



APRIL 25, 2021 | 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER

## HOLY FAMILY PARISH

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## ***The Indispensable and Dependable Good Shepherd***

**T**HERE ONCE lived a shepherd who was known to be very hard working and committed to his flock of sheep. One fateful day he woke up to find himself down with a severe fever. He found it hard to move from his bed and as the day progressed, he became worse. His wife was worried as the flock of sheep started to bleat uncontrollably, signaling that they needed to go out for food and water.

Suddenly the shepherd's little son, Davis, seeing his father's critical condition offered to take the flock out to pasture. However, his mother objected at first, saying that he may not be able to do the work. The boy assured his mother that he had learned from his father and that he was capable of taking care of the flock of sheep and above all, he is personally connected to each and every one of them. Even his father from his sick bed confirmed that the boy could do the work very well.

As Davis was going out, his father spoke from his sick bed and told him to stay close to the flock and not to leave them alone for any reason. His mother advised him to ensure that they were taken to the right place where the pasture is green and full so that they can feed well. His old grandfather who was sitting outside and who also supported him earlier, asked him to look out for the weak ones and give them support. His father spoke again, telling him that

he is the support and guide of the sheep and without him they will be lost.

After all the instructions and reminders, Davis left with the flock. As he marched, they followed him. At some points he would stop to check if they were all doing fine. He called each by its name and it would respond by bleating joyfully. He met other shepherds on the way; often they passed each other with their flocks but none of his sheep followed the other shepherds, not even by accident; they stuck to their leader. At some points he would carry the weaker ones and they continued to march on to where the flock had enough green pasture and a running stream of water.

When the day was ending and it was time to go, Davis got the flock together. He was preparing to go when he heard the sound of the royal drummers! The king was passing with a royal procession. It was not easy in those days to see the king. Some people spent their entire life on earth without seeing the king. Davis thought about seeing the king in person and how gracious it would be to tell the story back home.

Davis saw the other shepherds leaving their flocks and advancing to the hill from where they could see the royal procession. He wanted to join them when he remembered what his father told him: "Stay close to the flock and never leave them alone for any reason!" And the second instruc-

tion: "You are the support and guide of the sheep—without you they are lost." He knew why his father said that; because of the wild animals—especially wolves.

Davis' thought was confirmed! As the others left to see the royal procession, a hungry wolf that had been hiding emerged from the bush and started to attack one of the flocks of sheep that one of the shepherds left behind. Seeing the wolf Davis gave a loud shout: "WOLF! WOLF!! WOLF!" Instantly the other shepherds turned back and even the king and his guards emerged with their chariots and pursued the wolf and killed it.

After dealing with the wolf, the king sought to see the boy who alerted everyone about it. When the King learned that he was able to see the wolf because he stood by his flock and did not leave them; he was pleased with him proclaimed him the King's Shepherd and the head of all the shepherds in the kingdom. How expedient it is for every shepherd to be constantly at the service of the sheep: parents, teachers, leaders, the government, etc.

Today, the fourth Sunday of Easter, is known as Good Shepherd Sunday. From the story we heard, we can recommend the little boy Davis for his thoughtfulness, especially his decision to defend the flock of sheep by not leaving them alone to go and see the royal procession. It is in like

manner and more that our Lord Jesus Christ declares today that “I am the Good Shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” Note well: he used the definite article “the”. This means that there is actually one good shepherd and he is the one.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the shepherd with a difference because he is so protective of the sheep to the extent that he lays down his life for his sheep against any external aggression (John 10:15). Furthermore, this quality is what our Lord Jesus Christ shares with God the father who is also known as the Shepherd of His people Israel (Psalm 23; Ezekiel 34:11-15).

An attentive search into the Bible would show that God preferred shepherds to take up most leadership roles. Practically all the Patriarchs were shepherds: Abel (Gen.4:2), Abraham (Gen.21:28), Isaac (Gen.26:14), Jacob’s sons (Gen.37:12) and Moses (Exo.3:1ff). King Saul and King David were Shepherds. Among the prophets some were shepherds like Amos.

The work of a shepherd was a very challenging one within the Jewish setting. The following important functions of a shepherd would help us to understand the position of our Lord Jesus Christ as the indispensable and dependable shepherd or, put in the words of Peter in the First Reading, the only name through which we can be saved:

**Individual Knowledge of the Sheep:** The shepherd knows the sheep individually and even calls them by personal names. He knows when they are hungry and feeds

them, he knows when each is sick and attends to it. Simply put, everything about the sheep is comprehensively known to the shepherd. When we relate this to the claim of our Lord Jesus Christ, we see that he is indeed the Good Shepherd *per excellence*. He knows us personally; Isaiah (49:16) says our names are written on the palms of his hand. He feeds us when we are hungry, not only with physical food ( MT 14:13-21), he also feeds us with spiritual food; his body and blood (John 6:54). He is further attentive to us when we are sick physically and spiritually ( MT 9:5-10).

**Leading the Sheep to Right Spots:** It is one thing to lead others and another thing to lead them to the right places. Most people are lost today because they were led to the wrong places by those they depended on. A good shepherd is one who knows the best spots for the sheep and leads them there (Psalm 23:1-2). This is one of the greatest attributes of our Lord Jesus Christ who came to lead us into eternal life (John 12:50).

**Defending the Sheep:** Without a shepherd the flock of sheep is defenseless and susceptible to destruction by enemies. It is thus the work of the shepherd to see to it that the sheep are protected. This is a superlative work of God as we learned from David (Psalm 23:4) where he says: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I fear no evil, for there you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me.”

In appropriating this role of the Good Shepherd which he shares  
(Over)

## PASTOR

Fr. Eric Anokye  
eanokye@richmonddiocese.org  
(276) 385-7312

## OFFICE MANAGER/ BOOKKEEPER

Lydia St. Peter

## OFFICE HOURS

Mon–Fri 9:30AM – 2:30PM

Please call the parish office to make arrangements for the **Sacraments of Baptism, Anointing of the Sick or Holy Matrimony** as well as funerals. **Reconciliation** is available from 30 minutes before a scheduled Mass.

## MASS TIMES

### SATURDAY

4PM – St. Joseph’s  
6PM – St. Mary’s

### SUNDAY

9AM – St. Elizabeth’s  
11:30AM – St. Theresa’s

### MON | WED | FRI

10AM – St. Theresa’s

Cover image:

Philippe de Champaigne, *Le Bon Pasteur*, 1650-60



with God the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ in the gospel today maintained that the Good Shepherd stands to defend the sheep against intruders. This simply means that he is apt in defending and protecting the sheep. One peculiar thing about our Lord in this role is the fact of laying down his life for the sheep; dying so that the sheep could live (John 15:13).

**Maintaining Unity Among the Sheep:** A discordant shepherd cannot have a coordinated and united flock. Real unity is not a mechanical act of fixing and re-fixing. It comes from genuine disposition of fellow feeling. The shepherd sees to it that he is one with the flock and that the flock is also united as a community. On this account our Lord Jesus Christ prayed for unity and oneness among the sheep as he is one with the father (John 17:21). He further anticipated the convergence of all under one flock and one shepherd (John 10:16).

If our Lord Jesus Christ, as we have outlined, is the Good Shepherd there is an urgent need for us to become the good sheep. As the Good Shepherd he is also the Good Leader in the same way we are expected to become good followers. The characteristics of good sheep and good followers include the following:

**Attentive listening:** “The sheep that belong to me listens to my voice” (John 10:27). Being attentive to the Word of God is life.

**Willingness to follow:** The beauty of listening lies in following. The invitation that was given to the fishermen still resonates today: “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men” (MT 4:19).

**Unity with the shepherd and the other sheep:** We cannot individually make up a flock. This means that our unity is our identity. In the Second Reading today the apostle John renders the identity as *children of God*. Our Lord did pray fervently for this unity (John 17:21).

**Corrigibility:** Sheep are known to be flexible when it comes to accepting corrections. As sheep of the Lord the Good Shepherd there is need for us to always accept corrections and be ready to retrace our steps.

Have a glorious Fourth Sunday of Easter.

## Science and the Real Presence

BY GENE VAN SON, *Catholic Stand*



Dr. Ricardo Castañón Gomez is not well-known to many Catholics. But he should be.

Atheist Richard Dawkins has apparently never heard of Dr. Ricardo Castañón Gomez either. Dawkins tweeted recently that Catholic belief in the Eucharist is madness. Had Dawkins heard of Gomez and the results of Gomez's scientific investigations into the Eucharistic miracles of Argentina and Tixtla, Mexico, he might not have tweeted his tweet!

Dr. Gomez is a scientist. He's also a former atheist. He became a Catholic after leading his first scientific investigation to examine what appeared to be a bleeding consecrated host. Recently he led a second investigation. Both investigations, as far as I'm concerned, provide proof of the Real Presence in the Eucharist.

### EUCCHARISTIC MIRACLES

Dr. Gomez led the scientific investigation into the 1996 Eucharistic miracle in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He also led the investigation into the 2006 Eucharistic miracle in Tixtla, Mexico.

In both instances, consecrated hosts appeared to be bleeding. In both instances samples taken from the hosts proved to be blood and living human tissue. And in both instances the tissue was living muscle tissue from an inflamed human heart. Also in both instances, the blood was type AB.

These findings match the findings of a 1971 scientific investigation into the 8th century Eucharistic miracle of Lanciano. What's more, the AB blood type in all three cases matches the AB blood type found on the Shroud of Turin.

And even more recently, in 2013, in Legnica, Poland, samples taken from a consecrated host that appeared to be bleeding were also scientifically examined. The tests once again showed that the samples were of inflamed heart muscle.

So in four separate scientific investigations, in four different countries, samples of consecrated hosts that appeared to be bleeding have been scientifically examined. And in all four instances scientists said the samples were living human heart muscle tissue. If this does not prove the Real Presence in the Eucharist, I don't know what would.

### **MORE PROOF**

But it gets even better.

In 2004, eight years after the host in Argentina was first found to be bleeding, Dr. Gomez brought another sample of the host to Dr. Frederick Zugibe. Zugibe was then one of the United States' most prominent forensics experts. Gomez asked him to examine the sample, but Gomez did not tell Zugibe anything about the sample.

Dr. Zugibe told Dr. Gomez that the sample he examined was that of living muscle tissue from a human heart. Zugibe also said the tissue came from a person whose heart had been severely traumatized.

Dr. Zugibe was amazed when Dr. Gomez informed him that the sample had been obtained eight years earlier. Zugibe told Gomez that the cells were still living when he examined them. He asked Gomez to explain how this could be so when the sample was eight years old. Gomez then told Zugibe that the sample was from a consecrated host. Zugibe's amazement turned to astonishment.

Also, in the samples taken from the hosts in both Lanciano and Argentina, live white blood cells were present. Yet white blood cells "die" within a few hours after being exposed to air. The Lanciano blood samples were over 1,200 years old.

To me these miracles show that what the Catholic Church teaches on transubstantiation and the Eucharist

is true. And no other religion on earth can say that science has proven what it teaches is true.

### **CATHOLICS SHOULD KNOW THIS**

But atheists like Dawkins think Catholics are mad to believe in the Real Presence. Practitioners of other religions may think Catholics are crazy as well. And even members of other Christian denominations might think Catholics are crazy to believe in transubstantiation.

But every Catholic should know that we are receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist when we receive Communion. Yet as the July 2019 Pew Research Study revealed, many Catholics also do not believe in the Real Presence.

If only more people knew what science has to say about the Eucharist!

### **UNINFORMED?**

You will get about 550,000 results if you Google the phrase "Eucharistic miracle of Argentina." And you will get about 28,500 results if you Google "Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano." So there is plenty of information available about these two Eucharistic Miracles. Why more people, and especially Catholic people, are not aware of these miracles is curious.

My wife and I make it a point to tell the kids in the eighth grade Faith Formation class we teach about these two miracles. When we tell them about the miracles and the results of the scientific investigations they are spellbound. When we talk about these miracles, we have the complete and undivided attention of the entire class. The Real Presence becomes real.

Faith Formation instructors in classes throughout the U.S. and the rest of the world should make note of this. Miracles—the Eucharistic miracles, along with the Marian miracles at Fatima, Lourdes, and Guadalupe—ought to be at least one lesson in the lesson plan for the year. Young people are being told today that science has all the answers. In these four Eucharistic miracles, science speaks quite loudly.

It's possible your children or grandchildren have not heard about any of these miracles. Or perhaps they have not heard of the scientific investigations into them. Maybe you should make it point to educate them!

*mass intentions*

**Date Intention**  
**4/24 SATURDAY**  
 4PM St. Joseph parishioners  
 6PM St. Mary parishioners

**4/25 SUNDAY**  
 9AM St. Elizabeth parishioners  
 11:30AM Virginia Shea †

*council members*

**PARISH COUNCIL:**

Tonya Hylton, Frannie Minton, Ralph Shawver, Cindy Deskins, Barbara Jones, Donna Lambert

**FINANCE COUNCIL:**

Kathy & Bob Buchanan, Randy Bolling, Doug Vance, Anne Danko, Jim Talbert, Jackie Shawver, Janet McDonagh

*please pray for*

Louise Serreno*	Lucas Boyd
Margie Stutso *	Doug Tabor
Margaret Shawver	Ralph Heldreth
Billy Akers	Elizabeth Managan
Scotty McBride	Chris Jessie
Gerry Hankins	Leo Brown
Clarence Moore	May Anne Rynne
Lexi Cox	Carolina Ferrare
Sarah Wall	Junior Aiken
Paris Whisher	Mary Spencer
Tammy Bennett	Shirley Hylton
Margaret Wasilewski	Anne St. Peter
Nic Ulate	Rayburn Minton
Elizabeth Gregory	Jeanne Hash
Frannie Minton	Philip & Pat Imel
Sue Bailey	Lara Marshall
Christian Lambert	Virginia Shumate
Shane Neal	Jim Shumate
Tiffany Hladek	Doug Vance
Tom & Sandra Bost	Andrew Satmary
Archbishop John Kwofie	Frank Mauceri
Carolyn Wade	Lori Hale
Stacy Hall	Dee Gentile
Pete Belcher	Glenn Harrison
Willie Hylton	Ray Ann Betzares
Bryan Gunter	Chris Lester
Michael Beavers	Donna Petro
Rick Hall	

*stewardship of treasure*

Donations Received as of April 18 (Week 42)		
CHURCH	ATTENDANCE	RECEIVED
St. Joseph's	11	\$354
St. Elizabeth's	20	\$510
St. Mary's	11	\$660
St. Theresa's	38	\$1,136
Total Offertory	80	\$2,660
Outside Donations		\$1,478
Year to Date Received		\$99,748
Goal		\$92,884
Ahead/Behind Goal		+\$6,864

**OUTSIDE DONATIONS—THANK YOU!**

St. Francis, Staunton, VA: \$1,478

**BUILDING FUND**

St. Joseph's: \$642 | St. Theresa's: \$850

## HOLY FAMILY NEWS

Mass continues to be livestreamed Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 10AM from St. Theresa's and the church will be open for anyone who wishes to attend in person. The 11:30AM Sunday Mass at St. Theresa's will also continue to be livestreamed for those who are not able to join us.

Have you checked out Fr. Eric's "**Cast into the Deep**" column on our Facebook page? Fr. Eric carefully crafts a reflection every day on the readings. Use it daily and grow your faith!

[facebook.com/holyfamilyswva](https://facebook.com/holyfamilyswva)

### THANK YOU:

Frances Jackson and her family wish to thank everyone for their prayers during her sister's passing. They feel blessed to have such a wonderful church family.

## ANNUAL DIOCESAN APPEAL

If a kid asks her parents for a dog, she might hear this response: "If you take care of it." The logic is simple: human beings respond to responsibility. We tend to treat things better when they belong to us.

Jesus knows this, and shows us in today's Gospel that His love is not the love of a hireling, who runs away when faced with trouble. Instead, He loves like the Good Shepherd, who lays down His life for His sheep, precisely because they are His sheep. When we have a stake in something, we tend to invest in it.

God has entrusted each of us with this parish community. We are all truly members of it, and we all have a stake in it. The Annual Diocesan Appeal is a great way to imitate the Good Shepherd by caring for what belongs to us, as opposed to merely using it like a hireling.

Do we really believe that our parish is ours, that it's been entrusted to us as a gift from God? If so, what should our commitment through the Annual Diocesan Appeal look like? And if not, why not? God wants us to be a part of the fold, because He knows that responsibility and relationship are the only ways to grow in love. Please consider making a gift as a response to Christ's call to be a good steward.

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birthdays & anniversaries:

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APRIL

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**BIRTHDAYS**—28: Kacie Pham | 29: Columbia McDonough | 30: Julian Whited

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