



# St. Augustine's Church Limerick Day of Prayer for Vocations 26th April 2026

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## Dogs and Sheep and Shepherds *They never follow a stranger (John 10)*

### Mass Times

#### Monday-Friday

7.30am, 8.30am,  
10.15am, & 4pm

#### SATURDAY

8.30am, 10.15am

Mass for the Sick

3.00pm

#### SUNDAY

9.00am, 11.15am  
& 7.30pm

#### CONFESSIONS

#### MONDAY & FRIDAY

10.45am-12 Noon

3.00pm-4.00pm

#### SATURDAY

10.45am-12noon

2.30pm-4pm

All Masses are  
'live streamed'  
at St. Augustine's

Gospel stories of shepherds prompt memories of shepherds I've seen with their flocks and their families as they lived their nomadic life. The chief shepherd walked ahead and his flocks followed. We used to see it on the Gamboru road. Gamboru was an outstation of St Augustine's, Maiduguri. The road was so worn out that you approached a pothole with caution lest it be too late to stop when you saw the donkey resting in it. The town itself is in the top right-hand corner of the map of Nigeria beside Lake Tchad. A place with dust, scorching sun and winds to flay. The glutinous black mud of the short wet season leaves a legacy of skewed walls and damaged houses as the quick drying-out make a giant spider's web of deep cracks in ground.

A few years after I left, the IRISH TIMES carried a *Reuters* report dealing with the same place:

*Scores of gunmen surrounded Gamboru on Monday. They sprayed automatic gunfire around the market town which was full of traders gathering before the heat of the day. Witnesses said they burned down houses and in some cases slit people's throats. A police officer said the death toll had reached at least 125....One woman said "I counted 85 dead before I lost interest in counting. This is horrible...They burned 17 trailers loaded with cows ...."* Later reports put the death toll around 300.

There were a few hundred Catholics there: nearly all immigrants from the states of the south come to make a living. They never thought it their permanent home. History had taught them insecurity. The common ambition was to build a house in their native place and return there with enough money to retire in relative security. Impervious to hardship and discomfort they did this by hard work and creative use of sharp wits. The church had a good mix. Traders of every stripe dominated. Living off them and one another were customs officers and smugglers, immigration officials and illegal immigrants, traffic police and cavalier transporters. These latter would carry sheep and goats, cattle and corn as well as fish from the lake to their native states a thousand miles to the south. Their cargo for the return journey would be mainly yams, oil of coconut and palm, and goods manufactured in workshops of their brothers who had stayed at home. A liberal attitude towards the laws of the land prevailed. Their generosity was also liberal; the visiting priest could rely on a warm welcome and gifts of a couple of sheep or goats and the occasional bullock, to take home with him. Priest or no priest, they came to church often to praise God and pray for one another. They had no "shepherd" strong enough to guard the gate of their sheepfold that morning when the thieves and brigands rode in with their automatic firearms to massacre Muslim and Christian alike.

Back to shepherding: no irreverence implied here, strong people sometimes treat the weaker as dogs do sheep.

The dog without control or discipline reverts to his predatory heritage with sheep the prey. Other dogs join in and a pack forms as the canine equivalent of the Dickensian mob shouting "Thief" for the fun of the chase and enjoyment of gore. No less vicious than the sentiment evident in recent quoted remarks of a currently powerful person *"We may hit it a few more times just for fun"* and *"we'll just keep bombing our little hearts out,"*

*Another dog, the collie for instance, is highly trained and disciplined to do the herding part of shepherding. This animal exercises a control that seems hypnotic. Aloof and forbidding, but benign. We've had that kind of shepherd too.*

Finally, paragons of shepherding, dogs whose main instinct is to protect. One such as the Patou of Alpine pastures.

*Patou have been used since the middle ages to guard flocks of sheep from predators. As puppies, the dogs are brought up with the sheep, with minimal human contact. Therefore, the dog regards the flock as its family, which it will always protect. Unlike other working dogs, the Patou is not raised to respond to orders from a human "master," but to want to protect the flock on its own. (Emily Geldard).*

The Patou make no distinction between those they see as predators—whether wolves, foxes or hill-walkers. Now there's a shepherd after the heart of the late Pope Francis, a shepherd with the smell of the sheep.

J.L.



### St. Augustine's Church Child Safeguarding Representatives.

Fr. Flor O'Callaghan O.S.A.

Fr. John Lyng O.S.A.

Ms Geraldine van Dam

Mr. Robert Ryan

Ms Charlotte Gleeson

Mr. Tom Walsh



## Thought for the Day

What is distinctive about our faith as Christians? We do not believe in a system of ideas or even in a higher ethics: we believe in a person, who gives life "a new horizon and a decisive direction" (Benedict XVI). John's Gospel makes this clear with its great I am sentences, one of which we hear today: "I am the gate." Naturally, we think the gate to what? The gate to life to the full. The risk today is to set our expectations low, to be happy with less. But the Gospel calls not to be half alive, but to be fully alive. Let us enter by the gate himself, because the gate to life is always open.



**Prayer** :Often, loving Lord, we find ourselves astray and defenceless. Let us recognise your voice, calling us one by one as you call us to follow you.

source: [www.tarsus.ie/readings](http://www.tarsus.ie/readings)

## Feast of Our Mother of Good Counsel Celebrated on Tuesday 28th April

We will celebrate the Feast of Our Mother of Good Counsel this Tuesday 28th at the 10.15am & 4.00pm Masses on the day. We will have our Novena prayers and Hymns and we would like to invite you to join us for this great Augustinian Feast.



### Novena Prayer

We turn to you, our Mother of Good Counsel  
as we seek to imitate your faith—filled life.

May we be lead by the same Wisdom which God sent forth from heaven to guide you  
along unfamiliar paths and through challenging decisions.

Intercede for us with your Son as we go forward joyful in hope,  
seeking to be united in mind and heart on our way to God.

O Virgin of Good Counsel hear our prayer as we look for guidance,

Pray for us to our loving and merciful Father,

to your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit, giver of all Wisdom  
one God forever and ever. Amen

Regeneron  
Great  
Limerick

**RUN** Sunday  
May 3rd

O'Connell St, Roches St & Shannon St  
will be closed from 8.00am -7.00pm

Clare Garden Festival  
Ennis Showgrounds  
Co. Clare  
Sunday, 26th April  
from 11am



### St. Mary's Cathedral

#### Lunchtime Concert

Tuesday 28th April at 1.15pm  
John Doyle (Tenor) ,  
Colette Delahunt (Soprano)  
Irina Dernova (Piano)  
Admission Free

## Blood Donor Clinic

Wednesday 29th /Thursday 30th April  
Greenhills Hotel, Ennis Road  
16.20pm - 19.40pm

To Book an Appointment : 1800 222111

**pieta**  
**Darkness**  
**into**  
**LIGHT**

Saturday May 9th [www.darknessintolight.ie](http://www.darknessintolight.ie)

## Grow Mental Health

Grow Mental Health. Peer Support Groups for anyone experiencing mental health concerns. New meeting on Tuesday' at 10am at Grow Office, Henry Street, Limerick along with other meetings times. Contact Celia at 086-1526966 for further information.

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