

**Reflection – April 25<sup>th</sup>.**

**This week's service of Holy Communion is at 11am. on Sunday at St. Nicholas, Willoughby.**

**There is also an on-line breakfast service from St. Mark's, Flecknoe available from 9am. on Sunday from the Leam Valley website; [www.leadvalleychurches.com](http://www.leadvalleychurches.com)**

**Please do contact me if I can help you in any way or if you would like a chat anytime.**

**With my love and prayers to you all and those whom you love,**

**Barbara**

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*This week's reflection written by Dr. Alec Parker, one of our Benefice Readers (Readers are authorised lay people trained to preach within the Diocese) which is based on the Gospel reading for this Sunday "The Good Shepherd"*

Although it happened a week ago, many of our minds, not to mention the media, are still filled with our final farewell to HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

The other prominent matter of world concern is the Covid pandemic. In Britain we are thankful for the way it has been managed, but in the rest of the world the situation is dire. To date there have been over 3 million deaths. Our Gospel reading today is the parable of the Good Shepherd, which I am bold enough to believe has a strong resonance with both of the above events.

At the Queen's coronation Prince Philip promised to serve Her Majesty for the rest of his life, and then proceeded to do so. The best royal ethic is that of service. Philip did many things for others, but will be specially remembered for his Award scheme which gave hundreds of young people, many from disadvantaged backgrounds, the opportunity to achieve what only the privileged of Gordonstoun had previously been able to do.

In the Covid pandemic the role of the British NHS in looking after those lost to the virus has been way beyond the call of duty. Our vaccine experts have excelled too. In particular, the storable AstraZeneca brand offers the real possibility of helping the rest of the world. They have said they would not take profit on this; as a shareholder, I am happy to agree.

Jesus' instruction to be the Good Shepherd comes directly from The Father. His sheep are to be from many folds ' I must bring them also and they will listen to my voice ,so there will be one flock, one shepherd.

We pray that this may be so in our lives and in our times.

With my love, Alec.

**John ch. 10 vv. 11 – 18**

<sup>11</sup> “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. <sup>13</sup> The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

<sup>14</sup> “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— <sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. <sup>17</sup> The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. <sup>18</sup> No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

*Prayer for this Sunday (“Good Shepherd Sunday”)*

*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.  
**Amen.***