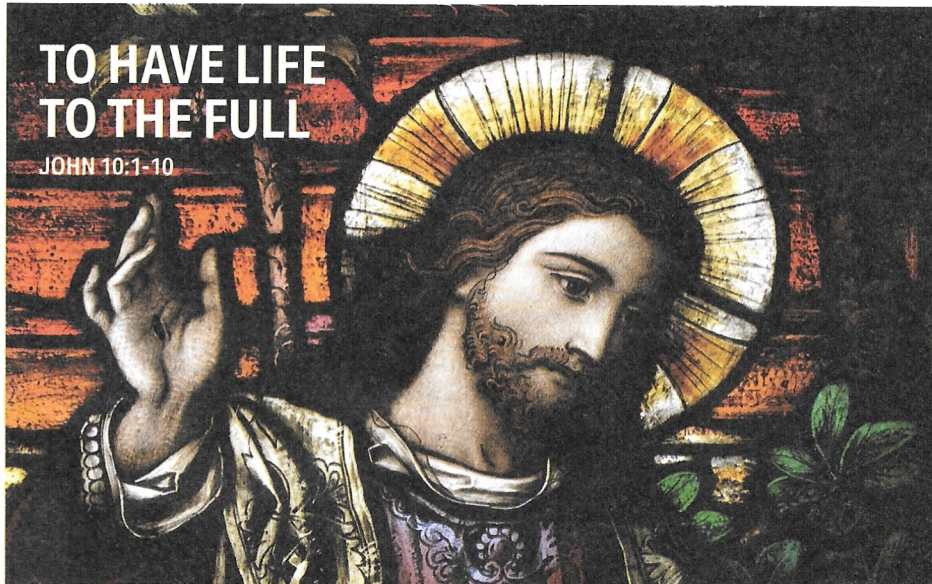


Sunday Message

4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE WORD

Year A • 26 April 2026 • Psalter Week 4



DO

Examine your life. Could you describe yourself as someone who is pro-life in everything you say and do?

PRAY

This is vocations Sunday. Pray for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life, and that all Christians will live out their vocation to preach the Good News. Pray also that people everywhere may experience the joy of living.

LEARN

It is through Jesus that we enter into the life of God.

Jesus is our good shepherd.

The final words of today's Gospel provide one of the shortest and most succinct statements of Jesus' mission: "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full." The chapter and verse are easy to remember: John 10:10.

SAY

"Lord, you are my good shepherd. Help me to follow you faithfully always. Amen."

"I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full" is Jesus' promise in today's Gospel. He comes to bring us the fullness of life.

The fullness of life is something that everyone who is truly human looks for. Many of us go to great lengths to try to enjoy life to the full. We want to have the latest and the best of everything. We attend self-help classes, seek the most rewarding careers, go travelling. Yet, despite all our efforts, we can still end up dissatisfied.

The Christian believes it is only in knowing Jesus that we will find real meaning and experience true life. But very often we are not good at really believing this or putting it into practice. Very often we look every place but in the right place. We forget what Jesus told us: he alone is the answer to all that we are looking for. He is our good shepherd. Follow him, listen to his voice, and we will have the fullness of life. We will experience the joy of living. ■

REFLECT

In today's Gospel, Jesus makes clear his wish for us: he wants everyone to have life and have it to the full. He wants everyone to enjoy the fullness of life, to experience life in all its beauty and potential, to treasure and support life in every aspect, in every respect.

It means opposing abortion and euthanasia. It means doing all we can to help young couples set up home and start a family. The Christian community, Pope Francis stated in his letter for the 2025 jubilee year, should be at the forefront in pointing out the need for a social covenant to support and foster hope, one that is inclusive and not ideological, working for a future filled with the laughter of babies and children, in order to fill the empty cradles in so many parts of our world.

Pro-life also means providing adequate health care and supports for those struggling economically or who are on the fringes of society. It means promoting a healthy work/life balance, so that we can spend quality time with loved ones and have

time for ourselves to unwind, to nurture our minds and passions, and to be able to enjoy life in its extraordinary beauty and richness. It means cultivating an attitude of gratitude for all we have been given and the blessings we can take too easily for granted. It means protecting our precious planet, which is God's gift to us to respect and cherish. It means being pro-life in everything we do, in our attitudes and in our actions, from womb to tomb.

Pope Francis put it like this: "Our defence of the innocent unborn needs to be clear, firm and passionate, for at stake is the dignity of a human life, which is always sacred and demands love for each person, regardless of his or her stage of development. Equally sacred, however, are the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned, the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm and the elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection."

He was pointing out that pro-life doesn't stop in the delivery room when a child is born. It covers the entirety of life, from beginning to end. It is to work for a world where everybody can experience the joy of living. Joy of living is the powerful phrase Pope Francis uses.

It means you cannot be pro-life and be indifferent to poverty and injustice. You cannot be pro-life and cut off money to aid organisations that help the poor. You cannot be pro-life and support the death penalty or genocide wherever it takes place or wars of conquest. You cannot be pro-life and at the same time be racist or bigoted or abusive. To be pro-life is to treasure all life as sacred.

The book of Genesis tells us that God saw all that he had made and found it very good. To have enthusiasm for life is to celebrate and delight in the gift of life God has given us. It is, in the words of Pope Francis, to recover the joy of living. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*The merciful love of the Lord fills the earth;
by the word of the Lord the heavens were made, alleluia.*

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
lead us to a share in the joys of heaven,
so that the humble flock may reach
where the brave Shepherd has gone before.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING Acts 2:14a, 36-41

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.
On the day of Pentecost Peter, standing with the Eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: 'Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.'

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.' And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, 'Save yourselves from this crooked generation.' So those who received his word were baptised, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 23(22):1-3a. 3b-4. 5. 6. R. 1

*R: The LORD is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.
Or Alleluia.*

1. 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;
he revives my soul. **R.**
2. He guides me along the right path,
for the sake of his name.
Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of death,
no evil would I fear, for you are with me.
Your crook and your staff will give me comfort. **R.**
3. You have prepared a table before me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing. **R.**
4. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the LORD's own house shall I dwell
for length of days unending. **R.**

SECOND READING 1 Peter 2:20b-25

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Peter.

Beloved: If when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL John 10:14

R: Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the good shepherd, says the Lord.

I know my sheep and my own know me.

R: Alleluia.

GOSPEL John 10:1-10

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

At that time: Jesus said, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.' This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So Jesus again said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone 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.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Grant, we pray, O Lord,
that we may always find delight in these paschal mysteries,
so that the renewal constantly at work within us
may be the cause of our unending joy.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*The Good Shepherd has risen,
who laid down his life for his sheep
and willingly died for his flock, alleluia.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Look upon your flock, kind Shepherd,
and be pleased to settle in eternal pastures
the sheep you have redeemed
by the Precious Blood of your Son.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

St Anthony of Padua

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Tel: 01772 725193
Email: stanthony.preston@lrcd.org.uk
Parish Priest: Fr Andrew Dawson
Annexe: 07792 256592
Social Centre: 01772 735963
Primary School: 01772 726621
Playgroup/Preschool: 07963 700591

Holy Family

Whitby Avenue, Ingol, Preston PR2 3YP
Tel: 01772 725193
Priest-in-Charge: Fr Andrew Dawson
(Resident at St Anthony's)
Primary School: 01772 727471
Covenant Books: 07396 796969
Sacrament of Reconciliation
(Confession): On Request

Mass Schedule for week commencing Sunday 26 th April			Intention	Last Weekend:
Sunday 26th April – Fourth Sunday of Easter				<u>Attendance</u> St Anthony's: 89 + 16 = 255
Today we shall use the third preface of Easter with the third Eucharistic Prayer				
Saturday 6pm (Sunday Vigil)	Mass at St Anthony's		Joe Rogers	<u>Collections</u> St Anthony's: £428.08 + £82.50 (Cards)
Sunday 9:30am	Mass at St Anthony's		The people of our parishes	
Monday 9:15am	Mass at St Anthony's		Helen Duffy	
Tuesday 9:15am	Mass at St Anthony's		Anthea Walmsley (RIP)	
Wednesday 10:30	Mass at St Anthony's	<i>St Catherine of Siena</i>	Requiem: Barbara Routledge	
Thursday 10:30	Mass at St Anthony's		Requiem: Hannah Baron	
Friday 9.15am	Mass at St Anthony's	<i>St Joseph the Worker</i>	Rosemarie Basile (LD)	
Sunday 3rd May – Fifth Sunday of Easter				
Saturday 6pm (Sunday Vigil)	Mass at St Anthony's		The People of our parishes	
Sunday 9:30am	Mass at St Anthony's		Teresa Smith (Anniv)	
Sunday 11:am	Mass: Holy Family School		Private Intention	

To donate to the weekly collection online (St Anthony's) scan the QR code below



Confessions: At St Anthony's 5:30-5:50pm Saturdays.

Baptism and Marriage: If you are a parent and would like to have your child baptised or are hoping to get married either in this parish or elsewhere (minimum six months' notice for weddings is required), please speak to Fr Andrew at the end of Mass.

Tea and Coffee: You are welcome to join us for some light refreshments after each of our Sunday Masses – 6pm (Saturday) and 9:30 at St Anthony's.

Prayer intentions

The Holy Father's Prayer Intention for April: For priests in crisis

Let us pray for priests going through moments of crisis in their vocation, that they may find the accompaniment they need and that communities may support them with understanding and prayer.

Cycle of Prayer: Eastertide: New members of the Church, Vocations, Human Work, The Church herself, The right use of the media.

We pray for the sick and the elderly, especially Jo Counsel, Bill Embery, John Mulholland, and David Fogell. For those who have died recently, especially Barbara Routledge, Hannah Baron, Jack McBride and Hilda McLaughlin, and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Eileen Jackson, Trish Cooper, Dudley O'Gara, baby Molly Walmsley, Marjorie Flynn, Gertrude & Frances Dewhurst, Alicia Evans, Ann Osbaldeston, Theresa Crook, Adrienne Hurley, Michael Crossen.

Father, may these, and all whom we have known who have gone before us, be received into the glory of the resurrection, won for us by your Son, Jesus, the Risen Lord.

The Requiem Mass for the late Barbara Routledge will be on Wednesday 29th April at 10.30am and the Requiem Mass for the late Hannah Baron will be on Thursday 30th April at 10.30am. May they rest in peace.

Testament – starts Wednesday 29th April: Over the next 8 weeks watch the first few chapters of the Acts of the Apostles come alive as a small group of followers of Jesus starts to spread the Good News of the resurrection. They face opposition, imprisonment and worse, but their numbers grow as they fulfil Jesus' command to make disciples throughout the whole world. See the trailer here: <https://www.angel.com/shows/testament-series>

St Anthony's Gutters: work has begun on the gutters of St Anthony's church, resulting in the closure of the St Anthony's Drive car park access. Please keep clear of the fencing around the scaffolding and try to avoid bringing a vehicle to St Anthony's if possible.

Message from Knit & Natter. If anyone has any wool they no longer require, there will be a box at the back of the church for donations. Thank you. Karen Hardman.

Lancaster Martyrs Pilgrimage: Walk in the footsteps of the martyrs to their place of execution, with stops for prayer along the way – the walk is quite steep, concludes with 12.15 Mass in the Cathedral. Bank Holiday Monday 4th May meet at 10.30am outside Lancaster Castle. We'll be joined by the Anglican Bishop of Blackburn.

Used Easter Cards: Used religious greetings cards can be repurposed by various parish groups. There will be a box at the back of church.

Please note that to allow for clear access to the fire exit under the tower the tables etc. that were stored there have been moved to where the shop was – which has in turn been given more visibility by being moved to the porch. Purchases from the piety stall can be made by placing the money into the green safe in the church.

Advance Notice: Corpus Christi Procession Sunday 7th June, commencing at St Walburges' Shrine Church at 2pm.

Fairtrade Stall: The next visit of the Fairtrade Stall will be next Sunday at St Anthony's.

CAFOD Sudan appeal: This month marks the third anniversary of the war in Sudan. It is a crisis that may not be in the headlines but it continues to devastate millions of lives. With your help, CAFOD is still working with the local Catholic Church to provide food, safe water and vital support to families fleeing violence. Any donation you can give (via the card machine) to CAFOD will help fund their on-going work.

The Social Committee is looking for new members. If you think you may have something to offer, or you are simply interested in knowing more, please contact to Karen at knitnurse58@gmail.com

St Anthony's Club: Have you renewed your membership for 2026? Please don't forget to renew your annual membership by popping in and speaking to the bar staff.

Holy Family Parish Meeting: Thank you to everyone who attended the meeting to discuss the future of Holy Family Parish, for your contributions and prayer. It is in the nature of these sorts of consultations and situations that there is often a time of processing the latest development and waiting on others. Please don't assume that nothing is happening in the meantime but rather use this as a time to hold each other in prayer. For the time being, there will be a monthly Mass at 11am in Holy Family School on the first Sunday of the month.

Thinking of being a priest? Come to the day of recollection and discernment! The day is for single men 16 years or over who are considering priesthood: Saturday 30 May 12.15pm – 2.30pm at St Peter's Cathedral, Balmoral Road, Lancaster LA1 3BT. Gather in the Cathedral for Mass at 12.15, followed by lunch and meeting with Bishop Paul. To book email Heather: Heather.Watts@lrcd.org.uk or Tel: 01524 841190. There is no charge. As well as meeting the Bishop, you will have the opportunity to get to know how discernment works and who can assist you. You will also meet many others from across the Diocese of Lancaster exploring a vocation to priesthood.

Students for the Priesthood for Diocese of Lancaster: We ask your prayers for the students for the Diocese of Lancaster who are presently in formation: Deacon Stephen Bamber: to be ordained priest: St Peter's Cathedral, Saturday 27 June. Chris Sumner: to be ordained deacon: St Paul's Basilica, Rome, Wednesday 17 June. And for those beginning or continuing formation with the Diocese: Alexander Kanaan, Ben O'Flynn, Dominic Standing, Paddie Denton, & Harry Rawcliffe.

Retiring Collection: this weekend for the Ecclesiastical Education Fund, which supports the initial and ongoing formation of priests and deacons for the diocese.

Anniversary Mass – Ann Fenwick: Ann founded the mission at Hornby in the 18th century and is an important figure in the cause for Catholic emancipation. The possibility of opening her cause for canonisation is being discussed. Mass will be offered in the medieval Anglican church of St Wilfrid at Melling where she's buried (possibly the first Mass there since the reformation) on 28th April at 7pm, followed by refreshments in the Melling Institute. Please let Fr John Millar know if you are attending on 01524 384820 or email john.millar@lrcd.org.uk. Bishop Paul is eager for people within the diocese to become more familiar with Ann's life.

Advance Notice: The Diocesan Pilgrimage to Walsingham will be 28 September to 1 October 2026. On the theme of "Mary, cause of our Joy." The all-inclusive cost is £360.00-£420.00. For more information and booking details contact Deacon Charlie Conner on 07711 345 176 or email charlie.conner@lrcd.org.uk The places will be limited, so please book in good time.

Mass Envelopes: A new supply of envelopes, suitable for requesting a Mass, has arrived and are available with the hymnbooks at the back of Church. Please either hand to Fr Andrew, place in the offertory baskets or through the presbytery letterbox.