

## Good Shepherd Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> of Easter

As many of you know, I grew up in the Mid-west on a family farm. As a farmer, my father was a very practical man, and would often spout off very profound common-sense kernels of wisdom, as only a farmer could. Many of them, I will NEVER be able to share from the pulpit.

One that I can though. I remember driving in the country with the family, and we passed by a barn filled with livestock, and the wind was blowing so that we took in a good whiff of the barn's odor. As my sisters winced and pinched their noses, Dad inhaled deeply and said... "Mmmmmmm.... Smells like money."

I tell you that story, because today is Good Shepherd Sunday, called so, because of the Gospel that we hear today. Jesus tells us in the Gospel of John, "I AM the Good Shepherd."

You may remember that several years ago, Pope Francis at the Chrism Mass in the Vatican was preaching to his clergy, and in his homily, he asked his priests to BE good shepherds, and to do so, that they had to take on the smell of the sheep.

And isn't that exactly what Jesus has done, in the ultimate way. He not only took on our smell, but he took on our flesh and blood, not lording it over us, but becoming one of us. And then to not lose any of us, which the father had given him, he laid down his life for the sheep.

But, he goes on to say, "I lay down my life in order to take it up again."

Okay..... so..... Christ is the Son of God. But he leaves that behind, and become a man.... And as a man.... He suffers and is killed... so that He may Rise....and live again.

**Why** does He do all of this???

It's to save a bunch of stupid sheep from the Big Bad Wolf. It's to save US from sin and death. It is because He loves us so much, that He wants us to also be, Children of God.

Hear again what St. John says, "Beloved; See what love the Father has bestowed on us... that we may be called... the Children of God. Yet so we are... Beloved, we are God's children NOW!"

Christ paid the price. He was the stone **rejected**. He was rejected by the Jews, the chosen people of God since the Old Covenant with Abraham to build the Kingdom of God. But they rejected HIM, and He has become the cornerstone of the New Edifice, the people of the New Covenant, The Church.

The Church, of the children of God. The Church of Jesus Christ the Nazorean, by whose name the human race will be saved, by which WE are saved.

WE are God's children NOW, sheep though we be, but OUR shepherd is the great "I AM": God, and he not only cares for us.... But he FEEDS us. And with WHAT does he feed us??? With His OWN Body and Blood... so that as He became like us.... So WE may become like Him.

What does that mean?

What will THAT be like?

John tells us, "we are God's children NOW... and What we shall be... has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed.... We shall Be Like HIM!!! For (then) we shall see HIM... AS... HE... IS....!

And then, we, shall also smell like the Shepherd.

Mmmmmmmm. The sweet odor of .... Everlasting Sanctity