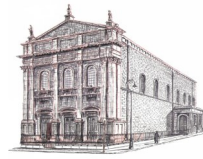




PARISH OF ST. AGATHA 1

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Fr. Brendan Kealy Adm.: 087 9117575 Office:

Tel:018554078, Mr John Kelly: Chairperson Parish Pastoral Council

Jesus I Trust in You E-mail : office@stagathasparish.ie Website: www.stagathasparish.ie

POPE FRANCIS: JESUS DEFENDS

Pope Francis reflected on the Gospel today (John 10:1-10), in which Jesus is presented to us at the true Shepherd who *defends*, *knows* and *loves* His sheep. The “mercenary”, he said, is His opposite, as he only works for money and does not truly care for the sheep. When a wolf arrives, the Pope explained, he flees and abandons them. "Instead, Jesus, the true Shepherd, *defends* us and saves us from so many difficult, dangerous situations through the light of His Word and the strength of His presence that we experience especially in the Sacraments", said the Pope.

JESUS KNOWS

Jesus also *knows* His sheep and the sheep know Him. To Jesus, the Pope continued, "we are not a 'mass' or a 'multitude'" but "unique individuals". Each one of us, has been "created and redeemed by Christ". He knows us as no other and "in Him, the image the prophets provided of the Shepherd of the People of God is completely fulfilled: Jesus is concerned about his sheep, He gathers them, He binds their wounds, He heals their ailments", said the Pope.

JESUS LOVES

The Pope then went on to say that "above all" Jesus "*loves* His sheep". This is why He gives His Life for them, explained the Pope: "Love for His sheep, that is, for each one of us, would lead Him to die on the Cross", and Christ's love is not selective; it embraces everyone. "Jesus wants everyone to be able to receive the Father's love and to have Life", he said.

CHRIST'S UNIVERSAL MISSION

Bringing his catechesis to a close, Pope Francis noted that the Church is called to carry on this universal mission of Christ. "Beyond those who participate in our communities there are many people who do so only at particular moments or never. But this does not mean they are not God's children, whom the Father entrusts to Christ the Good Shepherd", said the Pope. Finally, the Pope stressed, once again: Brothers and sisters, Jesus *defends*, *knows* and *loves* each of his sheep. (Vatican News).

Virtual Eucharistic Adoration

St. Agatha's has Eucharistic Adoration 7 Days a week after every Mass. Please join us for Rosaries and Chaplets. Click <http://www.stagathasparish.ie>

Also, you can click on <https://virtualadoration.home.blog/> from your home, where Jesus is waiting for you. "Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest" Mt 11: 28.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD/ VOCATION SUNDAY

Sadly the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are given to everybody in Baptism, are not always unwrapped. For example, the priceless gift of faith is our spiritual passport into Heaven. Many Christians forget to bring it with them, when they depart their spiritual journey on earth, which creates a huge problem at the border post, when they want to **Passover** into Heaven. Faith helps us on earth to respond to God's call and fulfil our Vocation. It is the spiritual fuel of grace that drives our souls up and into Heaven. Without practicing it, we are running on empty and become spiritually lost in the desert of our sinful ways. St. Peter tells us (Acts 4:8-12), not to reject the Corner Stone, which is a vital support that keeps the structure of our spiritual nature strong and aligned to God's Will. This is symbolised today by St. Peter, who gives the cripple, who was not strong enough to stand or walk on his own, the Divine Grace to stand up, because he is now supported by Christ, the Corner Stone, resulting in the man able to walk again. St. Peter always reminds us (Acts 2:14,36-41), that to save ourselves from eternal death, we must **Repent**, which means to change our sinful lives.

WAS IT WORTH IT?

Jesus explains in the Gospel today (John 10:1-10), how the insolence of Satan will try and steal our holy Vocation in serving God. The devil or wolf in sheep's clothing does this by leading us astray with false information (doctrine) on how to get to Heaven. His doctrine is not to be believed. The devil convinces many Christians that they do not need to open this gift of spiritual faith, but to make up their own unspiritual faith. Satan is the gateway into a faithless hell of eternal death and suffering, after we depart this passing world. Jesus is the Gateway into a faithful Heaven of eternal Life, full of Joy, Peace and Love with no more suffering. On the Day of Judgement, those who refused to repent (change) for their sinful and faithless lifestyle on earth or those who threw away their faith passport, will ask themselves: **was it worth it to be denied eternal Life?**

FEED ON DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

Jesus compares Himself to a committed Good Shepherd who stands by His flock. He cares for us with His Life, **by feeding us with divine knowledge on how to obtain eternal Life**. Sound doctrine is the divine teaching of Jesus and is like a healthy grass that feeds God's sheep. To practice or feed on God's Commandments or Divine Laws on earth, is to bear a sweet fruit that is pleasing to God and will bear an eternal harvest of Life, beyond the grave. To listen and take-in unsound doctrine, for the self-serving purpose of suiting one's unrepentant lifestyle, is spiritual food poisoning that kills the soul.

PRESERVED FOR HEAVEN

Not everybody likes the taste of Truth, because their senses have become tasteless to Faith, preferring the taste of Sin. This is why Jesus compares our faith to the likes of salt, saying that a tasteless salt is useless and does not enhance or preserve food. A soul without faith is like a grain of salt without taste. It does not season us spirituality for the greater Glory of God. Without faith, the soul will not be spiritually preserved or seasoned properly to have a true taste of Heaven.

IGNORE JESUS' VOICE AT ONE'S PERIL

To ignore the resonating Voice of Jesus is not wise. The word Vocation comes from a Latin word, meaning, **to listen**. Many people are deaf to Jesus' heavenly Call, because they have fallen for another voice, another shepherd, who is of this world. They wrongfully believe this dark voice and black shepherd brings comfort and happiness. We are compared to sheep because Jesus compared Himself to a Lamb, who willingly followed the Voice of the Father, to return to Him in Heaven, through the Sacrifice of the Cross and Resurrection. It is our route to Heaven too. We must not be afraid to carry and mount our crosses, for the purpose of making sacrifices for the sake of converting the black sheep in the ways of Christ. Prayer keeps us all on the straight and narrow Road to Heaven. Continued Easter Blessings and keep safe under the Mantle of Mary's protection.

Fr. Brendan.