

3 May Easter 4 White

Readings Acts 2.42-47

1 Peter 2.19-25

John 10.1-10

Opening Words

We are the Easter people, and Alleluia is our song.

There is nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God, no height nor depth, no death nor life, no isolation nor social distancing, no virus nor scaremongering, no ill health nor anxiety, no riches nor debts, nor things present nor things to come can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. AMEN!

Roman's 28 amended Vanda Perrett

Collect of the Day

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.

Gospel John 10.1-10

Jesus said to the Pharisees: ¹Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ²The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.' ⁶Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷So again Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the gate. Whoever enters by me

will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.'

Reflection

On a very personal note, Jesus as the gateway is an especially important reading for me. This is the call I received to come to Land's End; a call to come and be a gatekeeper here, keeping the gate open for all who desire to draw nearer to God, to keep the gate open for those who need sanctuary, to keep the gates open for everyone, because God's welcome is truly for everyone regardless of their past or present, their sin and their mistakes. It is poignant to be reading about entering through the gate when our buildings are locked.

Jesus talks about the sheep knowing his voice and hearing him call them by name, they follow him, it sounds beautifully easy. But behind these words are hours of patient trust building. Animals do not automatically respond like this. You must train them to trust, and to be obedient. While some may talk about training through punishment and withholding kindness, the most successful training for a long term relationship is based on kindness, care, love and consistency. The sheep know the voice can be trusted; the voice is one that leads them to a place of safety yes. However, to reach safety often we must navigate danger! The sheep know they can trust the shepherd in good times and bad to lead them into the right paths, to ensure they will have food, water and shelter.

The shepherd is not a stranger but a beloved member of their family and this is what Jesus offers to us all. To welcome us into his family and love us with consistency, with care and kindness, and no matter where we go, he will lead us back to safe shelter as long as we trust him. My prayer for each of us as we navigate this time of challenge and isolation is that we can trust in God to lead us, and remember Jesus is our good shepherd and will lead us through the gate to eternal life.

Prayers

Merciful Father, you gave your Son Jesus Christ to be the good shepherd, and in his love for us to lay down his life and rise again: keep us always under his protection, and give us grace to follow in his steps; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayers for our world by Katherine Baxter, amended VP

God of all creation, you hold the depths of the earth in your hands. You are closer to us than the air we breathe. Fill our souls with your wonderful love and light. Give us strength and courage to reflect that love and light in the world. Let us never shrink back from who we are in you or hide our light inside ourselves. Renew in us a sense of joy, painting the dark shadows around us with your light, your love and your salvation. Hear us today as we pray for a world too often darkened by hatred, evil, power and greed.

Through the gateway we must take, **Let your light shine.**

God of power and might, your broken world cries out from the depths, a world dominated by the darkness of pain and suffering. We think of the on-going and deepening fear and grief generated by Covid19. We pray for those who are serving in hospitals, Care Home, the Doctor's surgeries, and Emergency services, for the shop keepers and farmers, for the fishing folk and the chemists, for the garage keepers and the vets, for all whose essential work puts them at risk to enable our needs to be met.

May they see your light, feel your strength and power and know the truth of your promise that we shall not be overcome by the dark shadows of life or illness

Through the gateway we must take, **Let your light shine.**

God of compassion and grace, we share with you our love and concern for people in a dark place today. We have on our hearts the friends and loved ones of the victims of fear, illness, violence and hatred. We pray that they will find your strength in the compassion and love of those around them. Let your light shine through the darkness of all their pain and their suffering.

Through the gateway we must take, **Let your light shine.**

God of life, we ask for your healing power on those who are enduring pain and illness. We especially think of those most affected by Covid19, and all those we name quietly in our hearts (*short silence*) We share the grief of people close to us, who have recently lost loved ones. We remember that as we weep with the grieving, we also embrace the joy of knowing You have welcomed them to their eternal home,

Through the gateway we must take, **Let your light shine.**

God of love and hope renew in us a deeper sense of who we are in you. Help us to be aware of your presence each and every day. Make us instruments of love and praise. May our words, actions and lives be living examples of your forgiving, healing, life-giving love. Amen.

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