

**The Bells of St. Mary's
The Church of the Immaculate Conception**

**Fourth Sunday of Easter
May 3, 2020**

From Fr. Anthony Ekanem, MSP

~ Good Shepherd Sunday ~

This 4th Sunday of Easter is known as Good Shepherd Sunday or Vocation Sunday. Please remember to pray for an increase in awareness to the call of the priesthood and religious life today. The image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd dominates the entire readings of today's celebration. We can trace this imagery back to the Old Testament. This fantastic representation of Jesus as a model tells us how close Jesus is to us and how close we should be to Him. On this Fourth Sunday after the celebration of our Lord's resurrection, there is also a subtle scriptural shift to the second half of our Easter season as draw close to Pentecost experience. No more about the empty tomb, no more about the locked doors where the apostles were, nor what happened on their way to Emmaus. Instead, we hear Jesus Christ contrasting a type of relationship of His love for sinners and with that of the Pharisees' contempt of sinners by saying, "I am the Shepherd." Not, I am a shepherd, or I will become a Shepherd. But I am the good Shepherd, and I am the gateway to a new life. Those sacred words of Jesus carry a profound and unique meaning.

The writers of the New Testament readings today were concerned with bringing to our attention who Our Risen Lord is and how we are to relate to Him. In today's Gospel reading from John 10:1-10, we see the Lord as both:

- the gate of a sheepfold through which we should enter into safety. "Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep." John 10:7,9.
- the Shepherd, whom we should follow, "as the shepherd calls his own by name and leads them out, the sheep follow Him." John 10

Let us take a brief look at the historical aspect of a shepherd:

In the Old Testament

The image of the Shepherd is often applied to God as well as to the leaders of the people. The book of Exodus represents Yahweh several times as a Shepherd. The prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel compare Yahweh's care and protection of His people to that of a shepherd. "He is like a shepherd feeding his flock, gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against His breast and leading the mother ewes to their rest" (Is 40:11). Ezekiel represents God as a loving Shepherd who searches diligently for the lost sheep. Psalm 23 is David's famous picture of God as The Good Shepherd: "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters; He restores my soul" (RSV, 2nd Catholic Edition). The prophets often used harsh words to scold the selfish and insincere shepherds (or leaders) of their day. (Jeremiah 23:1) "Doom for the shepherds who allow the flock of My pasture to be destroyed and scattered." Ezekiel 34:2: "Trouble for the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Shepherds ought to feed their flock."

In the New Testament

Jesus is the Good Shepherd of His flock. He makes three claims in today's Gospel reading. There are:

1. He knows His sheep and His sheep hear His voice: Just as the Palestinian shepherds knew each sheep of their flock by name, and the sheep knew their Shepherd and His voice, so Jesus knows each one of us, our needs, our merits, and our faults. He loves us as we are, with all our limitations, and He expects us to return His love by keeping His words. He also speaks to us at Mass through Sacrament of the Eucharist, through Scriptures, through His priests, parents, friends, and events of our lives. Sometimes, "God whispers to us in our pleasures, He speaks to us in our consciences, and He shouts to us in our pain!" (C.S. Lewis).
2. He gives eternal life to us, His sheep, by receiving us into his sheepfold and giving us Faith through Baptism, and then he strengthens that Faith in Confirmation. He supplies food for our souls in the Holy Eucharist and the Divine words of the Holy Bible. He makes our society holy by the Sacraments of Matrimony and the priesthood (Holy Orders).
3. He protects his sheep by placing them in the loving hands of His Almighty Father. Without Him to guide us and protect us, we are easy prey for the spiritual wolves of this world, including Satan and his minions.

In chapter ten of John's Gospel, Jesus adds two more roles to those of the Good Shepherd. He goes in search of stray lambs and heals the sick ones.

- Jesus heals wounds of our souls through the Sacrament of Reconciliation and strengthens us in illness and old age with the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.
- Jesus dies for his sheep. Just as the shepherds of ancient days protected their sheep from wild animals and thieves by risking their own lives, so Jesus died in expiation for the sins of all people.

Through today's Gospel, Jesus teaches one of the central aspects of the ministerial priesthood: the priest as Shepherd. It means that a priest is one who, by his ordination, consecrates his life for others. The title, "Father," like the title, "Shepherd," expresses a relation of loving service to others in everything, from the most sacred ministries to the most trivial chores.

INFORMATION

JOIN US FOR MASS LIVESTREAM BY GOING TO: <https://icmary103.com>

Our live stream Schedule will be as follows:

(The Spanish Masses will be in YouTube) Our schedule of Private Masses that will be livestreamed will be as follows:

- Saturday: 5:00 PM English
- Sunday: 11:00 AM English

The Spanish Masses will be in YouTube

· Thursday: 7:00 PM Spanish · Saturday: 7:30 PM Spanish · Sunday: 9:00 AM Spanish

All Weekday Mass intentions are being celebrated by the priests privately

Please go to the website about 15 minutes before the posted time to join the English livestream. There is a 30 second delay on the video feed. A recording of the Spanish Saturday 7:30 PM will be uploaded to YouTube.

CONTINUED FINANCIAL SUPPORT We urge all who can to please consider joining the online WeShare automated giving program by going to: <https://icmary.churchgiving.com/> to set up automatic giving to keep our staff, clergy, and buildings ready for us when this crisis ends, as it will. After the page opens, look around WeShare at the collection opportunities and click on the yellow button, "Make a Donation", and follow directions. God bless you for your continuing sacrifices.

While we are still able to keep our churches open for private prayer you will see collection boxes In the Church. Please place your collection envelopes or any contribution you wish to make to help support our parish, staff and our utility expenses. Or you can mail or drop your envelope at the Parish Office.

Thank you for supporting the work of Jesus Christ!

I hope you had a wonderful Easter weekend. As you may know from the email from Msgr. LaMorte, the Development Office was given the directive from Cardinal Dolan to reach out to parishioners on his behalf regarding the 2020 Appeal. I just wanted to check with you to get your approval to reach out to your parishioners in the next few weeks. I can understand how these times have been very stressful for you so I just wanted to make it clear that the calls will be made on behalf of the Cardinal and NOT you or your parish. Please email me back with your approval or if you have any questions, comments or concerns. Thank you, I hope you stay safe and well!

Sincerely, Celeste Kabemba Campaign Manager

The Cardinal's Annual Stewardship Appeal:

To donate you can go to cardinalsappeal.org, click on Donate, select an amount, and direct your gift to our Church: #567 Immaculate Conception, Yonkers

Sundays Readings:

First Reading: Acts of the Apostles 2: 14a, 36-41 (49A)

Peter proclaimed that only in the name of Jesus Christ are sins forgiven and the Holy Spirit received.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 23: 1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6 The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Second Reading: 1 Peter 2:20b-25 Jesus suffered for the sins of all people, and by his death on the cross, all can live in accord with God's will. People who strayed like sheep "have now returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

Gospel: John 10: 1-10 Jesus said, I am the gate for the sheep," He declared that whoever enters through him will be saved because he came that others may have life and have the fullness of life.

Religious Education

Religious Education classes will begin again when the Archdiocese including Public Schools give us the go ahead. In the mean time, Parents, please help your children learn their prayer before Confession and Holy Communion especially how to prepare for the Sacrament of Penance. This is a good time to say those prayers together. Let us keep praying for our Religious Education families of St. Mary's at this time. God bless you!

Religious Education Students and Parents at St. Mary's

1. Please note that an email was sent to all Religious Education Parents with lessons plans, class by grade.
2. If you HAVE NOT given us with your email address, please send your email address to icmary103@gmail.com so you can receive important information and updates.
3. If you Have Not received an email, it either means we have an incorrect e mail address or one that we could not read. Please email us your correct email address to icmary103@gmail.com. Parents, please send us YOUR email address. We cannot email the children; it must be the parent's email
4. Anyone needing to reach Marisa Rivera, please email to icmary103@gmail.com.

Cardinal's Annual Stewardship Appeal

Update of 2020 Appeal Goals Goal:\$37,500 Pledged:\$22,223.00 Paid:\$14,681.00

Thank you so much for your cooperation again towards Cardinal's Appeal. Please, we are still in need of more support in order to reach our parish goal for 2020 as we have been doing. We still need \$15,277 in pledges.

Easter Season is a good time to consider giving towards Cardinal's Appeal.

To donate you can go to cardinalsappeal.org, click on Donate, select an amount, and direct your gift to our Church: #567 Immaculate Conception, Yonkers

Mass Intentions for the week of May 2 to May 10, 2020

Saturday, May 2, 2020

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

5:00 pm - Available/Disponibile

7:30 pm - Legion de María

Sunday, May 3, 2020

7:30 pm - For the Parishioners/Para los Parroquianos

9:00 am - Onesimo Tovar + * Torivio Joaquina Tovar

11:00 am - Catherine Sacredenski * Jenny & Family

Monday, May 4, 2020

8:15 am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

Tuesday May 5, 2020

8:15 am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

Wednesday, May 6, 2020

8:15 am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

Thursday, May 7, 2020

8:15 am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Maxima Fagel + * Espie Thompson

7:00 pm - Available/Disponibile

Friday, May 8, 2020

8:15 am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

Saturday, May 9, 2020

12:05 pm - Stein Family + * Phyllis Panko Stein

5:00 pm - Mother's Day Novena

7:30 pm - Mother's Day Novena

Sunday, May 10, 2020 Mother's Day

7:30 pm - Mother's Day Novena

9:00 am - Mother's Day Novena

11:00 am - Mother's Day Novena

+Indicates deceased *Indicates the person (s) who requested the Mass.