

## Monday Eastertide week 4

### Acts 11:1-18, Jn. 10:1-10

The Gospel is another one of the “I am” statements in John’s Gospel. As Chris noted on Friday, when Jesus uses the words “I am” He is using the sacred and unpronounceable name of God which was given to Moses at the burning bush (Ex. 3:14). When using these words, Jesus is proclaiming that He is God (and it was for this reason that He was crucified, see Jn. 19:7) and each of the “I am” statements reveal a little more about the God we worship and adore.

In yesterday’s Gospel we focussed on the second part of this section of John’s Gospel where Jesus is saying that He is the Good Shepherd. Today, in the first part of this section, Jesus says “I am the gate of the sheepfold” (Jn. 10:7). What is a sheepgate? In rural first century Palestine, at night, flocks of sheep would be gathered and kept in a sheepfold under the protection of one shepherd. In the morning the various shepherds would come and call out their own sheep. Thieves may try go get in over the fence, but only the true shepherd enters via the gate.

We have two images here; Jesus is the Good Shepherd who calls and leads us, but He is also the entrance through which we enter into the fold. We cannot take a shortcut or try to get in through the side. Anyone who has seen “one man and his dog” type of events will see that the sheep often try to go their own way, but the competition is only completed when all the sheep are safely in the pen and the gate is closed. The aim of our life us to go into the sheepfold through the gate; that is enter heaven through the salvation won for us by Jesus Christ.

Finally, this passage ends with one of the most amazing sentences of all, that Jesus came to give us life; a life that is full. Jesus reveals to us a God who calls us and leads us as a shepherd calls and leads His flock, and also that the only way to salvation (safety) is through Him. A full life is one that is lived in Christ by the grace of the Holy Spirit on earth and this is the preparation for an even better life in heaven afterwards.

This message is brought home in the first reading when St. Peter recounts his experience of the Holy Spirit descending on the gentile (pagan) family of Cornelius. The life of the risen Christ given by the Holy Spirit is for all, not just for the Jewish people. This is something that the Apostles struggled to mentally accommodate at first, and sometimes we can be like them. Jesus came that all may enjoy His life, and all may live it to the full. How can we help others enter into the fullness of life in Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life? (Jn. 14:6).