

REFLECTION - 4th SUNDAY OF EASTER

"The Good Shepherd"

One of the oldest paintings of Christ, in the Roman catacombs, represents Christ as carrying the injured, straying sheep gently on His shoulders back to the sheepfold. This is an image of Christ which has always appealed to Christians. We have Christ as our shepherd - He tells us so himself in today's gospel - and we do not resent being called sheep in this context. There is something guileless about a sheep, and at the same time a lot of foolishness! But with Christ as our shepherd and the "good shepherd" who is sincerely interested in the true welfare of His flock we have reason to rejoice.



The leaders of the Jews, the Pharisees and Sadducees, were false shepherds who tried to prevent the people from following Jesus, but they failed. They then killed the shepherd but in vain. He rose from the dead and His flock increased by the thousands and will keep increasing until time ends.

We surely are fortunate to belong to the sheepfold of Christ, His Church. We surely are blessed to have the Son of God as our Shepherd, who came among us in order to lead us to heaven. Do we fully appreciate our privileged position? Do we always live up to our heavenly vocation? We know His voice, we know what He asks of us, but do we always listen to that voice, do we always do what He asks of us?

There are many among us today who foolishly think they need no shepherd. They think they know all the facts of life while they are in total ignorance of the most basic fact of all, namely, the very purpose of life. Not that the thought of it does not arise disturbingly before their minds time and time again. But they try to smother that thought and ease their consciences by immersing themselves deeper and deeper in the affairs and the passing pleasures of this temporary life. Alas for them, a day of reckoning lies ahead, a day that is much nearer than they would like to believe. What will be their fate when they meet Christ the Judge, whom they had refused to follow and acknowledge during their days on earth?

This is a misfortune that could happen to any one, unless we think often of our purpose and our end in life. We have a few short years, but short though they be, we can earn for ourselves an eternity of happiness during this life. Let the straying sheep boast of their false freedom and of the passing joys they may get in this life, this freedom and these joys are mixed with much sorrow, and will end very soon. We know that if we follow the shepherd of our souls, we are on the way to the true life, the perfect life, the unending life which will have no admixture of sorrow, regret or pain. Where Christ is, there perfect happiness is, and there with God's grace we hope and trust to be.



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Arrangements for Banns, Holy Matrimony & Baptisms:
May be made by contacting Fr Ross on 01908 562148

Confessions: May be made after Masses or by appointment.

Parish Website: www.parishstonystratfordcalverton.com

To Hire the Parish Hall: 'phone Lesley Salter on 01908 567404



The Parish of
**STONY
STRATFORD**
with
CALVERTON

**St Mary & St Giles, Stony Stratford
with All Saints, Calverton**

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

7th May AD 2017

...Jesus again said to them,

"Truly, truly, I say to you,
I am the door of the sheep.

All who came before are
thieves and robbers;

but the sheep did not heed them.

I am the door;

if any one enters by me,
he will be saved,

and will go in and out and find pasture.

The thief comes only to steal
and kill and destroy;

I came that they may have life,
and have it abundantly."

John 10



Welcome to the Parish Church where, after the example of the early church, we celebrate the Eucharist: the "apostles teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42)

INFORMATION

The Order of Mass is on the laminated card. The references to the Scripture Readings, which may be either listened to or followed in the Bibles provided, along with the Psalm and the Prayer of the Faithful are also included in this Sheet. Hymns are unannounced but are indicated on the boards towards the front of the Nave.

AA Large Print Orders of Service are available at St Mary & St Giles. Please ask a Sidesman for a copy.



A Loop System is in operation at St Mary & St Giles - please set hearing aids to the "T" position.



Access for the Disabled at St Mary & St Giles is via the path on the north side of the church. **At All Saints** it is via the South Porch.



Gluten-Free Hosts: if you are on a Gluten-Free diet and would like a Gluten-Free Host when you receive Holy Communion please mention this before Mass to one of the Sidesmen who will arrange this for you. Please make yourself known to the Parish Priest so that he is aware of your need.



Collections: for the continuing mission of Christ are taken while the altar and gifts of bread and wine are being prepared. If you are a visitor and a taxpayer and would like to make a donation please use the Gift Aid envelopes provided at the end of each row - please fill in your details. This enables us to reclaim, from the Inland Revenue, 25p for every £1 donated.



We observe a period of quiet prayer and reflection before the celebration of Mass, between the end of the Organ Voluntary and the Sacristy Bell being rung, in order that we may be better prepared to worship almighty God.

Reception of Holy Communion: All Baptised and Confirmed Christians are encouraged to receive Holy Communion. If you are unwell or uncertain about receiving the Precious Blood please do still receive the Host. Our Chalice Assistants are not authorised to permit the intincting (dipping) of the Host.



Please join us at the back of church for tea or coffee after Mass. A priest will be near the main door, shortly after the end of Mass, should you need to talk with one.

Please take this Service Sheet home with you and use as part of your devotions during the week.

At St Mary & St Giles this week:

Sidesmen	Team 2
Serving Team:	Team 4
Offertory bearers:	Anna & Rosie Page
Church Gardeners:	Team 2
Church Cleaners	Team 2

Worshipping Numbers last Sunday: ?

Weekday Worshipping Numbers w/e 29 April: ?

Prayer Thought:

We are the sheep of God's pasture, the flock that is led by his hand. In today's celebration of the Eucharist we are reminded of the Lord's care for us and called to follow him. We give thanks to him that through Christ, the door of the sheepfold, we have come to belong to him and can trust him at all times.

The Collect

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life: raise us, who trust in him, from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, that we may seek those things which are above, where he reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD (SIT)

The First Reading

Acts of the Apostles 2:14a,36-41

Reader at SMSG: Eilish Friedman
Reader at All Saints: Jonathan Dunn

(New Testament Page 101 in the Bibles)
Peter affirms that Jesus who had been rejected by the Jews now reigns in heaven as Lord of the world. Peter's hearers repented of having rejected Jesus and they accepted baptism.

The Responsorial Psalm (from Psalm 23)

**R/. The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.**

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit. ®

He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name.
If I should walk in the valley of darkness
no evil would I fear.
You are there with your crook and your staff;
with these you give me comfort. ®

You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;

one's secrets, to entertain an inner life populated by demons and noisy with their evil suggestions. There is a solution: it is enough to go to one who represents Jesus, one who so knows the Heart of the Master that he can speak on His behalf and pull us back from the precipice.

He Could Have Asked John to Intercede for Him
Judas could have gone to John. John was Jesus' beloved friend, the one with whom He shared all the secrets of His Sacred Heart, the friend in whose company He found comfort and solace, the friend who would remain with Him even on Golgotha, the friend to whom He would entrust His All-Holy Mother. John was, and is, a powerful intercessor with the Heart of Jesus. Had Judas gone to John and exposed his temptations, John would have spoken to him of the gentleness of the Master, of the love of His Heart, of His readiness to forgive. And John, interceding, would have gone to Jesus, to speak to Him on Judas' behalf.

But Judas could not bring himself to do this. Out of pride certainly, out of jealousy perhaps. And so he went his dark way into the night of betrayal and death.

The Mercy of God

Judas remains a tragic mystery. Had he repented his sin, or had he repented after it, he might have become one of the shining trophies of Divine Mercy in the early Church. Instead he went his dark way, keeping his secrets, and refusing to reach out to Jesus, to Mary, to Peter, to John or to any one of the company of faithful disciples who might have been able to grab hold of his hand and pull him back from the infernal pit.

The very act of reaching out is an expression of humility, and humility opens the floodgates of Divine Mercy. Apart from an abiding trust in the Mercy of God, one cannot have but a tragic destiny.

Merciful Jesus, save us, lest we, like Judas, betray Thee with a kiss!

THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH

TODAY: THE 4th SUNDAY OF EASTER

8:30am Morning Prayer at St Mary & St Giles
9:30am **PARISH MASS at St Mary & St Giles**
11:00am **FAMILY MASS at All Saints**
Intention: Our Parish

Monday: *Feria*

9:30am 'Squeals on Wheels' in the Parish Hall
8:00pm Bellringing Practice
Pray for: the Sick, Housebound & Handicapped

Tuesday: *Feria*

10:30am **Mass + Eleveses at All Saints**
12:00n Stony Ministers' Fraternal
7:30pm Archdeacon's Visitation at Olney
Intention: Our Churchwardens as they are sworn in this evening

Wednesday: *Feria*

12:30pm Deanery Clergy Chapter
6:00pm Rector in Parish Office for the arrangement of the Occasional Offices & Parish Business
7:30pm **Mass at St Mary & St Giles**
Intention: Those preparing for Holy Matrimony

Thursday: *Feria*

10:30am **Mass at St Mary & St Giles**
Intention: Refugees and the Homeless

Friday: *Feria*

8:00am **Mass at St Mary & St Giles (Sch)**
7:30pm Parish Singers Rehearsal
Intention: Victims of Slander and Gossip

Saturday: *Our Lady of Fatima*

7:30pm MK Sinfonia Concert
in St Mary & St Giles Church
Pray for: Visitors to our Parish Churches & all Church of England Pilgrims currently in Fatima

Next Sunday: THE 5th SUNDAY OF EASTER

8:30am Morning Prayer at St Mary & St Giles
9:30am **PARISH MASS at St Mary & St Giles**
11:00am **FAMILY MASS at All Saints**
Intention: Our Parish

Readings next Sunday: 5th Sunday of Easter

1st Reading:	Acts 6: 1-7
Psalm:	33 (part)
2nd Reading:	1 Peter 2: 4-9
Gospel:	John 14: 1-12

viper was hid, and it was about to sting him with its deadly poison.

Had He Turned to Jesus

If only Judas had gone to Jesus and said, "Master, I need to talk to Thee. I want to open my heart to Thee. I am troubled, and tempted, and on the verge of committing a very great evil. Save me, lest I perish. Hold me fast, my Jesus, and do not let me go. I trust in Thy love for me. I believe in Thy mercy. I remember what Thou didst say one day: "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me; and him who comes to Me I will not cast out" (John 6:37).

It is never too late to stop and open one's heart to Jesus in the intimate conversation that we call prayer. The worst betrayals, the most heinous crimes, and the living death of mortal sin begin their gestation when we forsake prayer, when we stop conversing with Jesus, or only deal with Him when we are obliged to do so by convention or routine. Then, there is no more friendship with Him. There is only business. And so the heart grows hard and cold.

He Could Have Turned to Mary

Judas had another recourse, but he was too proud to make use of it. He could have gone to Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Even before the words of Our Lord to Saint John from the Cross, "Behold, thy mother" (John 19:27), Mary was a true mother to each of the Apostles. She knew them as any mother knows her children, and she loved them, even with their weaknesses and repeated failures to believe in her Son, to hope in Him, and to love Him. Any one of the twelve could have gone to Mary at any time for counsel, for comfort, for encouragement, and for a mother's blessing. She loved each of them because her Son loved them, and chose them, and called them to leave all things and follow Him.

Judas could have gone to Mary and said, "Mother, behold, my life is filled with wicked desires, with anger, and jealousy, and pride. Mother, I am ashamed to confess this to

thee, but I am losing confidence in thy Son. I cannot accept His way of doing things. I am hardening my heart against His teachings. Mother, help me! And Mary, moved by an immense compassion, would have caressed his cheek, and opened her hands in prayer over his head. Mary was then, and remains even now for us the Mother of Mercy, the Refuge of Sinners, our life, our sweetness, and above all, our hope in this valley of tears. She would not have condemned Judas. She would not have been angry with him. She would have felt an immense pity for him, the pity of a mother for a wayward child. Mary could have saved him from the terrible fate that awaited him. But Judas did not seek her out. And so Mary would weep for him bitterly.

One can go to Mary at any moment, with any temptation, any weakness, and any sin. Our Lady hates sin, but loves poor sinners. She is disgusted by evil, but is merciful towards those held in its grip. She is repulsed by vice, but full of compassion for those who struggle to become free of it. Seeing us in our sins, she weeps over us, allowing her tears to soften and purify our hearts. Turn to her and she will crush the head of the serpent who plots our ruin.

He Could Have Opened Up to Peter

Judas could have gone to Peter. Peter had already emerged as the spokesman of the Twelve. Judas could have said to Peter, "Peter, my brother, tonight, let us get together for a glass of wine and a plate of figs. I need to talk. I am confused, troubled, restless. Hear me out. Help me." Peter was often outspoken, and impetuous, but he had a tender side as well. He was capable of compassion. Peter would have listened to Judas. He may have argued with him, as one brother argues with another. He may have reproved him in order to win them back. But the simple fact of opening up to Peter might have saved Judas. Instead, Judas chose to live with his secret. In the end, it would kill Jesus and cause Judas to hang himself.

It a dangerous thing to hold on to

my cup is overflowing. ®

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever. ®

The Second Reading 1 Peter 2:20b-25

Reader at SMSG: Rosie Page

(New Testament Page 197 in the Bibles) stresses the fact that we owe our salvation to the sufferings of Jesus. Following the example of Christ, who willingly suffered for us, we should patiently hear the trials of life.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! I am the good shepherd, says the Lord; I know my own, and my own know me. **Alleluia!**

The Gospel John 10: 1-10

(New Testament Page 92 in the Bibles) teaches that Jesus is the true shepherd who leads those who believe in him to salvation. Apart from Jesus and the representatives whom he appoints all other leaders are thieves and brigands.

The Prayer of the Faithful

(Intercessor at SMSG: John Hickman)

Priest: My brothers and sisters let us pray in the Spirit of the Lord Jesus who is risen from the dead.

Intercessor: For the community of believers in Jesus' resurrection, that it will remain strong in love and faithful to the gospel of salvation.....

V/. Let us pray to the Lord....

R/. **God of love, hear us.**

For newly baptised adults, that they will continue to draw on the life of the risen Christ who abides among us in word and sacrament.....

For those who doubt the good news of salvation, that the Spirit will guide them into the truth of faith.....

For those who continue to suffer for the faith, especially in areas hostile to Christianity, that they will be guarded with God's saving power.....

For those who are sick and confined by fear... *Fiddy Abraham, Polly Barclay, Gerry Bonner, Doreen Brooks, Shirley Brown, Steve Cooper, Terry Crook, Larry Francis, Russell Herbert, Jane Holman, Terry Mason, Sue Maton, Rosalie Osbourne, Pete, Ron Smart, Tony Oakley, Wendy...*, that God's freeing love will lead them to the peace of the risen Christ.....

For those who have believed in Christ's resurrection and have died, that they will be counted among the blessed in the reign of glory, particularly... *Cecil Tee, Gill Tee...* and for those whose anniversaries of death occur during this week...**7th** Sarah Godfrey, Richard Wenlock, Fanny Syrratt, Harold West, Harriet Watson; **8th** Emily Powell, Maud Tapp; **9th** Jane West, Eric Steer (priest), Charles Saggars; **10th** Ann Smith, Rosa Clarke, Harriet Roberts, Mary West, Mary Kirk, Charles Norgate; **11th** Ruby Foskett; **12th** Robert Webb, Evelyn Rayner; **13th** Mollie Jones, Sylvia Lovesey...

✠ Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord.
And let light perpetual shine upon them.

Priest: O God, in your abounding mercy, sustain in your Church the gifts of faith, hope, and love which give us new life in Christ, who lives and reigns forever and ever. **Amen.**

Communion Reflection:

Lord, you came on earth to teach us the way to the Father. You taught us that true wealth is not in having many things, but in desiring few things; that we are made rich, not by the things we cling to, but by those we give away for love; that real success is not in raising ourselves but in raising others; that humility is nobler than pride in our strength; that the truly free are not those who dominate others but those whose life is one of loving service to human needs. Amen.

PARISH NEWS & NOTICES

Lenten Appeal: If you haven't returned your Lent Box yet, please do so by next Sunday (14th May) at the latest. Thank you.

All Saints Restoration Fund: Jill Barby hopes to hold a Coffee Morning in the Parish Hall in aid of All Saints Restoration Fund on Saturday 20th May from 10:00am to 12:00noon. Offers of help, and of cakes and scones would be very much appreciated. If you can help please contact her on MK 569245. If this occasion proves to be a success it is hoped to hold further coffee mornings in aid of All Saints.

Parish Weekend Pilgrimage to The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham 2017: Thank you to all those who have booked places so far. Please could all completed booking forms along with deposits of £30 per person be given to Fr Ross as soon as possible.
N.B. All bookings to be made before May 15th.

If you have not been to Walsingham before this is an ideal introduction to the wonderful ministry of the Shrine. Fr Ross or any previous pilgrims will be only to pleased to tell you more.

Sainsbury's Active Kids Vouchers: It's that time of year again when our Church School is collecting Sainsbury's Active Kids Vouchers 2017. If you, family members or friends shop in Sainsbury's and receive any vouchers, then please pass them to Kieran or Fr Ross. We are collecting vouchers until 2nd May. Once all the vouchers are in and collated they will be used to get equipment for P.E. Thank you.

St Mary & St Giles School (North Site) - Mid-day Supervisor: Do you enjoy spending time with children? A permanent post is available for a Mid-day Supervisor starting 18th April 2017. We are

ideally looking for a person experienced with looking after children and able to provide the highest standards of care and support for all our pupils.

Monday to Friday Term-time only 12:00pm to 1:30pm, Grade A Level 1, FTE Salary £16491, Actual salary £2777.07 (includes 5.2 weeks paid holiday). We are committed to safeguarding the welfare of all our children. All applicants will be subject to a DBS (previously CRB) Check.

If you are interested in this post, please contact the school office (01908 562186) for an application form.

Christian Aid Week: is held this year from the 14th to the 20th May.

"Everything was a threat. They were putting bombs in the trees and on the roads" Nejebar fled Afghanistan with her family. This year's Christian Aid Week focuses on providing help to the thousands of families trapped in European refugee camps by providing family kitchen equipment to restore some normality to shattered lives. If you would like to be a house to house collector please sign up at the back of the Church. You can raise funds in other ways too, such as hosting a coffee morning or a Christian Aid Big Brekkie for friends and neighbours. Please contact me for further information.

Richard Hearne Tel: MK 560895
Email: richardhearne@hotmail.co.uk.

The Call to Holiness

One of the people that I am asked questions about in the Gospels other than Jesus is the person of Judas. In part this may be because all of us must from time to time wonder whether we betray the Lord in thought, word and deed and thereby might suffer his fate. I recently came across this article, written by a Benedictine Religious and, while I know it was written for Holy Week and that we are now in Eastertide, hope that you find it helpful.

The Wednesday of Holy Week invites me to meditate on one priest's abject failure, on one priest's sordid betrayal of Our Lord, on one priest's headlong plunge into the darkness of despair. You all know this priest. His name was Judas Iscariot.

Saint Benedict himself makes an explicit reference to Judas in Chapter LX of the Holy Rule: *Of Priests Who May Wish to Dwell in the Monastery*. He puts to every priest who knocks at the door of the cloister the question that Our Lord put to Judas in Gethsemani: *Dixitque illi Jesus: Amice, ad quid venisti?* (And Jesus said to him, Where to art thou come? - Matthew 26:50)

What I am about to share applies not only to priests; it applies, in some way, to everyone. Each of us is called to live in the friendship of Jesus. Each of us is called to holiness. Each of us is called to become nothing less than a saint.

Mysterium Iniquitatis

The Wednesday of Holy Week is designated *Spy Wednesday*: this because it commemorates Judas Iscariot's conspiracy to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. The betrayal of Jesus by Judas –his friend, his chosen one, his priest– continues to astonish and grieve us. Why did Our Lord allow such an evil? Why did He not stop Judas, confront him with the horror of his sin, and pull him back from the abyss of iniquity about to open beneath his feet? What a mystery it is that Our Lord should so respect the free will of a man, even when that man's choices are misguided; motivated by the desire for power, or money, or pleasure; or manipulated by Satan, the father of lies!

What Happened?

Consider, for a moment, what might have happened, had Judas taken the risk of stepping out of his isolation, of reaching out to another. Why did Judas end the way he did? How did he go from giving up everything to follow Jesus, to betraying Him for a miserable

thirty pieces of silver?

The Sickness of Our Secrets

The beginning of Judas' downfall was his secrecy. In the beginning of his discipleship, Judas Iscariot was, perhaps, more open, sharing with Jesus his thoughts, his dreams, his desires, and his fears. And then, little by little, Judas became disillusioned and jaded. He withdrew into himself. He dissimulated his temptations, his fears, his struggles, and his failures.

Something very similar happens when a soul stops going to confession, or confesses too infrequently, or puts off going to confession. One becomes accustomed to living with the sickness of one's secrets. One adjusts to living with them, and they poison us. This is something that the Church has always known. How important it is to lay bare our souls to a trusted spiritual father, to admit not only our sins, but also our temptations and our struggles. This act of humility disarms Satan, and renders him powerless. Only pride, and the secrecy that comes from pride and seeks to dissimulate sin, gives the Evil One a foothold in us.

Judas Stopped Conversing with Jesus

Judas must have stopped conversing with Jesus in a personal way. Certainly he continued talking to Jesus superficially, but mostly about business. He was, after all, responsible for administering the common fund of the Twelve. He stopped relating to Jesus in a personal way, as one trusting friend talks to another, heart to heart.

It is very telling that in Saint John's Gospel, Judas speaks rather caustically about expenses. He sounds calculating and disgruntled. "Why," he asked, "was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" (John 12:5) Judas had become all business. There was little love left in his heart. He was concerned about running a successful operation in worldly terms, but in his heart a