

St. Mary's Catholic Church

Fourth Sunday of Easter

May 3, 2020

Dear Parishioners:

One of the main ways in which we are different from the rest of creation is our ability to communicate in detail with precision. Yet at times we are careless with our words. Take for example, the Episcopalian priest in a remote place in England who sent this telegraphed message to his bishop: "My wife suddenly passed away. Please dispatch a substitute for the weekend."



Today is often referred to as "**Good Shepherd Sunday**" because of a very important concept and word used carefully in today's Scripture readings. The word and concept is "**shepherd.**" Sheep and **shepherds** were a major part of the culture and economy of the Middle East in Jesus' time as well as today. The term **shepherd** contains within it the tender meaning of guardian. The concept of the **shepherd** as being a guardian occurs frequently in the Old Testament; perhaps the most striking reference being Isaiah 40:11 "Like a **shepherd** he feeds his flock; in his arms he gathers the lambs, carrying them in his bosom and leading the ewes with care." Today's Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 23) describes all the things that the Lord our **Shepherd** does for us- His sheep. In today's Gospel Jesus refers to Himself as the **Good Shepherd**.

In today's Gospel passage (which is Jesus' only parable cited in John's entire Gospel) Jesus uses two metaphorical images describing Himself as both the **Good Shepherd** and the **Gate to Life**. In Jesus' day the entire villager's sheep were put into a communal pen or a cave at night for protection. In the morning each **shepherd** would call out to his sheep and when the sheep recognized his voice they would leave the pen or cave and follow him. The relationship between a **shepherd** and his sheep was so special that the sheep would only respond to his voice and not to another's. The **shepherd** calls his sheep by their name and they will follow him because of this recognition. Thieves, strangers and outsiders could not fool or trick the sheep into following them since the sheep did not recognize their voice. Thus in the parable of the **Good Shepherd** Jesus identifies Himself as **the Shepherd** and it is through His **shepherding** that we (sheep) will have life and have it more abundantly.

Jesus also calls Himself the **Gate** for the sheep. "**Gate**" is another name for door. Jesus is the only **gate** (door) that provides access to salvation. It is only by believing in Jesus and following Him that we are saved and gain access to eternal life. Strangers will appear and try to mislead us but we must **not** listen to their voice of falsehood. We must only listen to the voice of the **Good Shepherd**.

Every day so many voices shout at us, demand from us and try to seduce us. However if we listen to and follow Jesus (the voice of compassion, joy, peace, love, justice and mercy) we will begin to learn how to discern the manipulations and falsehoods in the voices and noises that surround us. The challenge facing all of us is to listen to Jesus' voice in the quiet of our hearts and in the center of our spirits. If we do so we can hear the voice of the **Good Shepherd** calling and leading us through the **Gate** to the Kingdom of God. Have a blessed week.

Love & prayers,
Fr. John

P.S. Today we celebrate World Day of Prayer for Vocations. Let us pray for our youth and young adults as they discern their "call to holiness" in choosing their vocation to Married Life, Single Life, Consecrated Life or to the Priesthood.

Weekend Masses

Sat May 2	5:00 p.m.	Ann Wiechart, Murphy & Immele Families
Sun May 3	8:30 a.m.	Mary Zaleskie
Sat May 9	5:00 p.m.	Jim Alt, George Donaldson
Sun May 10	8:30 a.m.	Kathy Sehlhorst, Gene Baderstcher

SUNDAY COLLECTION



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Readings for May 10, 2020

Fifth Sunday of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 6:1 – 7

2nd Reading: 1 Peter 2:4 – 9

Gospel Reading: John 14:1 – 12

