

EASTER 4A SERMON – MAY11/14

Text: John 10:10

2) Moses, the shepherd-leader: The Jews had a lovely legend to explain why God chose Moses to be the leader of His people. "When Moses was feeding the sheep of his father-in-law in the wilderness, a young lamb ran away. Moses followed it until it reached a ravine, where it found a well to drink from. When Moses got up to it, he said: 'I did not know that you ran away because you were thirsty. Now you must be weary.' He took the lamb on his shoulders and carried it back. Then God said: 'Because you have shown pity in leading back one of a flock belonging to another man, you shall lead my flock Israel.'"

) We need to pray for good pastors and vocations. The Church uses this Sunday to encourage vocations to the ministerial priesthood, the diaconate and the consecrated life. Christians must share in the responsibility of fostering these vocations. a) The faith community must continuously pray for vocations both in the Church and in their families. b) Since good priests, deacons and people embracing the consecrated life come from good Christian families, all Christian parents need to live their faith in Christ on a daily basis by leading exemplary lives as parents and by fostering good relationships with, and among, their children. c) Parents need to respect and encourage a child who shows an interest in becoming a priest or deacon or of entering upon a consecrated life. Parents need to encourage their children, including their teenagers and young adults, to participate actively in the children's and youth activities in the parish, like Sunday school, children's clubs, and youth associations. They also need to encourage and actively support them in becoming altar servants, gift-bearers, lectors and ministers of hospitality. On this World Day of Prayer for Religious Vocations, let us begin, or continue, to pray for our priests, deacons and those living a consecrated life instead of criticizing them.

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I. Introduction

-Fr. William Archibald Spooner & "Spoonerisms"

-"The Lord is a shoving Leopard" in stead of a "loving shepherd"

-Explain the difference between shepherding in Jesus day & modern shepherding w/ dogs and fences.

-"I am the gate (door)"

II. Jesus has gone before us

-Through suffering, pain of all kinds, an excruciating death, the grave, resurrection and & ascension into heaven.

-Where He continues His vocation as Good Shepherd by praying for us & interceding for us before the throne of God.

- III. Is “Good Shepherd Sunday” about Jesus or about us?
- Is 53: 6 (Brisbane Concert Choir Sinfonia of St Andrew's Conductor: Debra Shearer-Dirié Orchestra Leader: Chen Yang ... recorded July 2008, 4.26 min. long)
 - This is the human condition... we are a heard animal... not too smart when it comes to finding a positive, life sustaining way in life... we are in constant need of leadership (shepherding), first of all with parents & later with teachers, supervisors, police, pastors, & civil and national governments
 - Above all this, we need leadership from Jesus Christ and His church if we are to enter the eternal and abundant life.
 - He is the gateway to the abundant life. Following Him leads to a fuller life, a more satisfying life. It is a life of serving and loving others and giving yourself to a cause greater than yourself (like Jesus did). It is a life of also being loved and being served by God and His church.
- IV. Today is mother’s day, so why don’t we listen to some advice from two famous ladies... advice about living the abundant life...
- A Good Shepherd Payer of Incarnation* by St. Euphrasia Pelletier
 - Poem *Anyway* by Mother Teresa of Calcutta
 - ... When people live and love this way, everybody gains life... abundant life
 - This is life lived as Jesus wants us to live it. Remember God’s word from the cloud on the Mount of Transfiguration “This is my beloved Son. LISTEN to Him.”
 - How do we listen (six marks are a good start)
- V. In the Roman Catholic Church, this Sunday is a day set aside in the church year to pray for the shepherds of the church... pastors (shepherd), priests, deacons and others who pursue church vocations.

-Excerpt from Fr. Kadavil's sermon above...

-The Catholic Church in Canada is the only Christian church that has shown growth nationally in any significant numbers over the last 20 years. Do you suppose it has something to do with producing good shepherds of their flock from their families and then listening to these shepherds and following them?

VI. Earthly leaders are only poor "stand-ins" for the great Good Shepherd of our souls, Jesus Christ

-He loves us straying sinners and He gives us forgiveness of sins and brings us back onto the path of life.

-He draws us into loving fellowship with all His people.

-He said (Luke 19:10) that He came to seek and to save those that are lost

-John 3:17 says of that God did not send Jesus to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him

VII. What shall we say to summarize the abundant, eternal life that we access through Jesus, our Good Shepherd?

-Here is a traditional prayer from the Pakistani Christian Church:

O Creator and mighty God, You have promised strength for the weak, rest for the laborers, light for the way, grace for the trials, help from above, unfailing sympathy, undying love. O creator and mighty God, help us to continue in your promise. Amen.