

The Fourth Sunday Of Easter April 22nd 2018

We have heard about the Good Shepherd in today's gospel , that maybe we lose the power of this image for the people of Jesus' time. At the time of Jesus, and today as well, raising sheep was big business. It was a central part of economic life in the Middle East much as the auto industry is in our world today. People used sheep for food clothing and religious sacrifice. The number of sheep he had easily measured a person's wealth. The Good Shepherd had to be with his sheep in winter as well as summer, in rain as well as sunshine.

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus says He is the Good Shepherd. He gives three Characteristics of the good shepherd. First a good shepherd cares so much for the flock that he is willing to risk his life to protect them. Secondly he knows each of the sheep well by "name". He cares about all of them even those who go astray.

A good shepherd is willing to give even his life for the sheep. We all have had the experience of being disappointed by heroes and leaders in our life. Sooner or later, something is revealed that shows a person we admired not to be all that he or she claimed to be. Jesus is everything He claimed to be. He showed His love by giving up His life for us. Each Sunday the words "My Body for you"....."My Blood for you" come to us without interference from the Last Supper to show us the extent of Jesus' sacrifice for us. AMEN.