



FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

April 21, 2024



i will lay down
MY LIFE
for the sheep

JOHN 10:15



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Mission Statement

“Good Shepherd Parish, under the guidance of the true Shepherd Jesus Christ, is a Catholic faith based community seeking to proclaim and live the gospel message. Recognizing our diversity, we strive to bring together a church family, welcoming all people as we grow together in faith, hope and love.”

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SERVED BY

Rev. Valentine Ugwuanya Pastor

Denise Perry Secretary

For more information on our parish please go to:

Goodshepherdnj.com

Or email us at

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FROM THE PASTOR’S DESK ON 4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER APRIL 21, 2024.

In today’s gospel our Blessed Lord Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd. He overcomes the barriers we place between us by becoming the sheepgate, the way to gather together through him and with him. Gathering together is something that we were sorely missing during the time of self-isolation.

Jesus used the image of shepherd because shepherds were very familiar to the people of his time. At that time one of the most difficult jobs for the shepherds was to protect the sheep at night. They gathered the various flocks in one place to jointly keep them safe overnight. One shepherd would lay down to sleep over the entrance to the flock to be the guard. In a real way, the shepherd would literally lay down his life for the sheep. The next morning, each shepherd would call his flock and they would recognize his voice because they knew who cared for them and they would follow him to the pastures.

This chapter of John’s Gospel follows Jesus’ healing of the man born blind and the rejection of this miracle by the Jewish leaders who question Jesus’ authority to heal. Jesus responds to this challenge by calling himself the Good Shepherd. He is criticizing the leadership of the Pharisees and the other Jewish leaders. The Pharisees and other Jewish leaders are so angry that they attempt to stone and arrest Jesus (see John 10:31,39). This controversy with the religious leaders continues until Jesus’ death. In the portion of the chapter that we hear proclaimed today, Jesus describes his relationship with his followers as similar to the relationship between a good shepherd and his sheep. As a good shepherd will risk and lay down his life in order to protect his sheep, Jesus willingly sacrifices himself for the sake of his sheep. Jesus contrasts the actions of the good shepherd with the actions of the hired shepherd who abandons the sheep in the face of danger. In the verses following Jesus’ teaching, we learn that the Pharisees and the other religious leaders understand that Jesus is referring to them when he describes the hired shepherds.

Today, the 4th Sunday of Easter is celebrated as the Good Shepherd Sunday. We think of the ‘pastoral’ love of God, as we also pray for vocations to priesthood; priests are the ‘pastors’ of the church. Each year, for the gospel reading, we hear one part of John 10. This year, being Year B, we listen to the second part of that chapter. Today, Jesus says, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (Jn 10:11). His statement has two parts, and these parts form the structure of my reflection today.

The concern of a good shepherd for his sheep is part of the shepherd’s job. Jesus says, however, that the actions of the good shepherd are based upon the relationship that develops between the shepherd and the sheep. This is at the heart of the difference between the good shepherd and the hired shepherd. The good shepherd knows the sheep and therefore acts out of love. For the Good Shepherd, this is never simply part of a job; this love-in-action is integral to his identity. As with so much of John’s Gospel, one hears in this passage John’s particular focus on Christology. As the sheep are known by the Good Shepherd, the Father knows Jesus and Jesus knows the Father. There is an essential unity between the Father and the Son. The freedom with which Jesus acts when he lays down his life is rooted in the unity that he shares with his Father.

So, the image of the shepherd has been there in the long tradition of Israel. And Jesus just takes on this image. But what makes Jesus’ image of the shepherd unique and special is what we read in John 10. As I see, there are two themes that come out very powerfully in John 10. These themes are repeated over and over again in the chapter. In these themes we see a new and powerful image of the God of Christianity: one, “I know my own and my own know me” (Jn 10:14); and two, “The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep” (Jn 10:11,15,17,18). I shall pick up the second theme for the

Good Shepherd Parish Schedule for Mass & Worship (schedules are subject to change)

Saturday (anticipated) 5:30pm
Holy Day TBD.

Sundays —9:00am, 11:00am
Reconciliation: Saturdays 4:45-5:15pm

National Holidays —9:00am
Adoration Mo-Fri 7:30am-5:00pm

Mass Intentions For the week of April 20, 2024 - April 27 2024

Saturday 5:30pm For the Repose of the Soul of Anna Hinton
April 20

Sunday 9:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Paul Borg
April 21 11:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Anne Ezenwamba

Monday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Martha N. Anuforo
April 22

Tuesday 7:00am For the Repose of the Souls of Cecil Bonnett
April 23

Wednesday 7:00am For Health and Well Being of Avenella Samaroo
April 24

Thursday 7:00am For The Repose of the Soul of Norman A. Francis
April 25

Friday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Anne Ezenwamba
April 26

Saturday 8:30am For the Repose of the Soul of Florence Baumgarten
April 27 5:30pm For the Repose of the Soul of Benny and Josephine Di Pietro

Kindly keep our parishioner's family, with health and other challenges, in your prayers

Let us always remember in our prayers the sick members of our Parish

Paul Kocum	Sandi Mosley	Debbie Watson	Rihanna Scott
Elizabeth Cassata	Pope Francis	Frank Rocchi	Camile Laidlaw
Frederick Hamilton	Curtis Richards	Carlos Quinones	Venus Matthews
Jean Michelin	Corizon Abuzied	Bob and Barbara Nezlick	Patrick Roylance

* Please advise if any names should be added or delete from the list

Hospital Privacy | Please remember that current privacy laws regarding patients in hospitals do not allow hospitals/ pastoral care offices to contact parishes. If you or a loved one are in the hospital and want a priest to visit, please call the I office at (973)375-8568


Ministries: If you're interested in ministries of service either as a Lector or Eucharistic Minister, please call the rectory at 975-375-8568 or fill out the Information below and place in the collection basket.

Name : _____

Telephone #: _____

Lector _____ Eucharistic Minister _____

Please contact Fr. Valentine or call the rectory if you are interested in Intensions, of a Sanctuary Lamp, Alter bread and wine or Alter Flowers




ARCHDIOCESE of NEWARK
ANNUAL APPEAL 2024
MAKE YOUR GIFT TODAY

Announcement

Our Church now has an Adoration Room. All are invited to visit the room, Mon-Fri 7:30AM-5:00PM.

To gain access to the adoration room, reservations are required. Please visit the rectory to reserve your date and time.

Collection Report		April 14,, 2024
Weekly Target		\$6,500.00
Collection (Offering+ Fuel & Energy)		\$ 2,860.0
Surplus (Deficit)		\$ 3,640.0
Fiscal Year to Date		
Budget:		\$346,811.00
Actual:		\$74,155.00
Surplus (Deficit)		\$272,656.00
Rolling 4 Week Averages		
Average Collection:		\$2,954.0
Average Surplus (Deficit)		\$3,546.00

Minister Assignments April 20 - April 21, 2024

Saturday Sunday	Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers	
04/27 5:30pm	Denise Perry	Nellie Bate Barbara Banks	Fr. Val
04/28 9:00am	Paulette Ander- son-Spence	Augustine Boakye Helen Chief-Akude Mina Yago	Fr. Val
04/28 11:00am	Dorothy Nwanonyiri	Jerome Hule Melyn Lopino Thevarajah	Raj Fr. Val

GSP EVENT CALENDER	
Sunday April 21	
Fourth Sunday of Easter	
Monday April 22	
Tuesday April 23	
Saint George & Saint Adalbert	
Wednesday April 24	
Saint Fidelis of Sigmaringen	
Thursday April 25	
Saint Mark (Evangelist)	
Friday April 26	
Saturday April 27	

Good Shepherd Parish Information

RECTORY HOURS: Monday Thru Wednesday 10:00AM-2:00PM; Thursday / Friday 9:00AM-12:00PM

Parish Registration Forms can be found at the back of the church or call the rectory at (973) 375-8568

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION Saturday 4:45-5:15 pm

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM In order to have your child baptized at Good Shepherd, the parents must be registered and active members of our parish. Godparents or sponsors must meet qualifications as to have received both sacraments of Communion and Confirmation, attend Mass regularly and been a registered parishioner at a Catholic Church For more information please call the Rectory at (973) 375-8568

THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY Couples who are planning a wedding should call the parish office to meet the priest, to choose the date of the wedding and before any other arrangements are made call (973)375-8568

PASTORAL OF THE SICK Notify a priest of all who are hospitalized, home-bound, or Emergencies call (973)375-8568

ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS, RCIA. Adults interested in becoming members of the Catholic Church and Catholics in need of Sacraments, Confirmation or Eucharist; inquire at the Rectory. To register please call the rectory at(973-375-8568

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Sunday of October-April from 10:00-11:00 am in the Church building. For more information please call the Rectory at (973-375-8568

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
“The meekness and tenderness of the Good Shepherd”
Sunday, 3rd May 2020

Introduction

Three weeks after the Resurrection of the Lord, the Church today in the fourth week of Easter celebrates Good Shepherd Sunday, Jesus the Good Shepherd. This makes me think of the many pastors throughout the world who give their lives for the faithful. Even in this pandemic, many of them, more than a hundred have died here in Italy. I also think of other pastors who are taking care of the good of others: doctors. We speak of doctors and what they do, but we must acknowledge that in Italy alone, 154 doctors have died in service. May the example of these pastors who are priests and doctors help us to take care of the Holy people of God.

Homily

The First Letter of the apostle Peter, which we have heard, is a passage of serenity (see 2:20-25). It talks about Jesus. It says, “He Himself bore our sins in His body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed. For you had gone astray like sheep, but you have now returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls” (vv. 24-25).

Jesus is the shepherd - this is how Peter sees Him - who comes to save, to save the sheep which had gone astray: they were us. And in Psalm 23, which we read after this letter, we repeated: “The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want” (v. 1). The presence of the Lord as a pastor, as a shepherd of the flock. And Jesus, in chapter 10 of John, which we have read, presents Himself as a shepherd. Moreover, not only as the shepherd, but the “door” through which the flock enters (see v. 8). All those who came before and did not enter through that door were thieves and brigands, or wanted to take advantage of the flock: false pastors. And in the history of the Church there have been many who have exploited the flock. They were interested not in the flock, but in advancing their careers, or politics, or money. But the flock recognizes them, has always recognized them, and has gone in search of God on their own path.

But then there is a good shepherd who leads them ahead, the flock advances. The good shepherd listens to the flock, guides the flock, takes care of the flock. And the flock knows how to distinguish between these shepherds, it makes no mistake. The flock entrusts itself to the good shepherd, it entrusts itself to Jesus. Only the pastor who resembles Jesus can earn the trust of the flock, because He is the *door*. Jesus’s style must be the style of the shepherd, there is no other. But even Jesus the good shepherd, as Peter says in the first letter, “Christ suffered for you and left an example for you to follow the way He took. He had not done anything wrong, and there had been no perjury in His mouth. He was insulted and did not retaliate with insults; when He was tortured He made no threats” (1 Pt 2:21-23). He was meek.

One of the signs of the Good Shepherd is *meekness*. The Good Shepherd is meek. A pastor who is not meek is not a good pastor. He has something to hide, because meekness makes itself seen as it is, without defending itself. In addition, a good shepherd is tender; he has that *tenderness of closeness*, he knows the sheep one by one, by name, and he takes care of each one as if it were the only one, to the point that when he returns home tired after a day of work, and realizes that one is missing, he goes out to work again in search of that one, and carries it back home with him, on his shoulders (see Lk 15:4-5). This is a good shepherd, this is Jesus, this is the one who accompanies us all on the path of life. And this idea of the pastor, this idea of the flock and of the sheep, is a Paschal idea. The Church, in the first week of Easter, sings that beautiful hymn for the newly baptized. “These are the new lambs”. Similar to what we heard at the beginning of the Mass. It is an idea of community, of tenderness, of goodness, of meekness. It is the Church that Jesus wants, and He guards this, Church.

This Sunday is a beautiful Sunday, it is a Sunday of peace, it is a Sunday of tenderness, of meekness, because our Shepherd takes care of us. “The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want” (Ps 23).