

4th Sunday of Easter

Theme: JESUS, OUR GOOD SHEPHERD

On this 4th Sunday of Easter, history is being made in our Holy Rosary Catholic Church. Today, Nancy, a representative of the National Catholic Daughters of the Americas, and her team will institute a new court of Catholic Daughters of Holy Rosary and will install officers of Court #2803. On behalf of the Most Rev. Mark E. Brennan, our bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, and our parish faith community, I extend our heartfelt congratulations and God's blessing to Sue Smith and all the members of our Holy Rosary Court #2803. Bravo!

Catholic Daughters of the Americas (CDA) was founded in 1903. The CDA has our Holy Mother Mary as its patroness with the motto: Unity and Charity. CDA is said to be one of the largest international organizations of Catholic women in the world. Looking at the Circle of Love on their brochure, you will find 7 points/spokes, namely: Education, Family, Leadership, Legislation, Quality of life, Spiritual Enhancement, and Youth/JCDA that clearly spell out CDA's best services to the needs of the Church and the community. We're blessed to have them here now in our parish. Thanks to Sue Smith for bringing CDA to our Parish.

Fellow parishioners, we are also truly in need of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas in our world today, just as it was a great need in 1903 when it was founded. Beloved parishioners, please let us all pray for the members of the Holy Rosary court and all the members of the CDA that our Holy Mother Mary, their patroness, will continue to intercede to her beloved Son to bless them as they continue his mission here on earth.

Jesus, our Good Shepherd, is my theme for today. Jesus lived in a society where the care and feeding of sheep and other domesticated animals formed the major economic life of his people. The image of a shepherd was common among his audience. The Old Testament often speaks of God as Good Shepherd of his people, providing peace and security. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want" -Psalm 23:1. The Old Testament also refers to human leaders as shepherds. Many of these human shepherds/leaders were bad ones. This explained why many prophets challenged and criticized these bad shepherds/leaders that were ineffective and unfaithful. "Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the Lord" - Jeremiah 23:1, Ezekiel 34:8 etc.

In today's Gospel reading, St. John presents Jesus as the Good Shepherd in contrast to the bad shepherds. The Good Shepherd does his work because he wants to, unlike the bad shepherd who does his work because it is just a job, his heart is not in it. This bad shepherd does it for payment and will run away when he comes across a wolf, leaving the sheep behind.

Throughout Jesus' earthly ministry, you will notice Jesus is truly the Good Shepherd. As Good Shepherd, Jesus fed the hungry both spiritually and physically, healed the sick, raised the dead back to life, and laid down his life for us. As Good Shepherd, he provides peace and security for his sheep, not only for this world, but also for eternal life in heaven. He did all this out of his unconditional love for us. He did not leave us orphans. He gave us the Holy Eucharist and all the other Sacraments so that his mission will continue to flourish until his Second Coming. We're blessed to be Roman Catholics. We have it all!

In the first reading, we hear St. Peter telling the Jewish leaders that Jesus is the One and only Savior, and it was in his mighty name that he healed the cripple. Peter and other apostles were good shepherds like their divine Master, the chief shepherd. They preached, taught, healed the sick, and fed the hungry, as you read in the accounts of the early Christian communities. They died for Christ and his church. We're also called by Christ to be good shepherds in our communities. We must be people who truly care and love one another, even if our love and care is not reciprocated. This 4th Sunday of Easter is dedicated to the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. Thanks for your prayers and assistance in vocational promotions. The Church asks us to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Let us pray that Jesus will continue to call good shepherds to continue his mission here on earth. Let us also pray for Pope Francis, Bishop Mark, and all the clergy and religious, that we will be faithful to our vocation. We pray for the laity that they will listen to Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd, and those he has appointed to govern his church. We pray for all those at the helm of affairs that they will also be good shepherds to those they serve.

We continue to ask Holy Mother Mary, Queen of Peace, to intercede her to beloved Son, Jesus, for peace and love for our "wounded world." May all of us be instruments of peace and love in our various communities.