

# TRINITY NEWS

## Easter III The Shepherd of Israel as a Model of Compassion

Whenever I think of the model of shepherd I think of my grandfather Edward Neils Rodgers Falk. He was such an indestructible man that I never thought of him ever dying. He thought of it because I heard him talking to my eldest daughter when I was in the adjacent room. He said to Sharon, "You will always remember your grandfather won't you?" Sometimes he would be gone for several months with his horse-drawn van and several riding horses tethered to it as he went along. I always associated him with sheep and cattle. He travelled many miles in the "long paddock" as we called it. That is, the territory owned by the government called "crown land" on either side of the road, sometimes extending to vast open fields. The Shepherd of Israel was one of the most beloved terms for God in the Jewish Scriptures. The shepherd with his flock was used as a model for the greatest Shepherd of all. That Shepherd's flock was a human one, certainly far less pliant than placid sheep munching on the grass where it could be found on grandfather's journeys. I met a shepherd in Kent one day whose family had been looking after the small farm for 500 years. The model of shepherd is much older.

It is interesting that Christ felt that he had inherited the tradition of the Shepherd of Israel. He was not only a shepherd but the Good Shepherd. That is, a shepherd who did not fall under the censure of the false shepherds in Israel who drew caustic and sharp on comments from the prophets.

The most enduring symbol of Bishop in the Church is not the amethyst ring or the pectoral cross, but the pastoral staff. A Bishop carries the staff in the left hand with the curved portion at the top facing forward. It is only turned back towards the Bishop who carries it in procession after a funeral because the pastoral care is over for that particular person. They are now in the hands of God, as they have always been.

Jesus says that he knows his own flock by name. We pass through life calling on the name of God, listening to the still small voice that calls out to us, resonating within. One of the marks of the true shepherd is that the members of the flock who follow the leader know the shepherd's voice. Voices are an identity signature. Trusted voices are music to our ears. By contrast, the harsh voice of manipulative anger destroys trust.

We should note the personal application that Christ gives to the notion of shepherd. The shepherd does not come as a stranger, though the Christ always carries about his person some of the divine incognito. Someone who is luminous with the presence of God brings something of the mystery of God in their person. Jesus says that the shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He even allows himself to be called the "Lamb of God". This is a personal perception that goes beyond the horizon of the usual concept of a shepherd. The Shepherd of Israel is coming to visit.

Bishop Arthur Jones

***NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:***

Acts 17:1-15; Psalm 66; 1 Peter 2: 1-10; John 14:1-14

**THIS WEEK:**

May 16, Monday.

- **Finance Meeting**, 5:30pm, Parish Office.
- **Vestry Meeting**, 6:30pm, Rectory

May 17, Tuesday.

- **Bible Study**, 10am.
- **Bible Study**, 7:15pm, @ the Tutton's (#3 Sta. Potenciana, Urdaneta Village)

May 19, Thursday.

- **Midweek Eucharist**, 10am, Chapel

**TO PLAN:**

May 26-29th, **Summer Youth Camp** in Bulacan. Assembly @ CHT, 2pm.