

Reflection for the 4th Sunday of Easter

Jesus said: "I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep."

These are the words Jesus Christ the Risen Lord spoke today in our Gospel reading on this 4th Sunday of Easter. Because of today's Gospel Reading this Sunday is often referred to as Good



Shepherd Sunday. The image of Jesus the Good Shepherd can and should have an appealing message and image for us as His followers. When Jesus speaks of Himself as the Good Shepherd we are reminded of the fact that our Lord is a caring God who is present in our lives and is here to protect and guide us. This image of the Good Shepherd quickly became a part of Catholic art, first seen in the catacombs starting in the 2nd century A.D. This image of Christ the Good Shepherd today can be found in homes, Churches, and cemeteries, be it as a

statue, mosaic or painting. These images convey a message of a loving Lord that is active in our lives helping us in this world and in the next.

In this time of uncertainty with the pandemic the idea and image of Christ the Good Shepherd is a welcome and comforting image for us to embrace. May this image and idea of Christ the Good Shepherd be more to us than just providing us comfort. May we be emboldened by the image and message of Christ the Good Shepherd, for with Him to guide and protect us; we can then be able to boldly live a life as a follower of Christ.

In the world today we have many challenges in living a Catholic life, our society and our world can seem not just at odds with our beliefs but at times society can seem to be in open conflict with our faith. Also with recent events in the Church with regards to priest sexual abuse of minors it is natural for any member of the Church to have concerns and questions. The image of Christ the Good Shepherd can provide us comfort and peace in these challenging times.

We can take comfort in the Church providing a consistent message and teaching from one generation to the next. We can also see the appropriate way that the Church has responded to the priest sexual abuse of minors, and its zero tolerance policy. Naturally there is more work for the Church to do on all fronts but it is good to see the Church responding to the needs of the world today and following the example of Christ the Good Shepherd.

In December of 2019 the Archdiocese filed for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy and has been working with the Creditors Committee to reach an agreement. The Chapter 11 filing for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe came about due to the large number of sexual abuse of minor's claims. All these claims are for clergy that no longer minister in the Church and most have passed away. As a Church we must keep the victims in our prayers, and find ways to help them find healing.

Recently the Archdiocese and the Creditors Committee have come to a basic understanding of a Confidential Agreement. If they are able to finalize this agreement the Archdiocese will be able to move forward from Chapter 11 Bankruptcy and more importantly the victims can take another step towards healing. In order for the Archdiocese to have the funds to settle with the Creditors Committee the Archdiocese has contacted the parishes to ask us to help with the funds needed for the confidential settlement agreement. All parishes that provide funds to the settlement agreement will receive a

channeling injunction that will protect the parish from future lawsuits. When I was contacted by the Vicar General of the Archdiocese, Fr. Glenn Jones, I consulted with the Parish Finance Board and came to the conclusion that the correct and right course for our Parish, the victims, and the Archdiocese is to agree in principle that our Parish would give a portion of its savings to the confidential agreement that the Archdiocese and the Creditors Committee are working on.

At this point due to the confidential nature of the agreement and that it has not been finalized I know little about it and can share very little. But our Parish Finance Board believes it is important that we keep all members of the parish informed, and I completely agree with them. I hope this information is helpful, I am sure it is hard to read, but it is important that you as members of this parish are kept informed. Know that I keep each of you in prayers and I ask for your prayers. May we together pray to Christ the Good Shepherd for the victims of sexual abuse and for our Archdiocese. In closing know that I am truly thankful to all the members of the Parish for all the good works we do in our Community and in the Universal Church, if you have any questions or concerns please know that I am very open to meeting with you.

Fr. John C. Daniel