

Christ Our Hope Catholic Church

Faith in Laity Corner



Readings: Acts 4:8-12, Jn. 10:11-18

4th Week of Easter

Monday, April 23, 2018

Sheep State?

Sunday being Earth Day we reflect on what we do as humans, and how it impacts the only place that has the ability to support life as we know it. It is also the moment for us to examine ourselves as *sheep*. Catholics and most Christians are familiar with Psalm 23 which describes God as our Shepherd, who willingly guides and points us to safe and peaceful places in our lives. Jesus, who is God, spoke of Himself as the Good Shepherd doing all for His sheep, even giving His life.

"I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (Jn. 10:11)

For two Persons of God to describe themselves as having the loving qualities of a Shepherd towards humans, then there must be some expectation for us -the sheep, *not so?* If God, the Messiah came to earth and laid down His life for all of humanity; there is no doubt that He has placed an unlimited price on each of us,

"I will lay down my life for the sheep." (Jn. 10:15)

This should not be taken lightly!

Then it becomes important to reflect not only on the qualities of the shepherd but to reflect that Jesus willingly paid for our salvation?

"I know mine and mine know me..." (Jn. 10:14)

Jesus paid this tremendous price, with the hope that using our *'free will'* we will choose to *'know Him'*. Knowing of God is different from establishing a relationship with Him. We can all know of God- that He is our Creator, read the Scriptures, attend Mass and occasionally

receive the Sacraments, and yet have no relationship with Him. Jesus' mission on this earth was to help us want to enter into a relationship with His Father as He demonstrated for us. The Will of His Father was the main thread that ran through everything Jesus attempted. In the *'state of the sheep'*- Is God's Will utmost in our minds when we face difficulties, or have decisions to make?

Jesus was clear when He spoke about His role as a Shepherd, there was no exclusiveness about Him.

"I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold..." (Jn.10: 16)*

Jesus declared that He cared for sheep that were not part of His flock. The implication for this is tremendous. So not only Catholics are part of Jesus' charge; he has others in His care. *State of the sheep*- do we readily accept people of Good-will from other faiths, belief systems outside of ours? Do we see their salvation as important as ours? How can we be of the *Jesus flock* and isolate fellow sheep due to the quality or color of the sheep's wool, or the size and length of the sheep? Jesus said,

*"These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice,
and there will be one flock, one shepherd." (Jn. 10:16)*

These are NOT my words, Jesus said them!! How do we qualify prejudices met to so many different 'sheep' whether it is because of economic status, education, health conditions, race or ethnicity?

May we continue to examine the *'state of the sheep'*. If we are the sheep and a part of the flock of the Lamb, then we have to boldly let others know through our words, actions, and interactions that – we have met the Good Shepherd. Jesus and

"There is no salvation through anyone else." (Acts 4:12)

Belief in this fact has to be within the mindset of the sheep, there can be no doubt that each sheep has a life mission to be guided by the Good Shepherd; not to be delayed along the way, to firmly believe that no

"Other name under heaven given

to the human race by which we are to be saved." (Act 4:12)

These are facts which cannot be hidden in the life of the sheep, on full display for all to see and believe. Our relationship with the Shepherd has to be tangible to others, not by words alone; but actions in season and out of season. Our relationship with the Shepherd has to

continue growing and unfolding in our lives. The Shepherd's love for us is constant and real, the question will be what is our state or disposition as *the sheep*? Will it be open and willing to hear the Word of God, be moved by the Holy Spirit to go out to share the Good News? Will we be able to discern, ...

"This command received from my Father"? (Jn. 10:18)

What IS your state as sheep?

Father, we pray against the ongoing senseless violence that plague our neighborhood, our society our country. We pray for the focus from our elected officials to use their power in the legislature to create laws which speak truth to fears; that our environment is not destroyed in the need to keep money in the hands of fewer and fewer people. Lord, let us allow You to be our Shepherd.

Faith in Laity Corner is a weekly review of Sunday's reading written by

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