

## Jesus, the Good Shepherd

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we all continue to shelter in place, I hope you and your loved ones are well and safe. Each week, Jesus continues to give us his message of courage, strength, and support, especially as we face the difficulties of our time. This Sunday is Good Shepherd Sunday. We have no other shepherd but Jesus Christ who laid down his life for us His sheep. Why would He go to the great extent of giving up His life for you? Today's gospel tells us that Jesus came that you may have life and have it more abundantly.

We may be feeling the opposite of an abundant life during this time of pandemic. It seems that life has been squeezed out of us on so many different levels of existence. However, when the going gets tough, remember the image of Christ, the Good Shepherd carrying a lamb upon His shoulders. Jesus is always there to carry you upon His shoulders. When your feet become weak; when your heart is heavy; when you feel hopeless; when your faith is tested; when your loved one or friend is sick; when you desire normalcy in your life; when you feel isolated, lonely, forgotten, and depressed; do not lose hope. Jesus is there to lift you up and place you on His healing shoulders. But He can only do so if you let Him. He knows your voice, but do you know His? There is someone who can help us recognize the voice of the Jesus, the Good Shepherd: Our Blessed Mother Mary. She knows the voice of her Son.

This month of May is a special month dedicated to Mary. It is a time for us to go Mary through prayer, that she may lead us to her Son Jesus Christ. Just like you, the human family yearns for the comforting voice of the Good Shepherd. This is a time to entrust yourself to the care and protection of Our Blessed Mother Mary by praying the rosary even more, especially as we all self-isolate at home, and living by some of those virtues Mary is known for, like the virtues of humility, gentleness, care and charity toward other people, promoting unity and peace among individuals. By so doing, we will always remain in green pastures where Jesus, the Good Shepherd leads us.

### **Other Prayers During the month of May:**

#### **Protection Prayer**

We fly to thy protection, O holy Mother of God;  
despise not our petitions in our necessities,  
but deliver us always from all dangers,  
O glorious and blessed Virgin. Amen.

#### **Memorare Prayer**

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,  
that never was it known  
that anyone who fled to thy protection,  
implored thy help  
or sought thy intercession,

was left unaided.  
Inspired by this confidence,  
We fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins our Mother;  
to thee do we come, before thee we stand, sinful and sorrowful;  
O Mother of the Word Incarnate,  
despise not our petitions,  
but in thy mercy hear and answer them. Amen.

**FORMED**

On FORMED this week, with Sunday's Gospel reading about the Good Shepherd, our parish recommendation for adults is a short reflection from *Opening the Word* with Teresa Tomeo. Children will enjoy learning about God's love for them by watching *The Little Lost Sheep*, an episode from the *Jesus Stories* series.

May the peace of Christ remain in your hearts and in your homes. Stay safe and well, and let's keep each other close in prayer.

May God bless you and keep you.

In Christ,  
Fr. Anthony Ahamefule