

ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – APRIL 25, 2021

Dear Parents and Parishioners,

Today we read in the Gospel the story of the Good Shepherd. This shepherd is not a hired man nor is the Good Shepherd a potentate. The Good Shepherd is a godly person in worker's clothes, who mingles with the sheep, and the smell and scent of the flock is on the shepherd.

A good shepherd is not one who demands, insists, and imposes, but rather one who gathers, encourages, and walks with the flock. The shepherd understands the individuality of the sheep.

This individuality reminds me of the Harvard Law of Animal Behavior. "Under controlled experimental conditions of temperature, time, lighting, heating, and training, the organism will behave as it damn well pleases."

The human species is not much different. Each person walks in their own shoes. A good shepherd is not on top of his sheep but rather walks in their midst. In the diversity of the sheep lies beauty.

I am impressed with this congregation of St. Joseph. Individuality prevails and unity exists. COVID has shuffled our lives. In church we shuffled our seating without complaint. "Pew rent" seats were gone years ago, many years ago. I thank all of you for giving this up for a while in this war-torn environment.

No matter where we sit in the restored St. Joseph Church, our unity is found in a singleness of purpose and in the Eucharist. During these days, the shepherd has taken us to a different pasture, but the grass is green and the food nutritious. The Good Shepherd enables each one of us to find a patch of grass that fulfills our need. Thank you for pasturing together.

Planting, and Gardening, and Manicuring

Our rural setting is an oasis of peace. People walk the cemetery, admire the gardens, play in the Grotto, and enjoy the children frolicking at recess time.

I want to especially thank all those people who make this bucolic scene so rewarding. Ladies under the guidance of Joan Mencer and Carol Kern and a few men are now working our gardens. They are planting, cultivating, staking, and praying. Mark Simonetti and Bill Hasan keep up the playground and mow the lawn.

An expeditious force of five or six men have now planted ninety-six trees in the cemetery. Calvary Hill will someday be a pine forest. The East boundary of the cemetery is marked by Dawn Redwood trees. Dawn is the symbol of growing light.

This exterior beauty of nature is complemented by the interior beauty of St. Joseph Church. Individual talents and labor have truly made your church an oasis of peace, tranquility, and unity. Thank you.

Fr. Tom Acker, S.J.
April 25, 2021