

Today we hear in our Sacred Scriptures

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two very conflicting images of what a shepherd looks like.

From the Book of Jeremiah comes a stern warning,

“Woe to the Shepherd, who misleads and scatters
the flock of my pasture.”

On the other hand, from the Gospel of Mark

we hear about a compassionate shepherd.

Jesus' Heart was moved with pity for them,

for they were like sheep without a shepherd.

Heartless shepherd. Heartful shepherd.

Let us all look at each.

The prophet Jeremiah lived around 628 B.C.,

during the reign of Josiah.

There was pressure from Babylon and Egypt to return to idol worship.

King Josiah and the Prophet Jeremiah opposed it with a passion.

After the death of King Josiah, it even got worse.

Our Scripture says, “You have scattered my sheep
and have driven them away.

You have not cared for them,

but I will take care to punish your evil deeds.”

God, through the Prophet Jeremiah, was outraged

against all the priests and leaders of Israel

who were not doing their jobs.

They were letting the fake idol worship creep back into the local society.

Now, sin was being accepted as normal.

In Israel's case, it was idolatry.

God's Word has not been preserved all these centuries in the writings of the Prophet Jeremiah just to let us know something about the past.

God's Word has been preserved for us to read in 2024 and to alert us to what we have been doing as a flock of God's people.

God wants us all to look at what we are doing to bring about the Kingdom of God on earth.

God's shepherds are not just religious workers.

They are also politicians, employers, social workers, teachers, parents, brothers & sisters.

Anyone that influences someone else.

If you are in someone's life, ask yourself,

do I understand what God wants of me?

And also, am I faithfully doing my best to carry out God's wishes to care for others?

In our Gospel today Jesus gathers his apostles.

We read in last week's Gospel

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that the Twelve Apostles he had chosen had been sent out by two's and given authority over unclean spirits.

Jesus had listened to their successes, and, maybe a few failures during their journeys.

The Apostles were excited and tired at the same time, so Jesus wanted to give them rest.

"Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest awhile," is what we heard in the Gospel.

I think there was also another reason.

When you pull your Bible out today, and read this Gospel from Mark, Chapter 6:30-34, you will notice that Jesus sent his Apostles out, but then gathered them back together again.

He even warned them about the dangers they would run into by recalling that his beloved John the Baptist had been killed by Herod.

You are seeing what Jesus' Heart looks like.

Jesus' Heart was with the Apostles.

Jesus' Heart was with John the Baptist.

Jesus' Heart was with the people that were coming in great numbers.

And Jesus' Heart is with you today.

Deacon Tom Landry Homily 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

This is what a Good Shepherd

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that is moved with pity looks like.

The more Jesus became popular, the more the Apostles did too.

The exhaustion came from the good works

and the great number of people that the Apostles were serving.

Jesus was there to listen and support and invite them to rest.

If we let Jesus gather us in, he will take care of us.

We all need rest.

Some people take time to pray every day and Rest in God.

Some people make Sunday truly a Day of Rest.

I am going to show my age now

but does anyone remember Blue Laws?

Blue Laws, also known as Sunday laws,
are "laws that restrict activities on Sunday."

They date from even before Christ

to laws even today that restrict hunting in some states on Sunday.

In other words, business is not open on Sunday.

No going to the hardware store...

no grocery shopping...no mall crawling.

As a child I remember going to early Mass on Sunday

because you fasted 12 hours before receiving communion.

As a family we had breakfast

then listened to music on a large stereo cabinet.

My father and mother made Sunday a Day of Rest.

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The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us this about the third Commandment...that God wrote himself.

"Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy."

"You may labor 6 days and do all your work,

but on the 7th day called the Sabbath

turn to the Lord your God and do no work."

"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath, so the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

Our Lord is calling us to rest awhile.

Let us rest in the Heart of Jesus our Good Shepherd.

It is on this day that Jesus will teach us... many, many good things.