

Thoughts on the Daily Word

4th Week of Easter. *Monday 27th April. Readings: Acts 11:1-18; Psalm 41; John 10:1-10.*

In this time, we are exploring and embracing the Mysteries of our faith. It is good to remind ourselves that the term ‘mystery’ is much more than our modern understanding of the term. We tend to focus on the secrecy or unknown bit of a mystery. In the ancient world it meant more of a revelation or plan that was unfolding. There was an element of the need to understand and to know the key to that revelation. Since most of life was mysterious the world was full of mysteries. Hence the many gods and philosophies. Inevitably there could be a focus on elitism, to understand or know the revelation gave you a special place and power. There were many ‘mystery’ religions around the first centuries AD. Some of these were secret societies for the, usually male, elites of the time. The Christian mysteries were different. They were open to all, even the poorest. The emphasis was not on rules but on knowing Christ through the Holy Spirit. Today’s Gospel describes Jesus as a gatekeeper that allows in anyone who knows his voice, his Word. The story in Acts outlines the beginning of the major shift in the Church from being exclusively Jewish to being open to all peoples and nations. In reality it was a difficult move for the new-born Church. To leave the security and protection of Judaism and step out into an often-hostile world. Listening to Jesus is a dangerous business, following in his footsteps requires courage and faith, both anointed by the Holy Spirit.