

## **Easter IV © [May 11, 2025] ~ Homily > Good Shepherd Sunday, World Day of Prayer for Vocations & Mother's Day**

Today, is the first Sunday after the election of new Pope, Pope Leo XIV. Now we have a Pope and he is the maiden one from America. Let us rejoice.

This Sunday, we celebrate not only the beautiful image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd, but also the gift of vocations, the role of mothers and the joy of welcoming our First Communion students into the Body of Christ. There is much to reflect on the ways in which God is calling each of us to be shepherds in our own lives.

In today's Gospel, we hear Jesus speak of Himself as the Good Shepherd. He tells us that He knows His sheep, and His sheep know His voice. Jesus calls us by name, and through His voice, we are invited into a relationship with Him - one where He guides, comforts, nourishes, and protects us.

As we reflect on this image of the Good Shepherd, we are reminded that Jesus is not only our protector, but He also challenges us to be shepherds to others. Whether we are parents, teachers, priests, or leaders in any capacity, we are entrusted with the care of others. Each of us is called to lead with love, to guide with compassion, and to protect with a heart full of care, just as Christ does for us.

Today is also the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. We pray for an increase in vocations to the priesthood, religious life, and lay ministry. The world desperately needs good shepherds - those who will serve with humility and love, following the example of Jesus. Let us pray for those who are discerning their call to serve the Church, and for the strength and courage they need to say yes to God's invitation.

We also acknowledge the vocations that exist within every family, workplace, and community. The vocation to be a loving spouse, a dedicated parent, a compassionate teacher - these are all ways in which we are called to shepherd others, reflecting Christ's love in the world.

Today, as we also celebrate Mother's Day, we take a moment to honor and thank our mothers for their incredible love and self-sacrifice. A mother's love mirrors the love of the Good Shepherd. Our mothers have nurtured us, cared for us, guided us, and protected us from the moment we were born. They have shown us what it means to love selflessly, to give without counting the cost, and to care for others with a heart full of compassion.

As we celebrate mothers' Day today, let us also remember that we have two mothers: our earthly mother and our Heavenly Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary. Just as Jesus entrusted us to Mary from the cross, let us entrust our mothers to her care, asking for her intercession and protection.

Today is a day of great joy for our First Communion students. It is a day when they receive Jesus in the Eucharist for the first time, a profound moment in their faith journey. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, nourishes them with His Body and Blood, strengthening them for the journey ahead. Let us support them in prayer, encouraging them to always listen for the voice of the Shepherd, who will lead them safely through life.

As we reflect on all of these themes today, we are reminded of our calling to be both good shepherds and good sheep. Let us strive to be shepherds in our own lives - guiding and protecting those entrusted to our care. And let us also be good sheep - listening to the voice of our Good Shepherd, following Him, and trusting in His loving care.

Let us pray for more vocations to the priesthood and religious life, for our mothers, and for the new generation of faithful (children receiving their First Communion today). May the love of the Good Shepherd fill our hearts, and may we always be willing to follow Him wherever He leads.

May God bless you all and Happy Mother's Day!