

**April 26, 2015**

**Fourth Sunday of Easter**

**The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. They will listen to his voice.**

*Shepherding is not about going somewhere else, it's the endless journey into the deepest parts of one's self, where we come face-to-face with God.*

**The Good Shepherd**

Pope Francis once described what characterizes a Good Shepherd:

- † *Shepherds must warm people's hearts, walk with them in the night, dialogue with their hopes and disappointments, mend their brokenness and become part of the world of 'wounded' persons in need of understanding, forgiveness, love.*
- † *Shepherds are to point the way for the people, keeping them together and preventing them from being scattered.*
- † *Shepherds are to ensure that no one is left behind and that the flock itself finds its own new paths.*

I have observed the parishioners of St. Mary by the Sea as being good shepherds in the way they welcome our guests, in the way they reach out to those seeking community, and in the way they are with those seeking the “*Always Awareness*” of God.

**The sheep listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd**

Dominican Father Timothy Radcliffe told this story, as related in “America Magazine” of June 21, 2010. It is the story about being good shepherds.

*“On a playing field in Indianapolis a few weeks ago, Vince Lombardi's slogan, 'Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing,' would have been clearly out of place. The junior varsity girl's softball team from Roncalli Catholic High was set to play Marshall Community, an inner-city middle school playing its first softball game ever.*

*After nine Roncalli girls were walked by the Marshall pitcher, the girls realized that there is more to sports than crushing the opponent. They probably could have won 100 to 0. Roncalli had not lost a game in over two years, but decided to offer to forfeit the game rather than humiliate the Marshall girls.*

*What happened next? The Roncalli team spent the next two hours teaching the Marshall girls how to get better instead of beaten. Together they practiced batting and fielding, running*

*bases, and how to use the equipment the Roncalli girls shared with them. Marshall had come with only two bats, no helmets, no cleats, and five softballs. Even after the game, this spirit continued. Roncalli's JV coach appealed to the parents of his girls for equipment for Marshall - used bats, gloves, helmets, and team shirts. Instead of an embarrassing victory for Roncalli, the loss became a win for everyone."*

The Roncalli girls were good shepherds to the girls of the inner-city Community School of Marshall.

### **We are all to be Good Shepherds to each other**

We are good shepherds to each other whenever we warm people's hearts, walk with them in the night, dialogue with their hopes and disappointments, mend their brokenness and become part of the world of "wounded" persons in need of understanding, forgiveness, love.

We are good shepherds to each other whenever we give our used bats, gloves, helmets, and game shirts to a team that doesn't have any.

**Who has been a Good Shepherd to you -- To whom you have been a Good Shepherd?**

*----- Sharing by congregation -----*

### **Good Shepherds lay down their lives for their sheep**

*Shepherding is not about going somewhere else, it's the endless journey into the deepest parts of one's self, where we come face-to-face with God.*