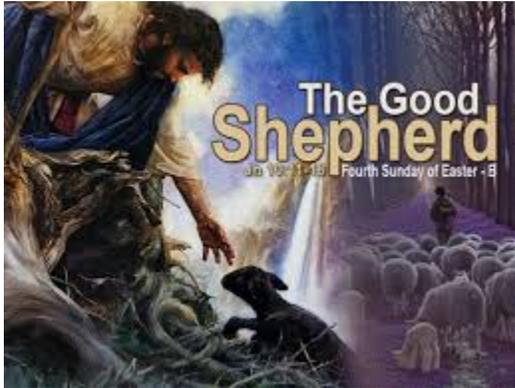


**For The Bulletin Of
May 7, 2017**



**THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF
EASTER**

From Father Robert

Sheep can be both dumb and stubborn. Oblivious to danger, they will stray from the safety of numbers in the fold and the care of their shepherd. A vigilant shepherd will go after the sheep. A shepherd's crook is used when a sheep won't listen to a shepherd's voice and is in danger. The crook can pull, push, or draw the straying sheep to the safety of the fold. Straying often, being driven back – eventually a sheep learns the shepherd's voice. The gospel today is about sheep and shepherd. But not just any sheep, nor any shepherd. Jesus is our Good Shepherd, and we are the sheep He cares for and keeps from danger.

There is only one true Shepherd. This "shepherd calls His own sheep by name and leads them out" – nay, He *drives* them out. Moreover, the shepherd "walks ahead" of the sheep, leading and guiding them. Thus, we have a two-way relationship with our Shepherd. On the one hand, He drives us out of our comfort zone to risk being His disciples.

When we are reluctant to go, He gives us a push, sometimes prodding us to go even where we do not wish. Taking up our Shepherd's mission can be as dangerous for us as it was for Him. On the other hand, the Shepherd goes before us with guidance and care. Even when we face danger – face ridicule, rejection, denial – He is there to protect us and keep us faithful to His mission. Do we hear Him calling us by name? Are we willing to be driven by Him? To be led by Him?

We know our true Shepherd from strangers or "thieves and robbers" by the sound of His voice calling each of us by name. Yes, He calls each of us by name. Each of us has something unique to give the church to build up the Shepherd's Body and continue His saving mission. If we refuse to hear His voice (as did the Pharisees in this gospel), His mission does not move forward as quickly and surely as it might. Each of us is important. Each of us has a name. The Pharisees refused to listen, refused to be driven to fulfill their true mission to God's people. Unlike the Pharisees, we are to heed our Shepherd's voice driving each of us out personally to continue His saving mission, His voice, guiding and leading each of us personally to abundant life.

In this gospel Jesus promises us His continued care and protection. He also tells us *why* we can rely on Him: as our Shepherd-guide, Jesus seeks only our good while protecting us from the real harm of "thieves and robbers." It is crucial that we listen to the voice of the Shepherd and stay close to Him for protection, yes. But more importantly, we stay close to Him because He guides us to the abundant Life He wishes to

give us. Jesus assures us twice – “truly, truly, I say to you” – of the strength of His promise and the clarity of His mission. He is our sure guide. We must hear and follow our Shepherd. Hearing Him calling us by name must elicit an active “Amen” response from each one of us.

Living The Paschal Mystery

Even at Easter when we celebrate the new, Risen Life of Jesus and share in His joy and sing unending alleluias, we cannot stray too far from reflecting on the cost of this new Life: self-giving for the sake of another. During times when we seem to be overwhelmed by the demands of dying to self, God assures us of new Life. During this Easter Season when we are overjoyed at new Life, God assures us of Jesus’ faithful guidance that leads us through death to new Life. Yes, Jesus is our sure guide – He leads us through death on our way to share in His new Life, in Easter joy.

As we celebrate this Good Shepherd Sunday, what are the thoughts and responses you have to today’s gospel?

- I hear the voice of the Shepherd driving me to...I balk when...I follow most easily when...
- The “thieves and robbers” whose voices mislead me are...
- The abundant Life I receive even now when I hear and heed the Shepherd’s voice is...



About Liturgy: Conflicting Voices of Liturgy

Many people are disturbed by the seemingly endless and conflicting voices speaking out on liturgy. Who or what to follow? It would be easy if there were an invariable set of rules for liturgy; while there are plenty of guidelines and some pretty specific rules, there are many options and decisions that must be made at the level of the whole church (in Rome), for a country, diocese, and even parish. So, who/what determines good liturgy?

First of all, whatever takes place during liturgy must be completely directed to the worship of the Father through Christ and in the Holy Spirit. All worship is directed to God and has God at the center. Secondly, all liturgy enacts the paschal mystery, Jesus’ dying and rising into which we enter at baptism and celebrate and live throughout our lives. Thirdly, all liturgy transforms the worshipers into being more perfect members of the Body of Christ. Fourthly, all liturgy leads to more just, charitable, and faith-filled Christian living. If all decisions about liturgy were measured against these four principles, a parish would already have taken a great step forward ensuring good and authentic liturgy.



New Members Brunch Today

Our Pastoral Council is welcoming our newly-registered members to our semi-annual New Members Brunch immediately following the 10:00 a.m. Eucharist. Also attending are the members of our Leadership: the Pastoral Staff, the Pastoral Council, and the Finance Council. We give thanks for these new members and joyfully welcome them to our parish community.



Mother's Day

Next weekend, we will honor all mothers, grandmothers, great grandmothers, godmothers, step-mothers, foster mothers, and all the holy women who nurture and give life! A special blessing will be given at the conclusion of each liturgy asking God's continued blessing upon all these beautiful and holy women.



"We Remember"

On Friday evening, May 19th, at 9:00 p.m., Contra Costa County Fire Stations will observe the annual "We Remember" event when fire apparatus will be rolled out onto the apron of each fire station and their engine/truck emergency lights turned on for one minute to remember the lives of their fellow firefighters who took their own lives. It is also a powerful way to support their families, friends, fellow firefighters, and loved ones to let them know that we will not forget them. I will be participating in this event at the fire station on Loveridge Road in Pittsburg. You are welcome to be present at a fire station near you to participate in this event. Thank you for your support for our firefighters of ConFire and all firefighters.



...to our amazing volunteer parishioners who come to clean early each Saturday morning and to prepare the church and parish hall for the weekend and the week ahead: **Jun Bajet, Angela Bueno, Cathy Romeo, Mency Osborne,**

Carole Miller, Jack Goncalves, and Steve Rojek.

...to our amazing volunteer parishioners who clean and maintain both the bathrooms in the church as well as in the parish hall: **Robert Goncalves, Virginia Noack, Mary Ewing, Patricia Britton, Steve Rojek, and Harlan Young.**

...to **Dilcia Aparacio** who does such an excellent job of washing, ironing, and caring for the Sacred Linens.

...to our Sacristans and Altar Guild who prepare the sanctuary for the celebration of Eucharist each week:

Peter Degl’Innocenti, Pam and Rich Confetti, Vincent Rodriguez, Harlan Young, Rowena Cayaban, Monika Kauer, Cynthia Enrique, Belen Farin, Nancy Santos and Rose Salamanca.

...to **our counting teams** who are here every week to count the weekly collections.

...to our volunteers who assisted in the parish office last week: **Jeannine Ford, Harlan Young, Melodye Costanza, Yvette Young, Alicia Perez, Joe Fanfa, Bev Iacona and Lorraine Lohmeier.**

...to our St. Vincent de Paul and Mobile Mall volunteers who transported last week’s donations: **Bob Carvalho and Barbara Jackson.**

...to our faithful weekly bulletin assembly team: **Bob Carvalho, Carole Miller, Dave Costanza, Judy Quicho, Belen Farin and Dilcia Aparicio.**

...to our wonderful Parking Lot Security who keep watch over our vehicles during weekend liturgies: **Steve Rojek, Don Benson, Jose Palomino, Bob Goncalves and various members of the Knights of Columbus.**



...to all of you for a most memorable Birthday Celebration last Sunday, beginning with the singing of “Happy Birthday” at the Sunday liturgies, the YLI Pasta Dinner, beginning at 3:00 p.m., the more than 400 guests who came and entered into the celebration, the Knights of Columbus who worked alongside our YLI Sisters as well as our Social Events Committee. The tables in the parish hall, on the patio, and in the garden were so beautifully decorated and the weather could not have been better! The wonderful service of the guests at each of the tables, the delicious antipasti, the Mixed Green Salad, the spectacular Pasta and the YLI “Magic” Sauce, the Garlic Bread, and the Ice Cream and Birthday Cake for dessert – what a feast! Not to mention the red and white wine poured so ably by our Knights! We even had the St. Ignatius of Antioch “Speedster” in operation to bring our guests from the far reaches of the parking lot to the event. There were no strangers at the dinner – everyone became “family” almost immediately as stories were told and shared, lots of laughter, toasts, the singing of “Happy Birthday” throughout the afternoon, the gifts that were given towards the end of the afternoon, the Raffle Drawing and “saluting” the winners...all done with such efficiency, professionalism, and cooperation between everyone – what a successful event! We were blessed by the presence of **Father Daniel** from Holy Rosary who brought greetings and

good wishes. There were parishioners from each of the parishes in which I have served over the past almost 45 years and I was deeply humbled and honored by their presence. They had such a great time! And the gifts!!! Thank you for such amazing generosity and thoughtfulness; I am doing my best to acknowledge each gift, each bottle of wine, your beautiful birthday cards and money gifts, all greatly appreciated. I thank you for your support of our YLI that does so much good for our parishes and our community – what a great sisterhood! Special thanks and gratitude to **Jeannine Ford, Chair, and to Dorothy Lamendola, Honorary Chair** of this Pasta/Birthday event.

This was the first time that we have ever set up tables and chairs outside in the garden beneath the Sequoias and Redwoods and it was truly a big “hit!” So many guests remarked how beautiful it was to be outside and again, the weather and lack of wind could not have made it a better setting. There was more than one person who remarked: “We need to do this again!” And, we will!

Thank you for your support, your affirmation, your appreciation, your many expressions of gratitude and love for me – you made this a birthday that I will never forget.

Antioch Women’s Shelter Update

Current Status – May 2017

- Our proposed emergency shelter for women and children remains on hold until we have an agreement to use the city property on Delta Fair Blvd. You may remember that the Antioch City Council directed the city staff to “make this

happen” with us in April 2016. Since then, we have seen delay/delay/delay in getting an agreement.

- Please pray that this shelter will become a priority of the new Antioch City Manager. Our leadership team has been working to get on his calendar to discuss ways to move forward with the city.
- You may remember that the Delta Fair land was rezoned for a shelter last November. Once we get the land agreement and an approved building design, we will launch our fund raising efforts to make this shelter a reality!
- Please pray for God’s clarity regarding your role with the growing homelessness problem in greater Antioch and East Contra Costa County. This is our “refugee problem”, especially homeless children and their mothers who are being priced out of their homes and into the streets. Can you help temporarily with a spare bedroom, a rented apartment, or something? This is happening by churches and community organizations in other parts of the SF bay and the country. Why not in Antioch and East Contra Costa County?
- Our website, www.antiochcasherter.org, has our current information. Or follow us on Facebook: Antioch Shelter Project. Tamika’s phone number is 510-384-4292 and

Gary's is 206-962-1496. Our email address is antiochsp@gmail.com. Let us know if you have any questions, suggestions, or are interested in helping.



Shepherd and Sheepgate

O God and Father of the Good Shepherd,
we pass through the gate and into the sheepfold
to the loving embrace of the Shepherd,
who is the guardian of our souls.
When we stray from the fold,
the true Shepherd comes and leads us in right paths.
Protect us, Good Shepherd, and do not let us be led astray
by the world's thieves and robbers.
Lead us from death into life.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
your Son, who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever. Amen.