

## Shellrock Benefice

### Service for the Sixth Sunday of Easter, May 17th 2020

Good Lord we come before You in a spirit of thanksgiving for all that you provide for us each day of our lives. Amen.

#### Collect

Risen Christ, by the lakeside You renewed your call to your disciples: help your church to obey your command and draw the nations to the fire of your love to the glory of God the Father. Amen

#### Readings

Acts 17 , 22-31; Psalm 66, 7-18; 1 Peter 3, 13-22; John 14, 15-21

#### A Reflection



I included this picture a few weeks ago in my service sheet and I'm including it today for two reasons. Firstly, it's Rogation Sunday, and as you know in times gone by this would have been an important festival in a rural area such as our own. Rogation Sunday is the day when the Church has traditionally offered prayer for God's blessings on the fruits of the earth and the labours of those who produce our food. The word "rogation" is from the Latin *rogare*, "to ask." Historically, the Rogation Days (the three days before Ascension Day) were a period of fasting and abstinence, asking for God's blessing on the crops for a bountiful harvest. Although many in our benefice enjoy growing their own vegetables, it is good to be reminded of our dependence upon those who work so hard to bring food to our tables and who bear the responsibility for the environment in which we live.

The second reason for my inclusion of the picture is that for me it illustrates well the love of our Heavenly Father. Whatever is happening to us, His love is there for us and in these difficult times remains unchanging. In our moments of loneliness, isolation, alienation and hopelessness, the Good Shepherd responds to our deepest yearnings for community by offering to calm our fears and insecurities. The Good Shepherd is a powerful image for us who particularly now are hungering for connection. Let us hold that image in our hearts.

### **Suggestions for prayer:**

For all nations caught in the grip of a pandemic

For our country and its leaders and the difficult decisions that are required to be made

For all people known to us who are ill at this time

For the bereaved

For those who are risking their lives in the care of others

For ourselves that we may continue to be patient at this difficult time.

For Rogationtide: Remember, Lord, your mercy and loving-kindness towards us. Bless this good earth, and make it fruitful. Bless our labour, and give us all things needed for our daily lives. Bless the homes of our parishes and all who live within them. Bless our common life and our care for our neighbour. Amen.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, For ever and ever Amen

### **Blessing**

May the grace of the Holy Spirit enlighten our hearts and minds. Amen