

## Homily Summary – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter (Year A)

**Overview:** This homily reflects on Jesus as the Good Shepherd who lovingly leads, protects, and lays down His life for His sheep. It highlights the importance of praying for vocations, especially priests and bishops, and invites us to turn away from sin and follow Christ more closely. It also challenges us to recognize those who have helped guide us in faith and to ask whether we truly allow Jesus to lead every part of our lives.

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### **Main Points**

#### **1. Jesus the Good Shepherd**

- The Fourth Sunday of Easter centers on Christ as the Good Shepherd who guides, nourishes, and sacrifices Himself for His people.
- He leads us to spiritual nourishment, especially through the Eucharist.

#### **2. Call to Pray for Vocations**

- This Sunday is also the World Day of Prayer for Vocations.
- Jesus explicitly calls us to pray for more laborers in His Church.
- Priests and bishops need our daily prayer and support.

#### **3. Conversion of Heart**

- The first reading calls us to turn away from sin and toward Jesus.
- Following the Good Shepherd means actively choosing His path over our own.

#### **4. Christ's Sacrificial Love**

- Jesus' goodness is revealed most fully in His willingness to die for us.
- His desire is not just that we live - but that we live abundantly.

#### **5. Witnesses in Our Lives**

- God places people in our lives who reflect Christ and lead us closer to Him.
- Gratitude for these individuals deepens our awareness of God's work.

#### **6. Personal Discipleship**

- A key question: Do I truly let Jesus lead my life?
  - Being a disciple means trusting and following Him in all things.
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### **Key Bible Verses (NRSVCE)**

- **Matthew 9:38** – “Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”
  - **John 10:10** – “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”
  - **John 10:11** – “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”
  - **Psalms 23:1-2** – “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures.”
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### **Catechism of the Catholic Church References**

- **CCC 1548** – Christ is present in His ordained ministers as Shepherd of the flock.
  - **CCC 1551** – The priesthood is a service of love in imitation of Christ the Good Shepherd.
  - **CCC 1427** – Jesus calls us to conversion, turning away from sin and toward God.
  - **CCC 1324** – The Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life.”
  - **CCC 1816** – We are called to live and witness the faith boldly.
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### **Reflection Questions**

1. Is Jesus truly the Good Shepherd of my life, or do I try to lead myself?
2. How often do I pray for priests, bishops, and new vocations?
3. What concrete step can I take this week to grow in trust of Christ's guidance?
4. Who has been a “shepherd” in my life, helping me grow closer to Jesus?
5. Where might Jesus be calling me to turn away from sin and follow Him more closely?
6. How can I more fully receive the “abundant life” Jesus offers?

**Rhyme summary:**

Good Shepherd Sunday calls us once again,  
To see Christ leading us with calm, steady hand.  
He bids us pray for priests who tend His sheep,  
That they may guide His flock with love both true and deep.

He lays down His life and leads to pastures green,  
Prepares His table where God's grace is seen.  
He offers us life - abundant, full, free -  
So let us each ask: Do I let the Good Shepherd lead me?

**Some Scriptural reasons to come to Mass each weekend**

**Exodus 20:8** - "Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy."

**Acts 2:42** - "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

**Hebrews 10:24-25** - "And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

**Luke 22:19** - "Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'"

**John 6:53-54** - "So Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day.'"

**Matthew 18:20** - "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

**Psalms 122:1** - "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'"

**Colossians 3:16** - "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God."

**Additional resources to learn more about God and the Catholic faith**

- Check out the resource list available on [www.frmerkley.com](http://www.frmerkley.com)
- Catholic Answers: <https://www.catholic.com/>
- Word on Fire: <https://www.wordonfire.org/>
- Formed: <https://formed.org/>
- The Coming Home Network: <https://chnetwork.org/>
- Catholic Exchange: <https://catholicexchange.com/>
- Dynamic Catholic: <https://dynamiccatholic.com/>
- The Augustine Institute: <https://augustineinstitute.org/>
- Ascension Press: <https://ascensionpress.com/>
- EWTN: <https://www.ewtn.com/>
- The Catholic Company: <https://www.catholiccompany.com/>
- Busted Halo: <https://bustedhalo.com/>
- CatholicCulture.org: <https://www.catholicculture.org/>
- The Thomistic Institute: <https://thomisticinstitute.org/>
- Ignatius Press: <https://www.ignatius.com/>
- Catholic Education Resource Center (CERC): <https://www.catholiceducation.org/>