, today's joyful Psalm: "He made us, His we are—His people, the flock He tends."

Sat 24 <sup>th</sup>	6.30 pm	
Sun 25 <sup>th</sup>	8.30am 10.30am	Rachael Ward RIP Eleanor Sian RIP
Mon 26 <sup>th</sup>	7pm	
Tue 27 <sup>th</sup>	No mass	
Wed 28 <sup>th</sup>	10am	
Thu 29 <sup>th</sup>	No mass	St. Catherine of Siena
Fri 30 <sup>th</sup>	No mass	A day of abstinence

*Please note that mass intentions as set out above may not always be read out, but the intention is offered.*

**Holy Hour:** Saturday 5.15 - 6.15 pm

**Confessions:** Saturday 5.45 - 6.15 pm

Or by appointment with Fr. Denis

**Family Mass:** 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday 10.30 am

#### **PARISH MASS ON-LINE**

*Fr. Denis is also still celebrating Mass online at 6.30 pm every Saturday night for the Vigil Mass, & Wednesday morning Mass at 10am. Both are accessible through the Parish Facebook page:*

*Catholic Church of the Holy Trinity and St Augustine of Canterbury*

*For more information, please go to the Parish website <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/baldock>*

#### **BOOKING TO ATTEND MASS IN PERSON**

For all services in Church, you need to book online, through our website below. If the Mass is

full, the signing in book at the back of church cannot be used.

#### **THE WEDNESDAY WORD IS AVAILABLE VIA THIS LINK:**

<http://www.wednesdayword.org/school/index.htm>

**ST. JOHN'S SCHOOL** is our Catholic Parish Primary School. Please contact the Head teacher, Thomas Timson on 01462 892478 to make an appointment. The school website is:

<http://www.stjohns4.herts.sch.uk/index.html>

#### **RC HOSPITAL CHAPLAIN**

Contact Tel: Mobile: 07876 526935 Lister 01438 285518.

#### **PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS:**



We pray especially for the sick of the parish and for those who care for and support them, especially, Alastair McCallion, Karen O'Shaughnessy, Angela Gray, Mairead Kirke, and Dick Worbey. We remember those who have died recently; Anna Sokal, and all those whose anniversaries occur about this time: Elizabeth Dunne; June Mason; Charles Canty; Peter Dejkalo; Pamela Prior; Peter King; Eliza Impey; Elizabeth McClennan; Martin Conway; Margaret Hesse.

#### **CHURCHES FINANCES & COLLECTION**

A word of thanks to all those who have donated for the upkeep of the Parish in one way or another. There are several ways to support the Parish. One of them is via a standing order, which is easy to set up and easy to stop, if you want to, when this difficult period has passed. Please use the bank account details, available from our website below, to set up the standing order if you use online banking, or you can write to, telephone or visit your bank as well. You can also donate via the website. Or, of course, you can contribute after mass in the Collection Plates provided.

<https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/baldock/donate/>.

*Fr. Denis would like to thank everyone for their generosity during this time of pandemic.*

#### **PLANNED GIVING & GIFT AID**

The envelopes for use from 11th April are available on a table at the Lady Altar side of Church. If you are a UK tax payer and would like to Gift Aid your donation, please speak to Father Denis, Catherine or any member of the Finance Committee. Thank you for your continuing support to parish finances, especially during this very challenging past year.