

## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter. Readings Year C. Acts 13:14,43-52, Rev 7:14b-17 & John 10:27-30

### Theme: Jesus, The Good Shepherd Cares for Us

Every Fourth Sunday of Easter is celebrated as the Good Shepherd Sunday. We also celebrate the World Day of Prayer for vocations, as well as Mother's Day on this Fourth Sunday of Easter

St. John in his Gospel uses an image of a shepherd and flock to explain Jesus' relationship with his heavenly Father and us. Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd that truly cares for us all. He knows you by your name. You are not a number for him. As a Good Shepherd, he is not afraid of the 'wolves,' that is the enemies of him and his followers, to take care of his sheep. As a Good Shepherd, he died for our salvation. Jesus truly cares and loves us unconditionally. He says: "My sheep hear my voice. I know them and they follow me." Hearing Jesus' voice implies, we obey Jesus' teaching and follow him faithfully until death. Those who are faithful to him would be rewarded with eternal life. They will never perish because of their fidelity to him and his heavenly Father. These people are those who would follow him not only in their joys but also in sorrows.

These are the people John describes in the second reading in his vision of what would happen on the day of Judgment. "These are the ones who have survived the time of great distress; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." They are aware that being Christians does not shield/protect them from disappointments and sufferings in this world. They are Christians in words and deeds.

St. Luke, the author of the Acts of the Apostles, gives us an example of Paul and Barnabas, great apostles who, in spite of rejections, disappointments, and sufferings, went through all these trials for Christ and his church. As St. Luke tells us: "The disciples (apostles) were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit."

On this day, we honor our mothers both living and deceased, let us thank God for the gifts of our mothers. For me, every day is Mother's Day. They are the precious gifts God has blessed us with. Our mothers reflect the image of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. They birthed us. They are the first to get up from bed and the last to go to bed. They serve meals to the family first, and they are the last to eat. They always make sure everyone in the family is taken care of. It is true that our mothers always put the family wellbeing first and theirs last. That is why they reflect the image of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. May our loving God continue to bless our mothers for their love and care for us. And for those who have passed on to be with Him, may God reward them with the crown of salvation, he, the merciful and loving God, has promised for his faithful children.

As we celebrate also the World Day of Prayer for vocations, let us continue to pray for more vocations especially for our Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. I am always very grateful for the men and women who faithfully pray the Rosary at the weekend Masses. I also thank those who request Masses for vocations and for all of you, for your continued assistance to priests and religious. It was so beautiful to see parishioners from our SVD parishioners at our SVD 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary at St. Thomas Catholic Church, Gassaway, this past Monday. Thanks, and God's blessing to you all.

As we are in the month of the Holy Rosary, let us continue to ask our Holy Mother Mary to intercede for us to be faithful to her beloved Son, Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd. St. Pope John Paul II, put it so beautifully in these words: "Putting on the mind of Christ (Phil 2:5), to pray the Rosary, is to take a spiritual journey, along with Mary, in contemplation of the face of Christ." Through meditating and praying the Holy Rosary, we are brought into a deeper understanding and knowledge of Jesus Christ. The holy Rosary is one of the most precious 'weapons' we are blessed to have to fight our enemy, the devil.

Happy and blessed Mother's Day to all our mothers, stepmothers, godmothers, foster mothers, and every woman that means a mother to you.