

Christmas Day



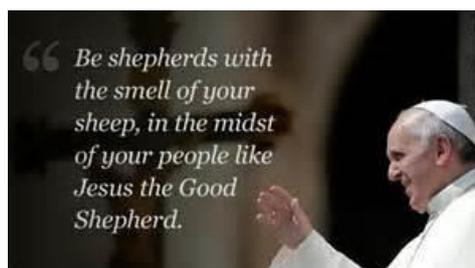
*For there is a child born for us, a son given to us
and dominion is laid upon his shoulders;
and this is the name they give him:*

Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace.

The angel comes, not to Mary or Joseph this time, but to shepherds watching their flocks during the night. The initial message is familiar, however: *“Do not be afraid”*. The Good News is proclaimed to the shepherds – news of great joy. A Saviour has been born, Christ the Lord.

Although we may not live in a rural setting where shepherds are commonplace, there are many “shepherds” in Bermondsey, in Southwark and in our world. We speak of Jesus as the Good Shepherd who loves each one of us. We see that Archbishop John is a shepherd to us, reflecting the gentleness and care of God in his Pastoral Care for the Catholic community in Southwark. We know that Canon Alan is a shepherd to us as he walks alongside us with compassion, love and tenderness. We, especially the Religious of the Archdiocese, are aware of Fr Jim’s pastoral kindness and concern for all those he meets.

Pope Francis says:



Yet we are all called to be shepherds. We are all called to listen to the message of the angel and to play our part in sharing the Good News with others as the shepherds did in Bethlehem. If we are to do as Pope Francis suggests to all those who are called to be shepherds, it will get messy. We will have to lift the sheep that are not clean, the sheep that are poor, and the sheep that are vulnerable. We have to imitate Jesus, the Good Shepherd who, in the end, laid down his life for his sheep.

*We honour Messiah
With the Christ-candle flame
Our Christmas Day candles
glad tidings proclaim
O come all ye faithful
Rejoice on this day
As God comes among us
The Christian's true way*



Tune: Away in a Manger

Although many Masses at Christmas have the Nativity story from Luke as the Gospel, one Mass often uses the beginning of John's Gospel instead. Here we have the wonderful image of Jesus as the Word, Jesus as the Light and Jesus the Incarnation of God.



Last week in our reflection, we prayed that each of us may be a living witness to the incarnation as together we proclaim: God with us – Emmanuel.

As the Word, the Light and the Incarnation, Jesus is the Shepherd who guides us, the Friend who walks with us, the Love which surrounds us: God with us – Emmanuel.

So let us ask our Incarnate God to be with us, bringing us home in his light, especially from the darkness of Covid-19.

*Starlight, star bright
Lead us on through the darkness.
Starlight we share you tonight
Bring us home in your light*



May you all have a blessed and peaceful Christmas