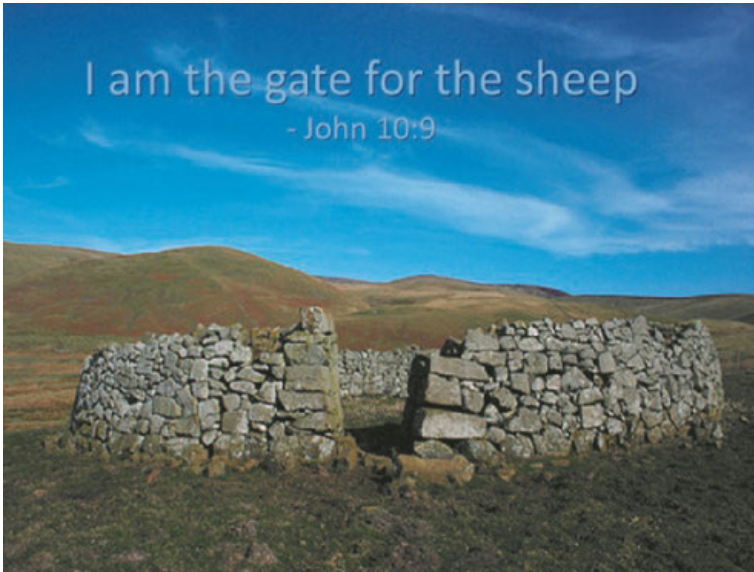


FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



“Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate but climbs over elsewhere is a thief and a robber. I am the gate for the sheep. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture.”

Where I come from, in South Wales, there are sheep dotted all over the hillsides. But growing up in the city, I was unfamiliar with the practices of shepherding, and what it entailed to be a shepherd.

It was not until I went on a hiking trip to the island of Corsica that I learned what Jesus meant when he said ‘I am the gate for the sheep.’ In the moun-

tains of Corsica there are sheep pens, formed of large circles of dry-stone walls, with openings for the sheep to go in and out, but no door. A local hiker explained that the shepherd herds the sheep into the pen at night, and then lays across the opening, to prevent any animal from getting in to attack the flock. The sheep can only go in and out through the shepherd, who is the door!

We, as the church, are the flock of Christ. We can either enter the sheepfold through the gate, or climb over elsewhere.

Think about it, every day, in every conversation we have, in every interaction with others, in every decision or choice we make, we either enter through Christ or climb over some other way.

Those who ‘climb over some other way’ think they know best, they take matters into their own hands, they cannot be bothered, and they look for the easy way out. It is, in other words, the way of pride and arrogance.

To enter through the gate, however, is the path of the meek, the obedient, those who allow themselves to be led by the shepherd.

Psalm 121 says “The Lord is your guardian, he neither sleeps nor slumbers, ...by day the sun will not smite you, nor the moon by night, he guards you from all harm, he guards your life.” These words are experienced as reality for those who enter through Christ, the shepherd, and the door.

Which way will you choose today?

Fr. Sean