

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Today the Church celebrates World Day of Prayer for Vocations, also commonly known as Good Shepherd Sunday. Over the past nine days, we have joined parishes throughout the Archdiocese in praying a novena to Saint Charles Borromeo for an end to the current Covid-19 pandemic and support for our seminarians and those discerning a call to the priesthood, particularly in the Archdiocese of San Francisco. I am grateful to Father Cameron Faller, our Director of Vocations, for his tireless efforts in working with young men in the discernment process. As an Assistant Vocation Director (San Mateo County), I am impressed by the number of men who hopefully will be entering formation this fall. I have had the opportunity to interview several of them and I pray that the good work the Lord has begun in them will be brought to completion.

It is important also to acknowledge the promotion of vocations on the part of Archbishop Cordileone. His active support and participation in this important ministry is making a difference. Many of the young men inquiring about priestly service in the Archdiocese have noted the efforts of the Archbishop in this regard. We all realize that the work of the Church is plentiful; we need more field hands to work the harvest. I am equally edified by the number of our parishioners who daily pray for vocations to the priesthood and the consecrated life. Each one of us can do our part by both prayer and encouraging young men and women we believe may have a vocation to serve the Church in this way. It makes a huge difference!

In today's Gospel from John (John 10:1-10), Jesus tells his disciples that he is the gate through which the shepherd and the sheep enter; those who climb over or try some other means to get into the gate Jesus refers to as bandits and thieves. Jesus is the gate through which we enter in order to share in the fullness of God's love and truth. Jesus often warned against false shepherds who lead their flock astray. This manifests itself in innumerable ways; one certainly can be an abuse of power and authority, of treating those in the care of a shepherd with indifference and lack of loving care. Saint Augustine wrote, "I, seeking to enter in among you, that is, into your heart, preach Christ: if I were to preach other than that, I should be trying to enter by some other way. Through Christ I enter in, not to your houses but to your hearts. Through him I enter and you have willingly heard me speak of him. Why? Because you are Christ's sheep and you have been purchased with Christ's blood." We follow Jesus the Good Shepherd because when he calls we know his voice; it is a voice of total self-giving for the other; it is a voice of compassion and reconciliation; it is a voice which unites us to the love of the Father and the Son.

Let us continue to follow through the gate which leads to eternal life. May we be attentive through prayer and discernment to the voice of truth even amidst all the temptations and promptings of the noise of this world.

The photograph which dons the cover of this week's bulletin is a depiction of the Good Shepherd. This statue was commissioned in the 1960's by Father Vital Vodusek and rests at the Slovene-Croatian section of Holy Cross Cemetery in Colma.

May the Good Shepherd always keep you in his care!

--Fr. Tom