



**Newsletter for
week commencing
26 April 2026**

**Fourth Sunday
of Easter (A)
Vocations
Sunday**

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Gospel Reflection - Who Wants to be a Sheep!

Who wants to be likened to a sheep! Sheep are seen as silly animals that follow each other blindly and do not act or think for themselves. When Jesus invites us to be 'his flock', he is not asking us to behave like sheep, rather he is asking us to think of him as our 'good shepherd'. As followers, we are not asked to follow blindly, we are asked to discern his voice and his values in a world full of distractions and competing values.



From the moment we get out of bed in the morning there are a million and one demands vying for our attention. We make a list of things we have to do in a day and discover we have more things to do than hours to do them in. Most of the things we have to do are things that we will get into trouble for if we don't do them. We have to go to work or we won't get paid. We have to do the housework or we will be considered dysfunctional. We have to pay the bills or we will receive a court summons. We have to help our children with their homework or we will get disapproving letters home from the Headteacher. Finding time to listen for Jesus' voice probably isn't on our 'list-to-do'.

The good news is that we don't have to add Jesus to the list; Jesus is part of the list. The trick is to know, that Jesus' voice is in every little job that we do, and in each one of our day-to-day activities. We don't need a special time to sit down and listen to what Jesus is telling us. Hearing Jesus' voice is a habit we need to develop on a day to day basis. The trick is to know that Jesus' voice is everywhere that encourages us to impact our world as Christians. Jesus' voice is the voice at work that encourages us to do our best, the voice that encourages us not to gossip, the voice that encourages us not to ignore the person who needs a lift at home time. Jesus is the voice that encourages us to respond to family members and the wider community who are in need. Jesus' voice is the voice that tells us how to vote and how to campaign for those who do not have a voice of their own. The voice of the impostor on the other hand is everywhere that encourages us to act out of self-interest and greed. Being part of Jesus' flock is certainly not for the 'sheep'; it's for those with discerning ears from the first moment we get out of bed in the morning to last thing at night.

The voice of Jesus the good shepherd is the one that offers us spiritual sustenance, guidance, love and protection. Jesus wants us to recognise his voice as the one who addresses what we are and what we stand for. Key to a healthy spiritual life is an overriding commitment to hearing the word of God and applying it to one's own life.

World Day of Prayer for Vocations

Today the Church celebrates the call to the priesthood and the consecrated life. We remember other callings at other times, but on this day we pray especially for those God is calling to be consecrated or to be ordained.

To do:-

- Pray for the priests who have ministered to you throughout your life, both living and dead.
- Keep our parish priests in your prayers throughout the week.
- Encourage your children, grandchildren, or other young people to consider a vocation as a priest or religious brother or sister.
- Pray a rosary for more young men and women to respond to God's call.

First Holy Communion



Children will be receiving the Holy Eucharist for the first time as follows :

- St Joseph's - Saturday, 2 May.
- St Alban's - Saturday, 9 May at 10.00 am
- Sacred Heart - Saturday, 16 May at 11.00 am

Please keep them and their families in your prayers

Sacrament of Confirmation Welcome Mass

We warmly invite the Confirmation candidates and their families from Sacred Heart & St Alban, St Joseph and St Paul of the Cross to come together at St Paul of the Cross Church, Burtonwood on Saturday, 9 May at 6.00pm as we welcome them to our Family of Parishes Church Community.

Canon Christopher reflects In 1964, Pope Paul VI, launched the first Vocations Sunday which, since then, has been celebrated on the fourth Sunday of Easter, also known as Good Shepherd Sunday. This weekend marks the 63rd World Day of Prayer for Vocations which gives us an opportunity to reflect on our own vocation as a baptised member of the Church but also gives us an opportunity to pray that others may find their vocation.

Saint John Henry Newman has given us a prayer that expresses very well that God has a plan for each of us. He is calling us to grow in holiness and to live in his love. Some are called to live their baptismal calling through married life, some are called to the priesthood, the diaconate or religious life and others to live as single people. Everybody is called! It is good to have these conversations to stir hearts and minds, especially with the young to help them respond generously to the Lord. What is God calling you to?

Recently, I was discussing marriage with a young couple preparing for marriage and who are very much aware of their vocation to married life and to being parents. It was good to hear how well they expressed their growth in that vocation. They had seen the need to be prepared for what that life would mean to them and through reflection had already seen change and development in their attitude to life to prepare for their life-long commitment.

This weekend, we are asked in particular to consider and pray about vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and the religious life. Although Archbishop Emeritus Malcolm McMahon has retired, he has sent us a message for this special Sunday. He writes about the vocation of a friend who became a teacher and how her wholehearted response had influenced him in his decisions. In the same way, I too have similar reactions.

Are we ever certain of what we should do with life? As with Archbishop Malcolm there were times when I questioned whether I was following the right path. It would be wrong to drift into a way of life without much prayer and reflection. I have never regretted my decision but at this stage of life give thanks to God for the joy that comes from serving the Lord in this special way. The journey still goes on and, as the archbishop reflects, in his retirement he still finds that his own vocation is growing as he answers God's call in a different way. He concludes as follows: *"My message to you on Vocations Sunday is a very simple one. Be brave and try your vocation. We are all called by God to a life of holiness; a life with God at the centre of what we do, but the way that works out is very different for each of us. Some people have a certainty about their call, others like me are prepared to take cautious steps along the way but in both cases the important thing to remember is that our calling is more about God and the people we serve than ourselves."*

As well as couples preparing for marriage, much essential preparation is taking place currently for the sacraments. Children are preparing for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. Older ones are preparing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Each of these are vital steps in life and the preparation taking place is not to be taken lightly. Let us pray for these young people.

We pray also for our seminarians preparing for the priesthood over a longer period of time. Compared with my experience sixty years ago the numbers involved nowadays are very small with only six candidates for this archdiocese covering six years of training.

We need to 'ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into his harvest' and pray that more young people will hear and respond to the call of the Lord to follow Him in this special way. Amen.

**Parish of Sacred Heart & Saint Alban
Baptism Preparation**

If you are hoping to have your child baptised at Sacred Heart or St Alban's Church in the near future you will need to attend a preparation session.

The next Preparation session for the under 2 year olds will take place on Sunday, 3 May at Sacred Heart Church after the 11.00am Mass (about 12.30pm).

Please contact the Parish office or Anne Preston (07913003537) for more details. Thank you.

Right to Life UK : As tomorrow is the 58th anniversary of the 1967 Abortion Act coming into effect, we pray for our Government, that their ability to support pregnant women would increase and that they would anchor themselves on the desire to protect all human life. Lord hear us.

Volunteers are required at St Joseph's for the following on **Pentecost Sunday** (24 May) :

- **Bidding Prayers** - Please sign sheet in Narthex if you are willing to read a prayer in your own language.
- **Musicians** needed to help with the music. Please phone 07794230212 if you can help. Thanks.

**Refreshments After Mass on
Sundays**

- **St Joseph's** – after the 8.30 am Mass hosted by members of the Teams of Our Lady group and after the 4.30 pm Mass hosted by members of the Legion of Mary.
- **St Alban** – after the 9.30 am Mass. Hosted by members of the Parish.
- **Sacred Heart** (in the Parish Centre) – after the 11.00 am Mass. Hosted by members of the Parish.

Priests' Training Fund - A collection will be taken after all Masses this weekend. today Please give what you can. Thank you.

Legion of Mary

Join us for a Celebration Mass of Hope Life and Blessing of the Sick on Wednesday, 13 May at 2.00pm at St Joseph's.



Refreshments will be served in the Parish Centre following the Celebration Mass. All are welcome.

Fr Raymond will celebrate a Class Mass in St Vincent's School on 22 May at 2.00 pm. If you wish to attend please contact the school on 01925 726544.

Parking at St Joseph's

Please ensure that when you use the car park that you only park in the disabled spaces if you have a current permit. Thank you.

*Please feel free to stay for a cuppa and a chat.
Everyone is most welcome.*

Parish of Sacred Heart & Saint Alban Volunteers Required

- **Confirmation Team** - To assist with confirmation preparation we are trying to create a team that can work together across the deanery to help prepare our young people for this important step on their journey of faith. You do not need to be experienced in working with young people: there are a number of roles to be involved with. And there need not be any long term commitment. A willingness to be involved is the main thing – even if only for one meeting.
- **Children Liturgy Catechists at Sacred Heart** are also needed.

If you are interested in being involved with preparing our young people or would like to know more about how you can help (without any obligation to commit) please contact Margaret in the Parish Office on 01925 630928 during normal office hours.

Spring Dance for 18-30s

We are a group of young Catholics in Liverpool organising a big Spring Dance at St Margaret Mary's Parish Centre on Friday, 8 May. So far, we have around 140 people interested in the Dance which is aimed at young people **aged 18-30**.

The Spring Dance will have food, wine, music and dancing with a Scottish Ceilidh Band as well as a local jazz pianist.

You can purchase a ticket by filling out the form found at <https://forms.gle/dcnsaTs93tW3aPnm7>.

Share your Youth Pilgrimage Memories!

This year marks 50 years of the Archdiocesan Youth Pilgrimage to Lourdes, and we'd love your help to celebrate this special milestone by sharing your memories.

- Did you meet your partner on the pilgrimage?
- Have several generations of your family travelled to Lourdes?
- Were you part of the very first pilgrimage, or did you experience a moment there that stayed with you forever?

Whatever your memories or experience – we want to hear from you!

Please send your memories and/or photos – to communications@rcaol.org.uk by **13 May**.

Selected submissions may be featured in The Pic, on the Archdiocesan and Animate's websites and social media channels and in a special scrapbook of memories being created for the youth pilgrims travelling this year.

Please note: *By sharing photos with us, you confirm that you are happy for them to be used in archdiocesan publications and that you have obtained permission from everyone pictured, or from their family if they are deceased.*

Franciscan Rosary Resource

To mark the Franciscan Jubilee this year, Pastoral Development have produced a resource to help pray the Franciscan Rosary, as we mark this special year. Please find the booklet attached at the back of our churches .

Pray in May

During the month of May, Mary's Meals is inviting churches and schools to take part in their 'Pray in May' campaign, encouraging prayer and reflection for children around the world who rely on a daily school meal.

Mary's Meals provides nutritious school meals to children living in poverty, enabling access to education and long-term hope.

More information can be found on the Archdiocese of Liverpool Pastoral Development Bulletin at the back of our churches

Friday Community Free Food Offering Facebook: @GoodNeighboursWA5

Each Friday, Good Neighbours WA5 opens its doors to provide a warm and welcoming space for our community through our weekly food offering. **Location:** Hood Lane Community Centre, off Hood Lane North on Crosfield's Recreation Grounds (5.00-6.30 pm).

We invite everyone to join us from 5:00pm for a free cuppa and friendly conversation. Our food table is open from 5:30pm – 6:30pm. Each adult is welcome to fill a carrier bag with fresh food. There are no questions asked and no tickets required.

This initiative is made possible by our wonderful volunteers, whose kindness reflects the true spirit of service within our community. If you or someone you know could benefit, or if you feel called to support this work, we would love to welcome you. For more information, please contact Amanda 07841 328608 email Amanda@givecl.com.

Dignity of Human Life

Archbishop John Sherrington has asked for your continued prayers after the Holy Hour for the Dignity of Human Life on Sunday. He made this video from Rome, where he is for a week-long retreat with other Bishops. You can view the video here: [Archbishop John Sherrington on the Dignity of Human Life](#)

Walking Day Celebration

As part of our Walking Day celebrations we hope to put together a display of photographs from previous Walking Days of Sacred Heart & St Alban's parish. If you have any photos you would like to share for the display we would be very grateful. So, please start looking through those old albums and watch this space for details on how to get them to us. Many thanks in advance.

Bingo at St Joseph's - The next session will take place on Monday, 11 May at 1.30pm. All welcome

St Joseph's Parish Offertory Envelopes

Thank you to all St Joseph's parishioners who have collected their Offertory envelope boxes.

There are still a few remaining. These will be moved to the Presbytery on Monday, 27 April.

If anyone else would like a box for 2026/27 please contact Martin Griffiths via the Parish Office.

Missionary Appeal

The Oblates of St Joseph Congregation will be visiting St Joseph's parish on Sunday, 10 May.

They will preside at both Masses on that day. Kindly be generous to them.

The next meeting of St Joseph's UCM will take place on Thursday, 7 May.

QUIZ in St Joseph's Club Sunday at 8.00 pm. Jackpot - £150. Play Your Cards Right - £50. Please do come along to support your club

Thank you to everyone who supported and helped with the Lenten breakfasts. £300 was raised and will be given to St. Joseph's Family Centre

St Joseph's Church Cleaning
Thursday, 30 April from 9am.
Help much appreciated.

St Joseph's Bonus Ball
22/4/26 – No 07 : D Povey
32 numbers sold

Good Shepherd Sunday Prayer for Vocations

Dear Lord, our Good Shepherd, whose example we endeavour to follow, pour forth your grace upon our religious, deacons and priests, who have called to guide and shepherd your flock.

Give them the strength they need to serve you and the Church with a joyful heart and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to be their helper and guide.

Open the hearts of your people, especially the young, that they may hear the call to holiness and have the courage to explore your will for their life.
Amen.

Mass Intentions for week commencing

	Sacred Heart	Saint Alban	Saint Joseph	Saint Paul of the Cross
Sunday 26 April	11.00 am Ian Bailey (RoS)	9.30 am Mary Taylor (RoS)	8.30 am Maureen Parker 4.00 pm Bill Turner	10.00 am
Monday 27 April	10.00 am Requiem Mass Philomena Bradshaw		No Mass	
Tuesday 28 April		9.30 am Angela O'Brien (RoS)		9.00 am
Wednesday 29 April			No Mass	9.00 am
Thursday 30 April		9.30 am Austin Dickinson (RoS)		9.00 am
Friday 1 May	7.30 pm Jacqueline Simpson (RoS)		No Mass	
Saturday 2 May	5.15 pm Kevin Thompson (RoS)			6.00 pm
Sunday 3 May	11.00 am John Burke	9.30 am People of the Parish	8.30 am People of the Parish 4.00 pm Peter Ryan (Anniversary)	10.00 am

Confession	Saturday from 4.30 pm	Saturday from 9.30 am	Wednesday 5.15 pm-5.45 pm	Saturday 5.15-5.45 pm
Adoration [Exposition]		After the Mass on Thursday	Monday & Friday 10.00-11.00 am	

- **Holy Eucharist** - Please note that whilst we can receive the Holy Eucharist under both kinds, intinction (dipping the Body of Christ into the Chalice of His blood) **IS NOT PERMITTED**.
- Please note that there are no weekday Masses at St Joseph's as the Parish Priest is on annual retreat. Kindly visit the Family of Parishes if you wish to attend Mass during the week.

Penketh Support Group Food Hub
Meeting Lane Community Centre
WA5 2HB. Opening Hours Thursday,
Friday & Saturday until 12:30pm. If
you require a food parcel please
contact Helen on 07415 939808 or
email penketh2020@outlook.com

The Legion of Mary meets on
Tuesdays at 1.30 pm in the
Loreto Room [behind St Joseph's
Church]. **All welcome**

Why not visit our website and
keep up-to-date on all the news
at www.sacredheartandalban.org
or follow us on Facebook @
**Parish of Sacred Heart and
St Alban Warrington**
Why not take a moment to check
in – you may find something of
interest

Please visit St Joseph's website
for all its news, Mass times,
newsletter and much more!
www.stjosephpenketh.co.uk

**Please ensure that your mobile
phone is switched off whilst
you are in Church. Thank you.**

Sanctuary Lamps
The Sanctuary Lamps will
burn this week for the
following intentions :

St Alban
Fr Gerard Cobham (RoS)

Sacred Heart
Vocations to the priesthood
and religious life

St Joseph
Prayers for World Peace

St Joseph's Marian Candle
Prayers for Vocations

Please remember in your
prayers the following who
have died recently :
Fr Gerard Cobham,
Philomena Bradshaw and
Maureen Hennessy.
May they rest in peace.

**Parish of Sacred Heart &
Saint Alban Safeguarding
Reps** - Irene Crowder,
Margaret McGrath & Paul
Towey

There will be a Requiem Mass on Monday (27th)
at 10.00 am at Sacred Heart for Philomena
Bradshaw. **May she rest in peace.**

Did you attend a Notre Dame School in the
Archdiocese of Liverpool? There will be a reunion on
17 May for all ex-pupils & teachers, consisting of
Mass at 11.00am followed by a complimentary light
lunch & a Social finishing at 3.00pm, at the Irenaeus
Centre, Waterloo. A donation for our current charity
& a raffle prize would be appreciated. Please try to
attend, all are welcome. Reply by 3rd May to Bernie
Shaw, 0161 483 0173
Email ; berniemshaw@hotmail.com

Messages of Thanks

The family of Maureen McNamara would like to thank
Fr Raymond and the parishioners from St Josephs for
their prayers, messages of condolence and kindness
over the last few weeks. Your actions have provided us
all with a great deal of comfort during this sad time.

Amy and Lucy would like to thank everybody who came
to the Mass and Celebration for our beautiful mum
Christine Hope on her first heavenly anniversary. It was
overwhelming to see so many people there. Fr Raymond
celebrated a wonderful Mass and the celebrations in the
club were the perfect way to remember and honour
someone who is so dearly loved and missed by so many.
Thank you to everyone involved in making this happen.
See you all next year to celebrate mum's 70th birthday!