

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Three sons left home, went out on their own and prospered. They discussed the gifts they could give their elderly mother. The first said: "I built a big house for our mother." The second said: "I sent her a Mercedes with a driver." The third said: "You remember how our mother enjoys reading the Bible. Now she can't see very well. So, I sent her a remarkable parrot that recites the entire Bible. It took elders in the church 12 years to teach him. Mama just has to name the chapter and verse and the parrot recites it." Soon thereafter, their mother sent out her letters of thanks. "Milton," she said, "The house you built is so huge. I live only in one room, but I have to clean the whole house. "Gerald," she said, "I am too old to travel. I stay most of the time at home so I rarely use the Mercedes. And that driver is so rude! He's a pain!" "But Donald," she said, "The little chicken you sent was delicious!"

Dear Friends,

Each year the fourth Sunday of Easter is called Good shepherd Sunday and world day of prayer for vocations. The church reminds us to pray for the vocations to become priests and consecrated life. Let us pray that we get more vocations to the religious life from our families as we pray every week to St. Joseph.

Amid this pandemic, we all follow the guidance from our leaders of the Nations and church. They are our shepherds. If we ask the question whether they are guiding us in a direct direction or not. We all have some answers but I leave that to your fair judgement.

Jesus becomes the good shepherd today to you and me. He came to give his life for us. As a shepherd, he left us so many good things in our life. There are so many aspects to be noted. Today let us focus on the Gospel passage on the roles of a good shepherd in a time of danger or in the time of need.

All of know there were more than 60 priests who died in Italy during this pandemic. I think they listened to voice of the sheep. The gospel today explains the role of the shepherd to his flock. To me, it is a bilateral relationship. The people of Israel were nomads tending sheep. So it was easy for Jesus to explain the relationship. When flocks were mingled together, each flock would recognize the sound of their own shepherd's voice and come to him, ignoring other shepherds' voices. Can you discern which "voice" in your life belongs to the Good Shepherd? Which of the following is your favorite comparison of Christ to the Good Shepherd: calling by name, recognition of voice, following Christ, or not following strangers. Jesus recognizes all our voices and calls each one of us by our name.

I recently read a story of a Man from Zimbabwe who worked in one of the Arabian countries tending the sheep. One day a traveler came and asked him to give him a sheep for a low rate without the knowledge of the owner. He could keep the money with himself because he gets a low wage. But that man refused to do that and he said I love all the sheep. This news was viral in social media and brought to the knowledge of the government officials of the country. The government honored him for his sincerity.

Are we sincere in ourselves to our flock? This question may apply directly to me, or all the leaders of different group. We are all shepherds in our own capacity. It applies to all of us.

Jesus came to give life in abundance. Do we have that life? What is lacking for us?

The Heart of the Good Shepherd tells us that his love is limitless. It is never exhausted and it never gives up. There we see his infinite and boundless self-giving. There we find the source of that faithful and meek love which sets us free and makes others free.

What about us? Do we understand the self-giving of Christ? Are we able to do that in our family or business or in our work place?

Let us be a good shepherd to take care of all sheep, especially the missing one.