Sermon: **I am the good shepherd** (John 10.11)

All those ‘I am’ sayings! Jesus sounds like he’s bragging. Really he is pointing out how different he is to the rest of us, yet remaining one of us. Today I am going to focus mainly on Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

Jesus has a thing about sheep. Eg John 10.1-18.

Eg in Matthew’s gospel we have: **Be on your guard against false prophets; they come to you looking like sheep on the outside, but on the inside they are really like wild wolves.** (7.15)

**As he saw the crowds, his heart was filled with pity for them, because they were worried and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.** (9.36)

**You are to go to the lost sheep of the people of Israel.** (10.6)

**Listen! I am sending you out just like sheep to a pack of wolves. You must be as cautious as snakes and as gentle as doves.** (10.16)

**Jesus answered, “What if one of you has a sheep and it falls into a deep hole on the Sabbath? Will you not take hold of it and lift it out?** (12.11)

**Then Jesus replied, “I have been sent only to the lost sheep of the people of Israel.”** (15.24)

**What do you think a man does who has one hundred sheep and one of them gets lost? He will leave the other ninety-nine grazing on the hillside and go and look for the lost sheep.** (18.12)

**Then he will divide them into two groups, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.** (25.32)

**Then Jesus said to them, “This very night all of you will run away and leave me, for the scripture says, ‘God will kill the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’** (26.31)

Although other animals we part of farming then, the relationship between shepherd, and sheep and the outside world was similar to that of Jesus, the Church and the outside world. TEXT.

I could try to tell you all about the relationship between a shepherd and his/her sheep, but I feel you probably know more than I do. The point is that there is a special bond between Jesus and us, the same kind of intimate knowledge, care, willingness to put himself out for the sheep. TEXT.

Relief teachers get a hard time; the students think they don’t know them and don’t care that much.
Small shop owners who call you by name make an impact on you, which you don’t get from supermarkets.

**“the sheep hear his voice as he calls his own sheep by name”** (John 10.3). God’s intimacy to us is special.

Cf Pastoral Care Team; Parish Profile 2011 - pastoral care is so important for many congregations from their minister – one who in some strange way represents Jesus to them.

NB Jesus talking to Peter in John 21.16:**A second time Jesus said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” “Yes, Lord,” he answered, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Take care of my sheep.”**

This is why some churches call their leader, pastor. TEXT.

NB Not only do these explain something about Jesus but they tie in with the burning bush as found in Exodus 3 where Moses meets with God who gives his name as ‘I am’. Jesus is not just giving information about his role but is also declaring he is God, or at least is speaking with the authority of God.

TEXT is also an encouragement for church leaders (not just presbyters) to be like Jesus. For Jesus came down so that we might rise to be like God!