

4th Sunday of Easter by Father Dave – This weekend is also known as Good Shepherd Sunday, and it is also the “World Day of Prayer for Vocations.” The Scripture lessons for this day concern the role of the shepherds of God’s flock in the Church. Each year on this Fourth Sunday of Easter we reflect on the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd Who devotedly and kindly takes care of the flock. And by the way – the title, “pastor”, means shepherd. A shepherd leads, feeds, nurtures, comforts, corrects, and protects those entrusted to his care – responsibilities that belong, not only to every Christian leader, but to all of us who are baptized and mingle with one another.

The earliest Christians had seen Jesus as the fulfillment of the ancient Jewish dream of a good shepherd. They also wished to include the gentiles as part of God’s flock. From Acts of the Apostles – since Christ was rejected by the Jews, Christians were obliged to preach the Gospel to all the nations, thus emphasizing the universal mission of Christianity. The Jews had rejected the word of God and hence it was being offered to the Gentiles.

The reading from the Book of Revelation was written for the encouragement of persecuted Christians. And the Gospel passage offers us both a great comfort and a great challenge. The comforting good news is that no one can snatch the sheep out of His Father’s hands. The challenge is that *each one of us* is called to be a good shepherd to those entrusted to our care (parents with child, or parent with aging parents, teacher with student, employer with employee, etc.) and, at the same time, we are called to be good sheep in Jesus’ flock.

As we look at these readings, we can reflect on them in two different ways. Regarding – recognizing the voice of the Shepherd: have you ever been in a room of people, and from somewhere in that crowd of people we hear a voice and say, “I would know that voice anywhere! That’s” That’s how it should be in recognizing the voice of Jesus in our lives. In recognizing His voice, Jesus is telling us that hearing Him is where we are to get our values, the standards and principles that guide our lives and affect in a major way our happiness or unhappiness in life. He knows the sound of everyone of our voices. Do we recognize His? If we don’t let His wisdom guide us, how will we seek to find direction in life, or how will we give our children values and ideals? That is part of the problem with the world today; the values that Christ taught us are being ignored. Like our first parents, we make up our own rules to our own disadvantage because we figure we know better than God what will lead us to fulfillment and happiness. Jesus’ words, however, to us are clear: “My sheep hear My voice, I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish.”

Looking at “hearing His Voice” from another angle - As we couple these readings with the role of shepherding, we also call to mind the other title for this weekend –

“*World Day of Prayer for Vocations.*” Where are the priests? Why do we not have more? Is God no longer calling men for the priesthood? I think not. I tend to think – that because we have surrounded ourselves with so many other activities, professions, etc, and because success, today, is equated with how much money we make, we then pursue and encourage other professions rather than that of the Priesthood or religious life. This week I would like each of us to make an honest effort to open ourselves up to the Lord in prayer – not doing a merely passing prayer when we think about it and when we are able to squeeze it into our schedule. Instead – I suggest an honest effort that puts God first – realizing that it is because of His tremendous love that each of us has been created and exist at this precise moment in time for a particular reason. Am I fulfilling that reason of God to the best of my ability, or am I still pursuing my purpose and will?

In Closing – today is not a day to regret the shortage of priests and religious and merely pray to God to fill the gaps. It is, rather, a day for all of us to realize a vocation is always more than a job, more than something that puts food on the table and a roof over our heads. A job can be done without interior motive, without recourse to prayer. A vocation, on the other hand, can only be lived out of one’s relationship with God. A vocation cannot be accomplished by human effort alone, but requires divine grace. A vocation is a life work – chosen as a response to God’s call. Marriage, as a sacrament, is a vocation. Parenthood, priesthood, religious life, and all forms of ministry – be they in the medical field, teaching, or anything we do – are calls by God to a specific walk in life.

Today, as we reflect – let us recommit ourselves to the tool most essential for our walk in life – the tool of prayer – so that we can hear and recognize the voice of the Shepherd, and do God’s will in what He calls us to do.

Happy Mother’s Day

Holy God, Creator of all life, we give You thanks for our Mom’s, for the life You give to us through them, and for their countless acts of love and service.

Bless our Mothers’ works of love, lighten their burdens, renew their strength, and give them joy.

We pray for all mothers. May they have the courage to live holy lives, the faith to persevere in love. May their children be a blessing to them and to the world.

And for our Mom’s who have been called to their eternal home, we ask that You hold them in Your tender embrace until that day that we are all united around the banquet that You have prepared for all Your faithful.

We ask all this through Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Mary, Who lives forever and ever. AMEN

BULLETIN REFLECTION

by Father Rody

MAY 08, 2022...4TH SUN EASTER YR C...JN 10, 27-30

28 *I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. No one can take them out of my hand.*

What is the real purpose of the ‘economy of salvation’?

Was God not contented creating the universe and mankind?

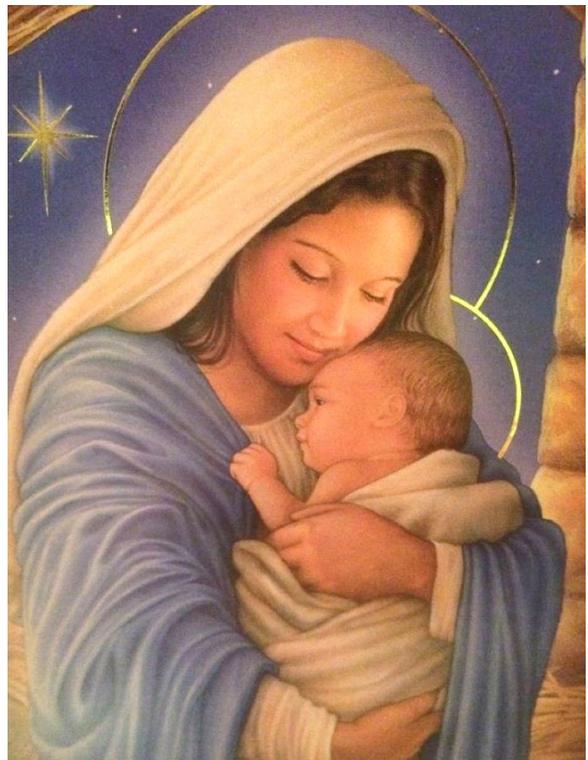
The foretaste of eternal life was carried out when Yahweh said, ‘... *Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness... God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*’ (Gen. 1, 26-27) From the beginning, Yahweh is really pushing this grand design of the economy of salvation by creating us after His own image and likeness.

But in the course of time, this plan of God has suffered blows by virtue of the disobedience of His creatures. Now, Yahweh sent the prophets to talk to them about considering the thought of turning a new leaf. Some listened and some did not.

The apex of sending representatives just so mankind would heed God’s call for transformation was the New Testament (Jn. 1, 14) ‘*And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.*’ Yet what happened to His only Son? Nature will say, ‘The seed has to die so that a new tree could come out and live.’ VIS-À-VIS JN 12, 24 *Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.*

At the turn of the third millennium, Pope John Paul II (then-now Saint) said ‘*Mea culpa.*’ A very noble act from our Pope embracing the sins others had committed and asking forgiveness. This is one of the fruits of that seed...not to turn away from them more so to go nearer to them by offering forgiveness.

The purpose then of the economy of salvation is to gain forgiveness from all our faults and this forgiveness eventually brings us to share in His paradise (remember the thief beside Jesus Christ). *Creating the universe and mankind is not the totality of the whole picture...it continues until Genesis 1, 26-27 ‘after the image and likeness of God’ is fully realized...the grand design of the economy of salvation is to finally grace mankind with His kingdom.*



Blessings to all our Mothers