

The image of the Good Shepherd is one of the most endearing images of Christ. It is an image that captures the qualities we associate with Jesus as the compassionate one who is willing to lay down his life for his flock. Fr Jules Chevalier, the founder of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, was especially attracted to this image of the Good Shepherd. In the MSC Constitutions we find written:

In Jesus we see the Good Shepherd who goes in search of those who are lost, who knows his own and gives his life to save them. He shows us the Father's deep concern for those who are considered unimportant and whose rights are disregarded. We learn from him who is gentle and humble of heart, who eases our burdens and gives us rest. He also makes demands and speaks with authority. To those who come to him, he gives his own strength and courage to help them live and work for justice and peace.

The image of the Good Shepherd also resonates with Anzac Day commemorations. On Anzac Day Australian and New Zealander's have always reflected on the nature of sacrifice, of laying down one's life for others. And yet we need to be careful in speaking about sacrifice. There is a growing tendency, especially fuelled by politicians, to glorify the past and to use the past to construct a jingoistic mythology of nationhood.

The reality of past wars and conflicts to which Australia has been involved certainly speaks of heroism, mateship and sacrifice, but it also speaks of the futility and wastefulness of young lives as a consequence of war.

Anzac Day is a commemoration not a celebration. It commemorates both the sacrifice *and* the futility of war.
Lest we forget.

***Easter blessings,
Gerard***