

## THE GOOD SHEPHERD

*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want*

On Sundays, I try to have a lie in. Instead of getting up at my usual time 7am, I try to sleep through until 8am. However, I still wake at the usual time and always struggle to stay in bed. Two Sundays ago, I woke at my usual time feeling unsettled so I got up to make myself a cup of coffee. As I sat with it in my office for a quiet hour, I thought about my life, past, present and future and my faith. There have been in my life moments of doubt even moments of disbelief. I have even tried consciously to not believe. Because my mind cannot envisage a God as great as He is, it tempts me to reject his existence but deep within there is always something that makes me unable to not believe.

I started then to think about those many people, so dear to me, for whom I pray regularly. People who carry crosses much heavier than the one that has been allotted to me and I thanked God that I had not been tested as they had. I realised that I have already lived most of my life and there cannot be that many more years ahead. I have tried to live a good life but, I wondered, have I been good enough. Have I put myself out enough for others? I have lived an ordinary life and have not done anything remarkable. Have I accomplished the special mission for which God has made me, the one that only I can do? Does He have more in mind for me? Will I be strong enough to cope?

Later, as I entered church, I still felt uneasy. I picked up a parish newsheet in the porch and made my way to my usual seat. I like to get there early to prepare myself for mass. I started reading "Our Faith on Sunday", the short reflections on the front of the newsheet and suddenly realised what day it was, Good Shepherd Sunday. The reflections uplifted me and I became overwhelmed. It was as if they had been written just for me to answer all the questions which had been troubling me since I awoke. I knew that there is nothing I have done, nothing I have failed to do, no sin that I have committed that cannot be forgiven. For He who humbled himself to share in our humanity was prepared to suffer and die for us to wash away our sins. I thought of that beautiful poem "Footsteps in the sand" and realised that Jesus has been with me throughout my life and in those most difficult times he has supported me. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who has always watched over me and protected me. I can look forward to the future with confidence. I trust him, He will be with me. He will not abandon me.

I may not have lived a remarkable life, nor have I changed the world but I have followed and put my trust in the one who leads me, my Good Shepherd.

*My soul He doth restore again,*

*And me to walk doth make*

*Within the paths of righteousness*