

2 Pastoral Letter

Clergy

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Fr. Martin Bui, Parochial Vicar
Fr. Don Romito, Retired Priest
Fr. Eamon O'Gorman, Retired Priest
Deacon Ken Kleckner
Deacon Jim Merle
Deacon Jorge Ramirez
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Jerry Cates, Plant Manager
Henrietta Moreno, Administrative Asst.
Andrea Rodriguez, Receptionist
Eric Brunter, Youth Ministry
Katherine Gonzalez, Youth Ministry
Liliana Duran, Children's Faith Formation
Paul Nguyen, Music Ministry

Baptisms

Please complete the online registration form at www.stjosephplacentia.org/baptism and you will be contacted by a Deacon.

Anointing of the Sick

Please call the Parish Center office.

Funerals

Please call the Parish Center office.

Marriages

Please call the Parish Center office at least six months in advance.

I think I have a confession that I need to get off my chest... I have never met or seen a shepherd in my life. Being born and raised in California will do that I suppose. Yet in my line of work the imagery of shepherding is so prominent and used universally that I feel I should meet one! What I imagine whenever I read of shepherding in the Bible is the feeling I get when I take care of one of my dogs. The desires to protect them, to nurture them, care for them, and allow them to live the best possible life free of worry or fear. From what I've read about shepherding this isn't far from what shepherds did and still do. I'm sure that many of you can relate to this as well. Many of you may have never met a shepherd before but yet you can relate to those desires. Maybe you relate to it as a parent, as a friend, caretaker of a loved one or pet, or many other different and unique ways. However you relate to it, we all know that feeling of caring deeply for something and wanting to take care of and nurture it.

In our first reading today in Jeremiah we are presented with powerful words about God's relationship with Israel. God says "I myself will gather the remnant of my flock." How crazy is that to think that God will be the one to care for the Israelites in such a capacity. God feels such a love and connection with Israel that God claims them and tells them who will bring them back together. Not an intermediary but rather God! What a powerful thought that God works in such direct fashion.

In today's Gospel we see one example of God fulfilling that promise made in Jeremiah. Jesus, God incarnate, sees the people and gathers them into his flock. Not only does Jesus gather them into his flock but he does so because his heart was so moved by the sight of them. When I think of this scene in my own mind, I think of how I feel with my dogs when they need help and that stirring that I get in my heart, that feeling of being willing to go to any lengths to help them. That same stirring happened in Jesus' heart! We see such humanity and love in the person of Jesus in such a small act. We have a God who cares for us and loves us, not only abstractly or through others but directly in the person of Christ.

I want to end this reflection by encouraging all of us to spend time thinking about what this means in our own lives. What does it mean that we believe to have a God who directly loves us, cares for us, and shepherds us? What does it mean to have a God who shares our humanity with us so much that God's heart stirred at the sight of those looking for answers? God blesses all of us.

Amen.
Eric Brunter