

Last Saturday morning, Anzac Day, with the rising of the sun, I went out to raise the flag in front of the Church. Very quickly I was joined by two men dressed in their suits with their full medals on. They asked if they could stand with me as I played the Last Post and Reveille on a speaker. They told me they were sailors who lived in nearby units.

It was a very moving ceremony. During the very short ceremony I remembered my grandfather who was at Gallipoli, and the many RSL members that I have known, who impressed me by their generosity of spirit.

The Last Post and Reveille have early origins in the shepherd calling his sheep home. The ceremony reminded me of the Good Shepherd that we celebrate this Sunday. It made me reflect on the sacrament of priesthood. In the last few weeks, I have been visiting police in the hotels. The reports I have had back is how grateful police have been in our visiting. I am not so silly to think it is about me personally but rather I believe - and the Church believes I make present the hope of Christ and his Church to the people I visit as a priest. I suppose I am very fortunate to see this clearly in my service to the police. It is a great privilege to see the Good Shepherd made present to the world.

I am very aware, that because we are not physically together at Mass, we are not seen as the Church, the community of Christ. I feel like a shepherd without sheep. I know we are spiritually united, but it means so much more when we are together at the celebration of the Mass. We as Church, with priests and laity together, make the sacrament of Christ his Church present to the world, each time we celebrate the Mass. It is human nature to appreciate something when it is withdrawn, I suppose I am appreciating more the visual identity that we have when we celebrate Mass together. In the meantime, we remind ourselves to live the Mass, as we make Christ present through ourselves, our families, our homes and our workplaces.

Fr Paul O'Donoghue