

**May 7, 2017**  
**FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

**FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,



The Fourth Sunday of Easter is also known as Good Shepherd Sunday. The image of a shepherd is one which appears several times in the New Testament and is one that would be immediately understood by the people of the

time. The parable of the Good Shepherd, which is the only parable in the entire Gospel of John, consists of the first 10 verses of Chapter 10. Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd and promises to take care of the sheep entrusted to His care. We are all familiar with the popular image of Jesus carrying a sheep over His shoulders. This image appeals to us because it demonstrates the tenderness of Jesus as well as His compassion.

The shepherds of the biblical Middle East had a close, intimate relationship with their flock. They would bring the sheep out to pasture each day and spend all of their time with them. The shepherd takes them to the green pastures and leads them to the fresh waters. He protects them from all wild animals and predators. Every good shepherd knows every one of his sheep and he is aware that his sheep also know him. There is the mutual understanding, a bond between them. The sheep recognize the shepherd's voice and stay with him. They will not follow other shepherds, even if called by them. It is a free relationship. They follow, not because they are forced to but by their own choice.

There are several references to sheep and shepherds in Sacred Scripture. In the Gospel of Mark, we read about Jesus being deeply moved by compassion because the crowd was "like sheep without a shepherd". In Luke we have the mercy parable where we see Jesus going in search of the lost sheep. In Matthew, Jesus speaks of false prophets, who are really wolves, but come in sheep's clothing. In the

final judgment, the good and bad are identified with sheep and goats respectively. And of course in today's Gospel from John we see Jesus as the Good Shepherd caring for His sheep. In the Old Testament we have the passage in Ezekiel where the shepherds of Israel are condemned for their betrayal of their responsibilities and where God promises to take over the gentle care of His flock. Through His compassionate care of them, God's people "will know that I, the Lord their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people... And you are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, says the Lord God". This is the personal care of God towards His people. Today's Gospel passage ends with one of Jesus' most beautiful statements: "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly." To follow Jesus is not, as some seem to fear, to live a half-life, a life filled with endlessly dire warnings of avoiding things. It is to live life, our human life, to the greatest possible fullness. In fact, the Gospel is a statement about how human life is best lived.

Modern society for the most part rejects the notion of the Good Shepherd. "Be an individual, follow yourself not someone else" is an all too familiar sentiment. Our critics tell us that to be a member of the Church, to be part of the flock, is to give up our individuality and to not think for ourselves. This coming from a popular culture that manipulates us by telling us how we are to look, how to dress, what to eat, what to buy, and what to consume. This from a culture that tells us what is beautiful, what is ugly and when we should and should not value life. Following the Good Shepherd is not about giving up our individuality and losing ourselves. It is about discovering who we really are and who we are meant to be.

May God bless you,

Monsignor Hurley

**SAVE THE DATE**

St. Thomas the Apostle Annual Parish Picnic  
Sunday, June 4, 2017 following the 10am  
Mass. More information to come.

## 2017 ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL

*"Their Eyes Were Opened and They Recognized Him"*

In today's Gospel Jesus tell us, "I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

Everyone is welcome to the flock by Jesus. As followers of Christ, we too must act faithfully to reach out to others. As Christ committed His life to being the "one shepherd", we too must commit ourselves to providing service to all.

Thank you to everyone who made a pledge to the diocesan Annual Catholic Appeal. If you have not yet participated, please consider doing so today. Your gift makes a real difference in the lives of thousands of individuals and families who reside within our 12-county diocese. Pledge envelopes are available in the rear of the church and can be placed in the offertory basket. Thank you for your generosity and support.

To learn more about the Annual Catholic Appeal, visit [www.cdow.org](http://www.cdow.org); click "Giving" then "Annual Catholic Appeal".

## DIOCESAN PRIESTS' RETIREMENT FUND

The weekend of May 20/21, all Catholic Churches in Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore will conduct a special collection to benefit the Diocesan Priests' Retirement Fund. As more and more of our priests retire from active parish ministry, there is a growing need to supplement this fund. Your generosity and prayer for our aging priests are greatly appreciated.

**LAST WEEKEND'S OFFERTORY**  
**\$2, 343.00**

## MASS INTENTIONS

### Monday, May 8

6:00pm – Italo Galasso

### Tuesday, May 9

8:00am – Lucy &  
Charles Robino

### Wednesday, May 10

8:00am – Easter Novena

### Thursday, May 11

8:00am – Easter Novena

### Saturday, May 13

5:00pm – Mother's Day Novena

### Sunday, May 14

8am – Mother's Day Novena

10am – Mother's Day Novena

## BAPTISM

For parents who wish to have their babies baptized the next class will take place on Tuesday, May 9, at 7:00pm in the church. For further information and to register, please call the rectory office at 658-5131.

## MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Marriage Moments: "Two of Jesus' disciples were walking to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus and they were talking about all the things that had occurred." (Luke 24:13) Take a walk today. Talk. Be conscious of the presence of Jesus.

Parenting Pointers: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." (John 14:15) Just as God gave us commandments, healthy families have rules that help keep order and keep the peace. What are some of your family rules? Do you need any new ones? Let go of outdated ones? Discuss together.

## **BIRTHRIGHT OF DELAWARE ROSE SALE**

Birthingright of Delaware is holding its Annual Rose Sale at our parish on Mother's Day weekend, May 13 & 14. Please support Birthingright's pregnancy services by purchasing roses after Masses on Mother's Day. Roses cost \$2/one, \$5/three, \$18/Dozen and \$35/twenty five. Your help will truly make a difference! Thank you.

## **VOCATION REFLECTION**

Today's responsorial psalm reminds us that the Lord leads us to restful waters. Each of us, though, is called to get there in a unique manner through the mystery of our vocation. Is God calling you to serve the Church as a priest, deacon, religious sister or religious brother? If you think so, call or write Father Norm Carroll, Diocesan Director of Priestly and Religious Vocations (302-573-3113; [vocations@cdow.org](mailto:vocations@cdow.org)). Be sure to visit our website: [www.cdow.org/vocations!](http://www.cdow.org/vocations!)

## **GOD IS ON THE AIR**

You are invited to listen to the Catholic Forum podcast. A new podcast is posted every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. at [cdow.org/communications](http://cdow.org/communications) or search "Catholic Forum" on iTunes or iHeartRadio podcasts. Next Sunday, May 14th, Karen Barbieri, founder of Pietra Fitness will discuss what some call "Catholic Yoga." For photos, information regarding upcoming guests, podcast links and more, "Like" Catholic Forum on Facebook at [facebook.com/catholicforum](https://facebook.com/catholicforum). Catholic Forum is a production of the Office of Communications of the Diocese of Wilmington.

## **MEMORIAL BRICK**

If you wish to purchase a Memorial Brick honoring a loved one or special occasion please call the Rectory or visit the St. Thomas the Apostle website at [www.sainttom.org](http://www.sainttom.org)

## **HOW DO WE PRAY WITH SACRED SCRIPTURE?**

Spiritual reading of Sacred Scripture, especially the Gospels, is an important form of meditation. This spiritual reading is traditionally called *lectio divina* or divine reading. *Lectio divina* is prayer over the Scriptures.

1. The first element of this type of prayer is reading (*lectio*): you take a short passage from the Bible, preferably a Gospel passage and read it carefully, perhaps three or more times. Let it really soak-in.
2. The second element is meditation (*meditatio*). By using your imagination enter into the Biblical scene in order to "see" the setting, the people, and the unfolding action. It is through this meditation that you encounter the text and discover its meaning for your life.
3. The next element is prayer (*oratio*) or your personal response to the text: asking for graces, offering praise or thanksgiving, seeking healing or forgiveness. In this prayerful engagement with the text, you open yourself up to the possibility of contemplation.
4. Contemplation (*contemplatio*) is a gaze turned toward Christ and the things of God. By God's action of grace, you may be raised above meditation to a state of seeing or experiencing the text as mystery and reality. In contemplation, you come into an experiential contact with the One behind and beyond the text.

*To protect creation, to protect every man and every woman, to look upon them with tenderness and love, is to open up a horizon of hope; it is to let a shaft of light break through the heavy clouds; it is to bring the warmth of hope! – Pope Francis*

# < KID'S > KORNER

**Gospel Today**  
Fourth Sunday of Easter | John 10:1-10

Jesus says, "I am the gate for the sheep". Jesus is the faith we follow, and the gate we enter, to meet Him in heaven.

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## FIND THE LETTERS

Find and write the missing letters not listed (from A to Z).

*Hint: This word has doubles of two letters*



Unscramble the letters and fill in the blanks to complete the sentence below.

"I am the good \_\_\_\_\_;  
I know my sheep and my sheep know me".

*John 10:14*

