



## PARISH OF ST. AGATHA

2ND/3RD MAY 2020

### VOCATION SUNDAY

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#### DO YOU KNOW THE SHEPHERD?

Bono from U2 was the summer guest at a famous poetry recital and music festival in Europe. It is told that he mesmerised the crowd when apparently sharing his inspiration for many of the band's hit songs. For example, he explained how one song contains several references to Jesus as *One Man come in the Name of Love* and *One Man come to Justify*. Christ again appeared to be the subject when Bono sang about *One Man betrayed with a kiss*, (Matt26:47-49). In the song, *I Still haven't found what I'm looking for* includes the verses; *You broke the bonds and You loosed the chains. Carried the Cross and my shame. All my shame, You know I believe it.*

In the U2 song *Vertigo*, Bono painted a picture of when Satan tried to tempt Jesus into worshipping him (Luke 4:7), presenting the world as a prize. **Bono sings**, *All of this can be yours. Just give me what I want. And no one gets hurt.* In the song *Magnificent*, the lyrics echo Psalm 100, *From the womb my first cry; it was a joyful noise.* In The bands song *Until the End of the World*, the lyrics imagine a monologue by Judas Iscariot to Jesus, again referring to the kiss (Matthew 26). *In the garden I was playing the tart. I kissed your lips and broke your heart, You, you were acting like it was the end of the world.*

The song, *It's a Beautiful Day*, Bono pictures the dove and the rainbow that Noah saw after the Flood in Genesis 8. He sings; *See the bird with a leaf in her mouth. After the flood all the colours came out.* In the song called *Grace*, God's grace is personified as a woman. When Bono sings that *She carries a Pearl in perfect condition*, he touches upon the pearl of great price in Jesus's parable (Matthew 13:45-46). Also, Mary carried the True Perfect Pearl in her womb and all of God's Grace flows through her. Another U2 song called 40 is related from Psalm 40. And the song *Oh Lord, loosen my lips* is an echo of Psalm 51:15.

The crowd were in awe of these stories and as Bono concluded, from the back of the room, an old man with a face worn by time, which impressed Bono, stood up and asked if he would mind reciting Psalm 23. Bono said that he would be delighted to recite it on one condition, that the old man would come up on stage and recite it himself after Bono. The elderly shy farmer reluctantly agreed.

Bono began in his beautiful unique voice; *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.* When he was finished, there was loud applause and a standing ovation. Bono then invited the old man up to the stage. In a trembling voice that was cracked by time, the old man began to recite; *The Lord is my Shepherd, there is nothing I shall want...* It is told that when he was finished, there was no applause, but neither was there a dry eye in the building. Afterwards, someone asked Bono what he thought produced the different responses in the crowd. Bono, thought for a moment and said, *The difference is that I know the Psalm 23, but this man knows the Shepherd. That makes all the difference.* Fr. B.

#### VOCATION SUNDAY - SHEPHERD OF OUR SOUL

Sadly, the Gift of Faith, received in Baptism, is not always opened by people. Faith enables us to hear God's calling Voice. In today's Gospel (Jn 10:1-10), Jesus clearly tells us that He calls us, **one by one** and that **the sheep hear His Voice**. Many ignore Him. Jesus describes Himself as a Shepherd and the Gatekeeper of Heaven. He explains how He is the Gate and that nobody passes through Him to eternal Life, except those who lovingly respond, in obedience to His Will, which is to live a life that doesn't offend God by sin. St. Peter tells us (Acts 2:14,36-41), to listen to His Voice calling us to **Repent**, by expressing regret & He will forgive.

#### STRANGER'S VOICE IS NOT FROM OUR BROTHER JESUS

Satan is referred to as the voice of a stranger, who calls people away from their holy vocation. If we listen to the voice of the devil, then prepare to be fed false information (doctrine) on how to get to Heaven. The devil convinces many Christians that they do not need to open the gift of faith, to access eternal Pastures. Satan is the gateway into a faithless hell of eternal death, full of 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 suffering. On the Day of Judgement, it will be too late to repent, we have to change now: listen & obey Jesus' Voice.

#### FEED ON DIVINE KNOWLEDGE OF TRUTH

The Sheepfold that Jesus talks about is the Church. He compares Church to a rich field full of healthy green pastures. This means it's full of sound teaching to graze upon, which will fill our souls with a spiritual healthy life of Faith. It produces a new sense of hearing and vision. It causes a belief in God, knowing that a Banquet awaits the obedient faithful, in Heaven.

#### 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 that of salt. Tasteless salt is useless and does not enhance or preserve food, A soul without faith is like salt without taste, it cannot preserve the spiritual life-giving grace, poured into our souls, through the hands of Our Lady. Sadly, when the time comes to enter Heaven, the soul is not in a preserved state of heavenly Grace. Faith is God's Creation and to claim that one lives by their own faith is the result of listening to the strange voice, which leads to the wrong gate.

#### IGNORE THE VOICE OF JESUS AT ONE'S OWN PERIL

We are compared to sheep because Jesus compared Himself to a Lamb, who willingly followed the Voice of the Father, calling Him to return back to Heaven, through the Sacrifice of the Cross. It is our route to Heaven too. We must not be afraid to make sacrifices for the sake of the Kingdom. God bless under the Mantle of Mary's Rosary this month. Fr. Brendan.