

GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



"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."

John 10:14-15

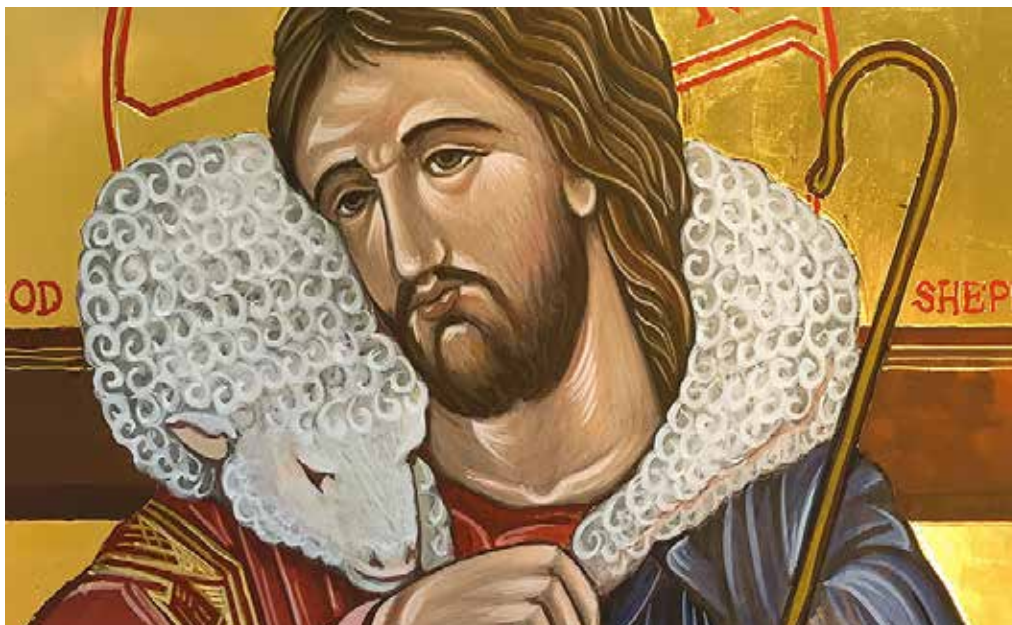
CALLED TO SERVE

ORDER OF FRIAR SERVANTS OF MARY
Vocation Newsletter

The Fourth Sunday of Easter is traditionally called "Good Shepherd Sunday." On this day we hear the gospel of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. For over 50 years the Church remembers it as the "World Day of Prayer for Vocations. Reflecting on the Good Shepherd and the call to Religious and Ordained vocations in the Church is complementary. Jesus' mission (aka, His vocation) was to herd

the flock of the Father through the Paschal Mystery. Every aspect of Jesus' life revolved around calling all people into the fold of the Father: his sermons inspired people to believe in the Father; his life was the instruction of how to live the faith; his miracles confirmed the compassionate and loving presence of the Father in the world; his death and resurrection remain the promise of abundant blessing in this

life and eternal life in the next. Everything Jesus spoke, every action Jesus made was to bring back into the Father's fold all who believe. One reason the Easter Season extends 50 days is to allow us the opportunity to deeply ponder the blessed implications of belonging to the flock of the Lord. It also affords us the opportunity of pondering our own response to the Lord in assisting and calling others into that company.



We belong to the flock of Jesus through baptism. Baptism is not just a sacrament among seven. It is the primal sacrament that opens our lives to grace as we live in relationship with the Most Holy Trinity. Baptism is the way we live in relationship with God and through baptism we participate in the very life and love of the Holy Trinity. That encounter with the life and love of God gives meaning to our lives with the purpose and intent to lead others into the fold of God. While all of us do this through the universal priesthood of the baptized, consecrated persons and priests do so in a particular way.





The three hallmarks of the consecrated life are the common life, the witness of the vows (evangelical counsels) and mission (service/ministry). These three elements work together and form the life of each religious community and of the individual religious. The life and ministry of consecrated religious witness to the world that loving, serving and working for the reign of God in the world is the important work of all Christian believers. They witness to the necessity of making

Season. This is the perfect moment for every believer to invite all people into the fold of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Good Shepherd Sunday, the World Day of Prayer for Vocations is our yearly moment to reflect on the vocation that Jesus is calling us to undertake. Discerning the call of the Lord is never an easy task. It can be scary, present many questions and concerns, and make us wonder if we have the ability to take on the task that Jesus asks. Faith reminds us that following Jesus is not

Questions for Prayer and Reflection:

1. **What is exciting about serving the Lord as a consecrated religious or priest? What are my concerns or fears?**
2. **What is my next step in discerning the Good Shepherd's call in my life? Who can assist me? Who can pray for and with me?**

a place for God in life and in society. The common life of consecrated religious witness to the importance of working for harmony and unity among all people, a witness so needed in today's world. The life, witness and mission of consecrated persons answer the call of the Good Shepherd to call all into the fold of God. Like consecrated religious, ordained priests answer the Good Shepherd's call through their life of ministry.

Priests witness to Christ by their simple lifestyle and their intense prayer-life. It is in the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, where the priest makes the most important impact in the life of the Church. In his ministry, the priest speaks of the hope whose name is Jesus. The priest ministers Christ's hope when he celebrates the sacraments with the faithful. He ministers Christ's hope when he presides at the parish Eucharist and likewise when he assists people in their communion with the Lord. The source of hope for the priest is his own prayerful encounter with Jesus. A priest's ministry is always about extending God's compassion and love to Jesus's flock. Both the consecrated person and the priest assist the Lord in calling and sustaining people in the fold of the Good Shepherd. The Church celebrates and renews its faith through the Risen Lord in the Easter

always easy. Yet, faith also reminds us that we never do His work alone. Jesus calls, equips, empowers and accompanies us as we do His work. The Good Shepherd calls us because He trusts us to be His presence through our life and ministry. This Easter Season, what is the Good Shepherd calling you, inviting you to do for Him? Remember He calls you because He trusts you. Can you trust yourself and trust Him? As you continue your discernment, we Friar Servants of Mary are prayerfully remembering you daily. If you wish to know more about our community or talk about vocation discernment, feel free to contact us. The Lord bless you and Our Lady watch over you on your journey. Happy Easter.

Prayer

Jesus Christ, Teacher and Lord, who never ceases to call new disciples to follow you, have mercy on me, a sinner: send your Comforting Spirit upon me that I may discover God's plan for my life and, with your grace, help me to follow it eagerly and enthusiastically, for your glory. You who live and reign forever. Amen.

Vocation Director

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