

The Shepherds Voice: By Scott Hahn

Jesus, in today's Gospel, says that He is the good shepherd the prophets had promised to Israel. He is the shepherd-prince, the new David—who frees people from bondage to sin and gathers them into one flock, the Church, under a new covenant, made in His blood (see Ezekiel 34:10–13, 23–31). His flock includes other sheep, He says, far more than the dispersed children of Israel (see Isaiah 56:8; John 11:52). And He gave His Church the mission of shepherding all peoples to the Father.

In today's First Reading, we see the beginnings of that mission in the testimony of Peter, whom the Lord appointed shepherd of His Church (see John 21:15–17). Peter tells Israel's leaders that the Psalm we sing today is a prophecy of their rejection and crucifixion of Christ. He tells the "builders" of Israel's temple that God has made the stone they rejected the cornerstone of a new spiritual temple, the Church (see Mark 12 :10–13; 1 Peter 2:4–7).

Through the ministry of the Church, the shepherd still speaks (see Luke 10:16), and forgives sins (see John 20:23), and makes His body and blood present, that all may know Him in the breaking of the bread (see Luke 24:35). It is a mission that will continue until all the world is one flock under the one shepherd. In laying down His life and taking it up again, Jesus made it possible for us to know God as He did—as sons and daughters of the Father who loves us. As we hear in today's Epistle, He calls us His children, as He called Israel His son when He led them out of Egypt and made His covenant with them (see Exodus 4:22–23; Revelation 21:7).

Today, let us listen for His voice as He speaks to us in the Scriptures, and vow again to be more faithful followers. And let us give thanks for the blessings He bestows from His altar.

To be good stewards we must be good shepherds, willing to lay down our lives for those committed in our care, not mere hired hands who run off, "leaving the sheep to be snatched and scattered by the wolf."

Shepherding Our Hearts to the Father

The Holy Spirit is burning within Peter, the first of the Apostles, as he proclaims the truth about Jesus to the leaders of the Jews in today's First Reading: Jesus Christ is the stone they rejected and executed, the cornerstone of the Church, in Whom all salvation and healing is found. In Christ, the Son of God, we also become children of God.

In Christ, who calls himself the Good Shepherd, we are known and healed and saved. This Good Shepherd has sacrificed everything for our sake, laying down His life willingly, and taking it back up again.

Jesus is always the one in control. No one forces him to do anything. The Father sent him into the world on a mission of salvation, and his whole life is dedicated to saving all of us. It is a struggle, but he is not struggling to protect or save himself; he is struggling to save all of us as he gives all of Himself. The enemy does not make him recoil or run away from his mission; the "wolf" will not make him anxious, because he cannot lose. Jesus is not worried. He does not need to recalculate his battle plan. The Plan is set from the beginning: He must take on all our fallenness and woundedness and sin and death itself, and carry it all the way to Golgotha in his own Perfect Heart – completely human and completely divine; he must sacrifice himself wholly by laying down his life, and then transform every darkness into light when he takes up his life again. And His glorious promise to us is that ultimately, all will be drawn together so that there will be one flock without division, under the one Shepherd of love. The love of the Father has willed that we be called His children, as St. John tells us. God has created a world and a Heaven that would not be complete without us, because we are all members of one family in Christ, each of us beloved sons and daughters. Through Christ's rejection and death, we are redeemed, received, and given eternal life. In this freedom, we are called to accept this great gift and follow the commands of our Good Shepherd.

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Good Shepherd Sunday — 4th Sunday of Easter — April 21st 2024

"I am the good shepherd...and I lay down my life for the sheep...and they will heed my voice."
- JOHN 10:14-16

When you pray, do you only ask Jesus for the things that you want? Do you ever ask Jesus what He wants from you? How do you listen for His response? Many times Jesus responds in "quiet whispers" that are not so obvious. So, take time every day, in silence, to actively listen for His voice.

St. Joseph

Sat. April 20th 3:30pm—4:45pm Confessions
5:00 pm Dec'd members of the Murray & Catherine Miller Families

Sun. April 21st 10:30am People of the Parish

Mon. April 22nd 8:00 am Special Intentions

Tues. April 23rd 8:00 am Fr. Thomas Royer+

Wed. April 24th 8:00 am People of St. James Parish
5:00—6:45pm Adoration and Confessions

Thurs April 25th 8:00 am Fr. Duane Jack+

Fri. April 26th 8:00 am Pete Schaub+

Sat. April 27th 3:30pm—4:45pm Confessions
5:00 pm Peg Powers+

Sun. April 28th 10:30am Fabian & Dorothy Cahill+

"When you look at the crucifix, you understand how much Jesus loved you then. When you look at the Sacred Host, you understand how much Jesus loves you now." - St. Teresa of Calcutta
Jesus waits for you in Adoration. Spending time with Him will allow you to grow in faith and love.

St. James

Sunday Confessions
7:30 — 7:55 am

Sun, April 21st 8:00am
Murdock Family
Offered by
Ann Murdock

Sun, April 28th 8:00am
People of the Parish



St Joseph

Lector

Sat. April 20th
Sun. April 21st

Burns
Gilles

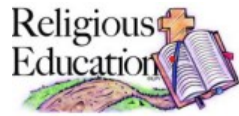
Sat. April 27th
Sun. April 28th

Zimmerman
Shuster

CCD—K- 6th Grade

9:00am—10:15am Harrison Hall

**April 30th
May 5th**



Confirmation—Grade 7-8

**Confirmation at
St. Mary Cathedral
April 20th, 2024
Cathedral 4-20-24**

**May 5th—7th& 8th Grade
Mass at St Joseph**

ST JOSEPH SPRING BEEF RAFFLE



- Raffle will be for 2 chances to win: each prize is 1/4 beef with processing included.
- Tickets are one for \$20 or three for \$50
- Tickets will be available for purchase starting this weekend.
- Drawing will be Sunday May 19th after the 10:30am Mass.
- Proceeds are to benefit the Building and Grounds Fund

Please consider volunteering to help sell tickets after Masses and/ or take a packet of tickets to sell.

Questions: contact Peg Boettcher, Colleen Kirkland or Liz McCoy

Beef Donated by Lillian's Pasture Raised Beef

**Please pray for Our
Confirmation Students who are being
Confirmed on April 20th**

**Khloe Ferretti
Mason Gargiulo
Silas Gilles
Mya Hill**



Guess who will be 100 on May 1st!

Mickie Gilles

If you would to send her a card please send it to:

Mickie Gilles
County Comfort
829 N Hurff
Elmwood, IL 61529

Thank you,

Financial Stewardship

All that we are and all that we have is a gift from God! Think of your family, your friends, your life, your talents and your money – these are all gifts from God! We aren't really owners of anything, we are merely "stewards" of the gifts God has blessed us with. We are called to be grateful and generous with all of our gifts for the benefit of others.

Sunday Totals:

St Joseph \$2,502.00

April 14th 2024

St James \$535.00

Mission of the Month of April - Haiti



Stop Assisted Suicide—A Better Way Forward—A message from the Catholic Bishops in Illinois

Legislation has been introduced to legalize assisted suicide in Illinois. SB 3499 makes it legal for a physician to prescribe an array of lethal drugs to a person diagnosed with a terminal disease who requests to end his or her life. The Catholic Bishops of Illinois oppose this legislation; there is a better way forward for our state.

As Pope Francis underscores, "We must accompany people towards death, but not provide death or facilitate assisted suicide."

Assisted suicide disregards the Hippocratic Oath, "Do No Harm," and sends the wrong message about the role of medical professionals. We cannot say it any better than the American Medical Association, "Physician assisted suicide is fundamentally incompatible with the physician's role as healer, would be difficult or impossible to control, and would provide serious societal risks."

This legislation brings a range of possible abuses. It should alarm us that in states with legalized assisted suicide there are documented cases of people being offered inexpensive lethal drugs to end their life rather than being provided more costly treatment. The poor and those with disabilities are particularly in jeopardy because they are the most vulnerable to abuses. Every major national organization that represents people with disabilities is opposed to assisted suicide.

In Oregon, where assisted suicide has been legal since 1997, data show that pain is not among the top five reasons why a person wants to end their life. Loss of autonomy, feelings of being a burden and being less able to engage in activities that make life enjoyable are most often cited as reasons for choosing assisted suicide. A better way forward is to expand mental health coverage and strengthen social supports such as community programs to help those dealing with depression and feelings of hopelessness.

No one wants to suffer or experience a loved one's suffering. Fortunately, there are effective ways to alleviate suffering or make a person more comfortable at the end of life through palliative care. This relatively new specialty area of medicine cares for the whole person – physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually – to relieve symptoms and stress that often accompany serious illness or side effects of treatment. A better way forward is to expand the number of palliative care locations and services in all areas of Illinois.

Ilcatholic.org/stop-assisted-suicide

Resources from the Catholic Conference of Illinois

Assisted suicide is not a compassionate solution for those who are suffering. There is a better way forward that truly offers compassionate care and compassionate choices.

Visit www.ilcatholic.org to find out how to contact your local elected official to tell them to vote **NO** on **SB 3499**.

There you will also find:

- Information on assisted suicide
- Frequently asked questions
- Prayers and Novenas to combat suicide
- Webinar on assisted suicide

Baby Olivia Project

The Baby Olivia Project provides a medically accurate glimpse of human life in the womb from the moment of fertilization. With scientific accuracy, the video shows the humanity of the preborn throughout each stage of human development. This state-of-the-art animation has been reviewed and certified by leading medical professionals including Dr. David Bolender, PhD, Cell Biology, Neurobiology & Anatomy, Medical College of Wisconsin; and Michelle Cretella, MD, Executive Director of the American College of Pediatricians. You can access this incredible video at the following link: [https://](https://babyolivia.liveaction.org/)

babyolivia.liveaction.org/

