

## Reflection on the Fourth Sunday of Easter – Good Shepherd Sunday

**First Reading: Acts 2:1-4a, 36-41**

**Psalm 23:1-3a. 3b-4, 5, 6**

**Second Reading: 1 Peter 2:20b-25**

**Gospel: John 10:1-10**

A few weeks ago, a parishioner called me and told me about a new TV show on YouTube called “The Chosen”. It is about Jesus calling the Twelve Apostles. The show really emphasizes that when Jesus calls them, he is calling them **by name**. You can see as they are called **by name** to join him, they melt before him.

In the times we live in, names don’t seem to be as important as they once were in the past. We sometimes feel like we are just a number. Even with all the possible ways we can connect with people by social media, we can still feel lonely, lost, unimportant, and worst of all, not loved. This causes us to feel disconnected and anxiety can well up in us. Humans are made to be with others and be connected. This virus does the exact opposite! It separates us.

Jesus says, *The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice, as the shepherd calls his own sheep **by name**, and leads them out.* Jesus calls us **by name**. The Shepherd does not call them by group or by a phrase such as “hey you”. The Shepherd calls them **by name** to follow him. Our name is very important to us; when we hear our name, we listen.

Stop and think about it; this is amazing! Jesus calls us and makes the first move to lead us to him. We have nothing to do with it, nothing! We only need to respond, and he even helps us to respond to him. He calls you and me **by name**! Yes, the all-powerful, all-knowing God who created heaven and earth, maker of the Universe, stars, sun and moon, knows each of us personally **by name**. Wow! That should give us great peace!

So, for example, let's say you're at Giant shopping in the bacon aisle. Someone you don't know very well greets you **by name**. The fact that person called you **by name** causes you to have an immediate connection with that person. You take that person more seriously and you are more likely to respond with greater interest. You feel closer to that person.

Now, let's say you're at Giant again buying some bacon and Jesus greets you **by name**. Wouldn't you have the same immediate connection with Jesus? Wouldn't you take Jesus more seriously and feel closer to him?

During this strange time of being separated, at times we can feel lonely and forgotten. We are not forgotten! Know that Jesus knows you better than you know yourself.

## Jesus knows you personally **by name!**

Let us continue to pray for an end to this virus so we can all be safe and return to our normal lives.

Also, let us continue to pray for those infected with this virus and all those who are affected indirectly – especially our healthcare workers, cleaners, and all those who are considered “necessary” workers. We humbly ask, Lord, for those of us out of work, that we may safely return to work very soon.

God bless,

Fr. Mark