

## Homily for the 4th Sunday of Easter

The fourth Sunday of Easter, known as Good Shepherd Sunday, is also the “World Day of Prayer for Vocations.” Today's first reading describes how Paul and Barnabas opted to listen to the voice of Jesus the Good Shepherd and follow him, and how, like their Master, they were rebuffed and rejected when they tried to share the good news of salvation. The second reading, encourages the readers with the assurance that every person who has ever followed Christ and led others to him will share everlasting life with him. The Gospel text offers us both comfort and great challenge. The comforting message is that no one can snatch the sheep out of his Father's hands. The challenge is that pastors and lay people alike should be good shepherds to those entrusted to their care. Let us become good shepherds and good sheep, good leaders and good followers.

*A soldier dying on a Korean battlefield asked for a priest. The Medic could not find one. A wounded man lying nearby heard the request and said, “I am a priest.” The Medic turned to the speaker and saw his condition, which was as bad as that of the other. “It will kill you if you move,” he warned. But the wounded chaplain replied. “The life of a man's soul is worth more than a few hours of my life.” He then crawled to the dying soldier, heard his confession, gave him absolution and the two died hand in hand. This is the real example of shepherding and it is a commitment in love.*

Love is a mystery. When it is there everything looks heavenly. When it is gone everything looks stale, meaningless. We are called to be in a deep commitment, but that commitment does not create love. Love creates it. Commitment follows it. If one day love disappears, that commitment also will disappear. Life is a commitment. Commitment brings energy. If one wants to live an intense life, full of energy and power, one needs deep commitment. If one is not committed, the energy is not challenged. The disciple is not just there to be a passive phenomenon. He has to be active in love. When the master and the disciple are both active, something of the beyond penetrates the ordinary world. Parents are asked to be shepherds of the family God has given them. It is the same for teachers, farmers, fishermen, doctors, lawyers, etc. Is our primary concern to care for and help others to a better quality of life? *A caring wife was giving medicines to her husband: that pill is for your heart, that one is for your eyes, that one is for blood pressure, that's for diabetes, that's a blood thinner, that is for cholesterol, that is for dizziness and finally the husband asked then what's for dessert?* If we are in it just for our own good then no matter what title one has one is not a shepherd with the heart of Jesus. Love is what we bring with us at the end of life. ‘We will be judged in the evening of life by love (St John of the Cross). Love for those near and far, for love in the gospel is more than love for just the family, the friend, the attractive one, the neighbour, for all. Love changes — we look back and see how the people we loved make the difference. Don't try to change people. Just love them as a shepherd of his flock. Love is what changes us.