



Lord, You are my shepherd so I will lack nothing. You restore my soul! You lead me on the right path because it is Your nature to do so. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will not fear because You are with me. I thank You for equipping me with Your rod and Your staff so that I can be comforted. You anoint my head with oil and ensure that my cup (my portion) runs over with abundance! Thank You for this good shepherd Sunday and for Your goodness and mercies all the days of my life, Amen!

## GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY

4<sup>TH</sup> Sunday of Easter  
03 MAY 2020

A true shepherd, Jesus said, knows his sheep well and leads them with care. And Jesus, the good shepherd, goes so far that he “lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11).

We can read Jesus’ words and learn something for ourselves. For we are all shepherds for God’s people in one way or another. We are all called to care for his people by following in Jesus’ footsteps. Our “flock” may include our children, our parents, or our catechism class. We may be quiet shepherds welcoming a new family at church or mentoring a co-worker. But no matter who is in our flock, we need to remember that the sheep belong to Jesus and not to us. He treasures each one of them and wants us to reflect his own love and self-sacrifice.

So ask yourself, “How well do I know my sheep? Do I know the challenges my loved ones are facing?” Sometimes we are so busy with our own affairs that we overlook the hurt, weariness, or fear in someone right next to us. But following Jesus’ example, we can set aside our concerns, “call them by name,” and listen to their needs. Perhaps we can even lead them to a place of peace. That’s one small way to be a shepherd for God’s sheep.

This Sunday is traditionally dedicated for us to pray in a special way for the ordained leaders in our Church, both those who are now leading us, and those who will continue to lead us in the coming years. We pray for those in ministry. We pray for young men who are called to serve as ordained ministers in the Church. Many who are called to the priesthood. May our prayers and lives help these young men to understand and value the challenges and respond to the call to this vocation.

### PRAYER FOR VOCATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

- *Composed by Pope Francis*

**LORD** of the Harvest,

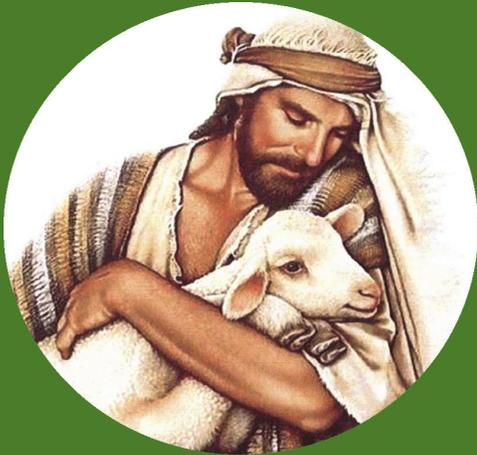
**BLESS** young people with the gift of courage to respond to your call.

**OPEN** their hearts to great ideals, to great things.

**INSPIRE** all of your disciples to mutual love and giving—  
for vocations blossom in the good soil of faithful people.

**INSTILL** those in religious life, parish ministries, and families with the confidence and grace to invite others to embrace the bold and noble path of a life consecrated to you.

**UNITE** us to Jesus through prayer and sacrament,  
so that we may cooperate  
with you in building your reign of mercy  
and truth, of justice and peace. Amen.



Father, I thank You for being the door of Your sheep. Lord, I adore You because You hear me, and through You I am saved! The thief comes to steal, kill and destroy, but Lord You have come so that I may have life and have it more abundantly! Thank You for being the good shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep! You are not a hireling who sees His sheep as a job, but You are the good shepherd who sees His sheep as His children. So on this good shepherd Sunday, I thank You because, You know Your sheep and are known by Your own. Thank You Lord! Amen

### **First Reading** (Acts 2:14a, 36–41)

*Peter, the leader of the apostles, proclaims to the people that Jesus who was crucified is risen from the dead and is proclaimed by God as Lord and Messiah.*

**THEN PETER** stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed: “Let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, “What are we to do, my brothers?” Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is made to you and to your children and to all those far off, whomever the Lord our God will call.” He testified with many other arguments, and was exhorting them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added that day. — The word of the Lord. All — Thanks be to God.

### **Responsorial Psalm** (Ps 23)

R — The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

1. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want./ In verdant pastures he gives me repose;/ beside restful waters he leads me;/ he refreshes my soul. (R)
2. He guides me in right paths/ for his name’s sake./ Even though I walk in the dark valley/ I fear no evil; for you are at my side,/ with your rod and your staff/ that give me courage. (R)
3. You spread the table before me/ in the sight of my foes;/ you anoint my head with oil;/ my cup overflows. (R)
4. Only goodness and kindness follow me/ all the days of my life;/ and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord/ for years to come. (R)

### **Second Reading** (1 Pt 2:20b–25)

*Jesus bore our sins on the cross, suffering for us sinners. He is the Shepherd who gave his life for us. In turn, we should come back to him to receive healing.*

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Peter **BELOVED**: If you are patient when you suffer for doing what is good, this is a grace before God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps. He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.

When he was insulted, he returned no insult; when he suffered, he did not threaten; instead, he handed himself over to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you had gone astray like sheep, but you have now returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls. — The word of the Lord. All — Thanks be to God.



Dear Lord, I thank You for the works that You have done in Your Father's name for they bear witness of You. I believe in You because I am Your sheep, You are my good shepherd. I heard Your voice, know You, and follow You. Thank You for the eternal life that You have promised to Your sheep. Lord, on this good shepherd Sunday, I will give thanks because in You I will never perish! No one will snatch me from Your hand. You Father, who has given me to You, is greater than them all, Amen.

### **Alleluia** (Jn 10:14)

— Alleluia, alleluia. I am the good shepherd, says the Lord; I know my sheep, and mine know me. Alleluia, alleluia.

### **GOSPEL** (Jn 10:1–10)

JESUS said: "Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate but climbs over elsewhere is a thief and a robber. But whoever enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice, as the shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice. But they will not follow a stranger; they will run away from him, because they do not recognize the voice of strangers." Although Jesus used this figure of speech, the Pharisees did not realize what he was trying to tell them. So Jesus said again, "Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy, I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

— The Gospel of the Lord. All — Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

### **Word in Other Words**

*Pablito Tagura, SVD*

A young man was badly burnt all over his body for trying in vain to save his parents from their house being engulfed by fire. Worst of all, his face was disfigured and turned very ugly. He went into extreme depression, bitterness, with the nagging guilt for failure to save his parents. He isolated himself, believing that his wife could not love him anymore in his sorry and pitiful condition.

But the wife would not give up on him; consulting a top plastic surgeon, she was assured that, at least, he would make her husband's face a little presentable. But the husband vigorously refused to undergo any medical procedures. The wife wanted to reach out desperately to her husband, to share in his grief and anguish. So she thought of an "unusual" plan, hoping that her husband would let her in into his "world."

She requested the plastic surgeon to disfigure her face and make it so ugly like her husband's face so that she could totally and completely identify with him and hopefully accept her and be convinced of her LOVE for him. That action may be akin to God's love! The second reading today tells us that Jesus bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds we have been healed.

The image of the Good Shepherd captures beautifully the Fatherly care, love and forgiveness of God through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. We are used to seeing a picture of Jesus carrying a spotless, innocent, adorable and cuddly lamb on his shoulders. But should we not have a picture of Jesus carrying a fully grown, smelly, dirty



There has been a slow decline of vocation to the Priesthood in developed countries like New Zealand, Australia, North America and Europe; but a notable increase of the Vocation is happening in Asia and Africa. Thus, the missionary receiving countries of the past like the Philippines, India, Indonesia is now missionary sending countries. In the Catholic Church we find that these missionaries may be found in many western countries like the USA, Germany, Australia, and even New Zealand. MISSIO (The Pontifical Mission Societies) has been the arm of the Pope to oversee that the formation of these young men undergoes proper formation and education.

**missio**  
new zealand

and ugly-looking adult sheep? After all, He came to save not the self-righteous but sinners. As foretold by the Prophet Isaiah: “He was despised and rejected...crushed for our wickedness, through his punishment we are made whole...bearing the sins of the multitude and interceding for sinners” (Isaiah 53:3, 5, 12). Jesus is the Good Shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine in the wilderness to go and search for the one lost sheep. (Luke 15:4)

Jesus introduced himself in the Gospel today as the gate for the sheep. When all the sheep from the different flocks have entered the pen, he keeps watch by lying at the gate of the pen the whole night to protect the flock and when morning comes, he calls each by name, which is reminiscent of Isaiah 49:15-16: “I will never forget you; I have written your name upon the palm of my hand.” Where does the Good Shepherd lead his flock? – to green pastures and clean waters; he is beside them and thus fear no evil, his rod and his staff will comfort them; goodness and kindness will follow them all the days of their lives (Psalm 23). If we hear the voice of the Good Shepherd should we not follow?

### **PRAYER IN TIME OF OUR CRISES**

**God our Father, we ask your protection against the Coronavirus that has claimed lives and affected many.**

**We pray for your grace for the people tasked with studying the nature of this virus and of stemming the tide of its transmission.**

**Guide the hands and minds of the medical experts to minister to the sick with competence and compassion, and guide government and private agencies to find a cure and solution to this epidemic.**

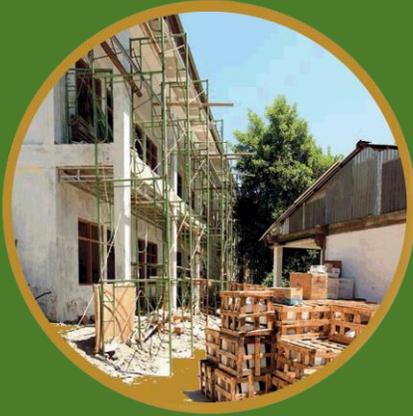
**We pray for those afflicted. May they be restored to health soon. Grant us the grace to work for the good of all and to help those in need.**

**I ask for your special providence and protection for our country, my family and my friends. Please send your Holy Spirit to protect us from this virus. And may Mary, our Blessed Mother, place over us her mantel of protection. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.**

### **THE OUR FATHER**

**Prayer Leader:** Let us now sum up all our prayers and petitions using the prayer of the Children of God:

**ALL - OUR FATHER** who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our trespasses. As we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.



MISSIO-NZ – the Pontifical Mission Societies in New Zealand has been helping in the formation of young priests and religious in many developing countries where in recent years a considerable number of young men and women are responding to the priesthood and religious life. Proper facilities like libraries, lecture rooms, and other seminary facilities are built to assist in the proper preparation of young candidates. The New Zealand Catholics have a share in the formation of young priests and religious. Your valuable help is a participation in this mission.



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**Prayer Leader:** Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

**All - For the Kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

#### **PRAYER FOR PEACE**

Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles: Peace I leave you, my peace I give you, look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will. Who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

#### **LAMB OF GOD**

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

#### **PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNION**

**My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all, and I desire to receive You into my life. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come spiritually into my heart. I welcome and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen. (3x)

O GOD, you never cease to call even those far away, for it is your will that all be drawn into one-fold. Attune our ears to the voice of the Good Shepherd, who leads us always to you, that we may find under your tender protection life in all its fullness. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, GOD for ever and ever. Amen.

May our loving and caring God continue to bless us with peace, health and happiness. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

May God be proclaimed through our very lives. Alleluia, Alleluia. Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia!