

# TRINITY NEWS

## Easter IV The Shepherd as a Lasting Image in a Troubled World

My grandfather Edward Neils Rodgers Falk of Danish stock was a shepherd who drove sheep and cattle on the stock routes in Australia in times of long droughts and at other times of insufficient rain for green pastures. He had many stories to tell of his exploits and we lapped them up when he came home. I have always found the stories about the Shepherd of Israel quite fascinating because of those background stories. The model of Shepherd was often used in Israel and a good example is in Ezekiel 34.

When Christ wanted to stress his care of those around him he used the Shepherd model in John 10:1-16. He called himself the good Shepherd to distinguish himself from those shepherds who were hirelings and did not care for the flock committed to their charge. **A mark of Jesus' teaching is that he talks about things that he is informed about. His visions of God are grounded in real life settings and examples.** He knew about shepherds in the hills around Nazareth and in the valley of Jezreel below. He tells us several things about shepherds in John 10:1-16. Remember that when he is talking about himself as the good shepherd he is also talking about the Shepherd of Israel, the one he called "My Father".

1. The good shepherd "lays down his life for the sheep". It requires a total commitment. A parent running into a fire at the risk of their own life in an attempt to save a child has that commitment. Parents are shepherds, often at great cost to them. "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13). The NRSV text turns it around to avoid saying "greater love has no **man** than this", but we get the drift. This text is on Anzac boards across Australia. It is about the sacrificial death of Christ, but it may be applied to soldiers and to anyone who lays down their life literally or in total service. Wendy Duke from Canberra was at Bataan with her sons on Thursday for the anniversary of the downing of the Black Cat Catalina A24-64 on December 14, 1944 near Bataan. Her father, James Robert Robinson, was a substitute on that flight from another Catalina and it cost him his life. She lost him at 5. James Henry Cox of my hometown of Warren was one of the crew of nine Australians. He was remembered on Anzac day yesterday in his hometown. The plane was never found.

2. The shepherd calls his own by name and they know his voice and follow him as he leads them out. The Risen Lord called Mary by name outside his tomb in a garden in John 20. She then recognised him instantly after thinking at first that he was the keeper of the garden. He appeared to those who knew him in the resurrection. He also knew them and built on his relationship with them in his appearances. It is not a meeting of strangers, but the renewal of personal ties in an awesome intimacy. "I know my own and my own know me." (10:14). This claim is a great assurance to us. **We were baptized by our name into a salvation that comes in His Name.** We would repeat his name every time we prayed all of our life. The sacrament of Holy Communion is given to the communicant by name if the priest or the one administering can remember it. The intimacy of Holy Communion with Christ may come in Spirit-touched bread and wine or in prayer and deep experiences or Scripture or in the silken touch of sunlight on a background of shimmering blue. Creator comes to enfold us in love at such times.

3. Jesus as the good shepherd extends his care to others outside those who followed him. They too would learn to know his voice. He is looking to expand his flock so that they also will know his voice and he can hear their voice. **The Christian faith once it is held in one's heart is only half-lived if it is not shared.** Jesus saw all of humanity coming together under the guidance of the Loving Shepherd. It was a prophetic hope in the time of Jesus and now it seems impossible, but "nothing is impossible for God". **Let us pray to the Good Shepherd to ease the pain of the troubled soul of our world. May the Shepherd be with us and to go before us and guide us in the way that leads to God.**

Bishop Arthur Jones

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## **THIS WEEK:**

**Tuesday, April 28.**

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

**Wednesday, April 29.**

- Bible study, 10 a.m.

**Thursday, April 30.**

- Midweek Eucharist, 10:00am, Chapel
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**Friday, May 1. LABOR DAY.**

**National Holiday. Office closed.**

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

Acts 8:26-40

Psalm 66

1 John 3:18-24

John 14:15-21