



SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 5, 2024



**THIS IS MY COMMANDMENT
LOVE ONE ANOTHER
AS I LOVE YOU**

John 15:12



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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 THE 6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

As we look forward and getting ready to celebrate the feasts of our Lord Jesus Christ's Ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles on day of Pentecost, our Easter season is fast coming to an end. The mood of today's liturgy is more reflective, inviting us to take in more fully the deep implications of our Easter faith.

When we look at today's readings there is the theme of love. What more important theme is there for our restless human hearts? Yet it is so often trivialized and distorted in today's popular culture, a culture that has embrace the culture of death and indifference. From our earliest years we have learned to know what genuine love is, not from lessons in words, or from textbooks, but by we loving ourselves. Today's readings invite us to recognize that the Paschal Mystery that is the center of our Easter celebration is an expression of God's love for us, and an invitation to enter into the love of Jesus and his Father, and to give it expression in our own lives. True love expresses itself in action rather than in words.

As St. John the evangelist told us last Sunday that our love should not in word but be in "deed and truth" (1Jn. 3:18). It is the love that went to death for the other, a love that is victible and sacrificial love. The Father's love, John's letter tells us, was expressed in our midst when he 'sent into the world his only Son, so that we could have life in him'. The words of Jesus in John's gospel remind us how complete is the gift which he brings, as an expression of the love which he shares with the Father: 'A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friend'.

True and genuine love is an unselfish gift. It seeks the good of the beloved rather than its own benefit. God's love is an outreach of utter generosity; it comes before any response on our part, as John's letter points out. (As the continuation of our passage puts it 'God loved us first'.) And our response can give nothing to God except the joy in the heart of the selfless giver. Our Lord says we are to abide in his love, as he abides in the love of the Father. In order to do so, we must love others. A cistern can only receive the flow of fresh water where there is an outlet from it. If we are to be immersed in the stream of God's love, then love must flow through us freely to the people around us. As we contemplate the mystery of God's generosity, we are reminded that, in the end, love is the most precious of all gifts.

Coming to a deeper appreciation of the love the Father and the Son have for us, expressed in the Paschal Mystery, we will find new enthusiasm and energy for the outreach which must express our life in Christ during the coming week: "You did not choose me, no I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and bear fruit" Loving God with self but not neighbor is like fundamentalism. Loving neighbors and self without God leads to moral relativism, in which what is right or wrong is based on one's culture and experience. And loving self without God and neighbor is narcissism, which we see in dictators throughout human history.

We are called to love and we have to know that the impediments of love are pride, selfishness, hurt, criticisms and indifference. Therefore, let us pray for the grace of humility, that we might see one another through the eyes of Christ and truly serve freely and abide in Christ's love.

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 May 4, 2024 - May 11, 2024

- Saturday 5:30pm For the Wedding Anniversary of Pol and Nellie Bate
- Sunday 9:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Tristen Brevik
- May 05 11:00am In Memory of the 6th Year Death Anniversary of Juan Camacho
- Monday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Charlotte Horning Drews
- May 06
- Tuesday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Vera Kline
- May 07
- Wednesday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Peter Veleh
- May 08
- Thursday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Leslie Hinton
- May 09
- Friday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Robert Hinton
- May 10
- Saturday 8:30am In memory of Antonio & Annunziata Sica
- May 11 5:30pm For the Protection of the Babies in the Womb and Their Families

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	John Valfour
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 Royslance	

* 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








ANNUAL APPEAL

2024

MAKE YOUR GIFT TODAY









Collection Report		April 28, 2024
Weekly Target		\$6,500.00
Collection (Offering+ Fuel & Energy)		\$ 3,078.00
Surplus (Deficit)		\$ 3,422.00
Fiscal Year to Date		
Budget:		\$346,811.00
Actual:		\$81,311.00
Surplus (Deficit)		\$265,500.00
Rolling 4 Week Averages		
Average Collection:		\$2,960.00
Average Surplus (Deficit)		\$3,540.00

Minister Assignments May 11 2024– May 12, 2024

Saturday Sunday	Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers	
05/11 5:30pm	Denise Perry	Nellie Bate Barbara Banks	Fr. Val
05/12 9:00am	Doris Omoighe	Alexandra Dunac Helen Chief-Akude Stanislaus Egeolu- Obimezie	Fr. Val
05/12 11:00am	Chima Ogbo	Jerome Hule Luer Drews Janet Drews	Fr. Val

GSP EVENT CALENDER	
Sunday May 05	
Sixth Sunday of Easter	
Monday May 06	
Tuesday May 07	
Wednesday May 08	
Thursday May 09	
Friday May 10	
Saint John of Avila and Saint Damien De Veuster	
Saturday May 11	

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

Pope Francis: 'This is our identity: we are God's loved ones.'

We have heard what Jesus told his disciples before leaving this world and returning to the Father. He told us what it means to be a Christian: "Even as I have loved you, so you must love one another" (Jn 13:34). This is the legacy that Christ bequeathed to us, the ultimate criterion for discerning whether or not we are truly his disciples. It is the commandment of love. Let us stop to consider two essential elements of this commandment: Jesus' love for us – "as I have loved you" – and the love he asks us to show to others – "so you must love one another".

First, the words "as I have loved you." How did Jesus love us? To the very end, to the total gift of himself. It is striking to think that he spoke these words on that night of darkness, when the atmosphere in the Upper Room was one of deep emotion and anxiety: deep emotion, because the Master was about to bid farewell to his disciples; anxiety because he had said that one of them would betray him. We can imagine the sorrow that filled the heart of Jesus, the dark clouds that were gathering in the hearts of the apostles, and their bitterness at seeing Judas who, after receiving the morsel dipped for him by the Master, left the room to enter into the night of betrayal. Yet at the very hour of his betrayal, Jesus reaffirmed his love for his own. For amid the darkness and tempests of life, that is the most important thing of all: God loves us.

Our abilities and our merits are not the central thing, but rather the unconditional, free and unmerited love of God.

Brothers and sisters, may this message be the core of our own faith and all the ways in which we express it: "...not that we loved God but that he loved us" (1 Jn 4:10). Let us never forget this. Our abilities and our merits are not the central thing, but rather the unconditional, free and unmerited love of God. Our Christian lives begin not with doctrine and good works, but with the amazement born of realizing that we are loved, prior to any response on our part. While the world frequently tries to convince us that we are valued only for what we can produce, the Gospel reminds us of the real truth of life: we are loved. A contemporary spiritual writer put it this way: "Long before any human being saw us, we were seen by God's loving eyes. Long before anyone heard us cry or laugh, we were heard by our God, who is all ears for us. Long before any person spoke to us in this world, we were spoken to by the voice of eternal love" (H. NOUWEN, *Life of the Beloved*). He loved us first; he waits for us; he keeps loving us. This is our identity: we are God's loved ones. This is our strength: we are loved by God. Acknowledging this truth requires a conversion in the way we often think of holiness. At times, by over-emphasizing our efforts to do good works, we have created an ideal of holiness excessively based on ourselves, our personal heroics, our capacity for renunciation, our readiness for self-sacrifice to achieve a reward. This can at times appear as an overly "pelagian" way of viewing life and holiness. We have turned holiness into an unattainable goal. We have separated it from everyday life, instead of looking for it and embracing it in our daily routines, in the dust of the streets, in the trials of real life and, in the words of Teresa of Avila to her Sisters, "among the pots and pans". Being disciples of Jesus and advancing on the path of holiness means first and foremost letting ourselves be transfigured by the power of God's love. Let us never forget the primacy of God over self, of the Spirit over the flesh, of grace over works. For we at times give more importance to self, flesh and works. No, the primacy is that of God over self, of the Spirit over the flesh, of grace over works.

The love that we receive from the Lord is the force that transforms our lives.

The love that we receive from the Lord is the force that transforms our lives. It opens our hearts and enables us to love. For this reason, Jesus says – here is the second element – "as I have loved you, so must you love one another". That word "as" is not simply an invitation to imitate Jesus' love; it tells us that we are able to love only because he has loved us, because he pours into our hearts his own Spirit, the Spirit of holiness, love that heals and transforms. As a result, we can make decisions and perform works of love in every situation and for every brother and sister whom we meet, because we ourselves are loved and we have the power to love. As I myself am loved, so I can love others. The love I give is united to Jesus' love for me. "As" he loved me, so I can love others. The Christian life is just that simple. Let's not make it more complicated with so many things. It is just that simple. In practice, what does it mean to live this love? Before giving us this commandment, Jesus had washed the disciples' feet; then, after giving it, he gave himself up to the wood of the cross. To love means this: to serve and to give one's life. To serve, that is, not to put our own interests first: to clear our systems of the poison of greed and competitiveness; to fight the cancer of indifference and the worm of self-referentiality; to share the charisms and gifts that God has given us. Specifically, we should ask ourselves, "What do I do for others?" That is what it means to love, to go about our daily lives in a spirit of service, with unassuming love and without seeking any recompense.

Holiness does not consist of a few heroic gestures, but of many small acts of daily love.

Then, to give one's life. This is about more than simply offering something of ours to others; it is about giving them our very selves. I like to ask people who seek my counsel whether they give alms. And if they do, whether they touch the hand of the recipient or simply, antiseptically, throw down the alms. Those people usually blush and say no. And I ask whether, in giving alms, they look the person in the eye, or look the other way. They say no. Touching and looking, touching and looking at the flesh of Christ who suffers in our brothers and sisters. This is very important; it is what it means to give one's life.