

Sheepish?

What are some facts about those woolly creatures we call sheep? Jesus talks about them and their shepherds in the Gospel this week.

Well, did you (or I) in our childhood have fun by turning various insects on their backs? Childishly, we would watch them struggle and never achieve their proper leg-side down position, unless we had mercy on them. Shepherds tell us an unshorn sheep is the same way: completely stranded if it gets turned on its back. In order to turn it right-side up when it was in need, the shepherd would carry a "crook" and with it would hook the sheep and turn it right. He was kind and careful.

That was why they followed him.

History tells us that in Jesus' time the many shepherds all brought their small flocks down to Jerusalem and that they kept these together in one big sheepfold. There were no brands, no markings of any kind, just a fuzzy mob. How, you might ask, would each shepherd retrieve the sheep that belonged to him (or to his boss)?

The first way was by calling each of his sheep by name. He had been with them on the hillsides to the point that they were no longer strangers to him. For instance, there was the one with the nick in its ear, the one with the pretty face, the one that limped. He had a name for each because they each had a personality that was special, just as you and I do today. When they heard their name, they got up and followed.

Second, the sheep recognized not only its name but the actual voice of the shepherd, a much loved sound. It belonged to the one who flipped them back on their feet, the one who shielded them from wolves, the one who led them to fresh pastures instead of what they had eaten down to nubs. A stranger's voice could not have the gentle consonance of their master and friend.

The appropriate sheep flocked to him.

Why does Jesus use such imagery on the Fourth Sunday of Easter? I suppose you know the answer already, but—if you will pardon the comparison—you and I are much like sheep. The shepherd calls us by name, which means that the magnificent God of the universe pays attention to us. He knows each and every one of us better than we know ourselves. The name he confirms for each of us finds its way down to the deepest interior of our souls. Christ calls each of us by name to be most truly who we are.

Of course, we often mishear such a voice. We ignore it, resist it, button our ears to it. But in our moments of sane and solitary wholeness, or maybe in our times of trouble, our spirits pulse to the rhythm of God's voice. It resounds within us.

Like the shepherd with his sheep, and in spite of wolves and wildness all around, this call is safe. Christ's call lets our fear drop away; it turns us right side up. It lets us follow our master and friend, around rocks and even through dark valleys.

Sometimes the phrase, "people are sheep," is deemed an insult. This Sunday it is the greatest compliment we could get.

John Foley, SJ

Fourth Sunday of Easter

May 3, 2020

St. Stephens Indian Mission

www.saintstephensmission.com

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Please view the Diocese of Cheyenne website dioceseofcheyenne.org as they have a plethora of information on the Church's response to the coronavirus outbreak. There is also a link to view Sunday Mass celebrated by Bishop Steven. The link is very helpful and provides many, many resources to join in prayer.

Reminder there is no daily Mass, no Sunday Mass, or Adoration and all public meetings (including AA and Bible Study) normally held on the Mission grounds are also suspended until further notice. The gift shop is also closed. The office is closed to the public as we encourage everyone to stay home. You may call 851-2912 in an emergency otherwise calls to the parish office will be returned as soon as possible. These restrictions are necessary as it is imperative we are responsible and act in solidarity for the common good. Bulletins will be posted to the parish website at www.saintstephensmission.com.

Please remember the church is open for private prayer every day from 8am-7pm. Continue to pray for the end of this pandemic. God Bless!

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♦ Come in seeking; come in wondering; come in hurting. Come into this house ♦
♦ of companionship and compassion. Come in. You are welcome here. Our ♦
♦ faith Family opens its doors to you and in the name of Christ, bids you ♦
♦ Welcome! ♦
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The purpose of St. Stephen's Indian Mission, the presence of the Roman Catholic Church among the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho, is to grow into a strong community of believers, sharing our lives in the Holy Spirit, forming one welcoming People of God, who are committed to Jesus Christ, His gospel and mission.

Readings May 4th through May 10th:

Mon: Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Ps 23:1-6; 1 Pt 2:20b-25; Jn 10:1-10
Tue: Acts 11:19-26; Ps 87:1b-7; Jn 10:22-30
Wed: Acts 12:24-13:5a; Ps 67:2-3, 5-6, 8; Jn 12:44-50
Thur: Acts 13:13-25; Ps 89:2-3, 21-22, 25, 27; Jn 13:16-20
Fri: Acts 13:26-33; Ps 2:6-11b; Jn 14:1-6
Sat: Acts 13:44-52; Ps 98:1-4; Jn 14:7-14
Sun: Acts 6:1-7; Ps 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19; 1 Pt 2:4-9; Jn 14:1-12

Father Jim and Father Hugo are celebrating a PRIVATE Mass every day so the Mass for the scheduled intentions are still being celebrated. Please feel free to call and leave a message if you have an intention. God bless.

Mass Intentions this week

5/2:	Saturday	All cancer patients
5/3:	Sunday	+Brother Llewellyn Kouba, OSB
5/4:	Monday	+Loriel Espinosa
5/5:	Tuesday	+Vera Trosper
5/6:	Wednesday	+Calvin Friday
5/7:	Thursday	+Loriel Espinosa
5/8:	Friday	+Loriel Espinosa
5/9:	Saturday	+Loriel Espinosa
5/10:	Sunday	+Loriel Espinosa

Christ Is Risen!

Indeed, He Is Risen!

The churches at St. Josephs and St. Stephens are open daily from 8am-7pm for private prayer. No more than 10 people are to be in the church at one time.

Please pray for the family of those we have buried from our parish this past week

+Calvin Friday

Eternal rest grant unto him O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Due to the coronavirus, Shepherds of the Good Shepherd are unable to be in parishes to sell our Olive Wood carvings that support Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. Please consider visiting the following website to purchase a gift for an upcoming First Communion, Confirmation, or other special event. Thank you. www.shepherdsofthegoodshepherd.org

Holy Virgin of Guadalupe, Queen of the Angels and Mother of the Americas. We fly to you today as your beloved children. We ask you to intercede for us with your Son, as you did at the wedding in Cana.

Pray for us, loving Mother, and gain for our nation and world, and for all our families and loved ones, the protection of your holy angels, that we may be spared the worst of this illness.

For those already afflicted, we ask you to obtain the grace of healing and deliverance. Hear the cries of those who are vulnerable and fearful, wipe away their tears and help them to trust.

In this time of trial and testing, teach all of us in the Church to trust in God, to love one another, and to be patient and kind. Help us to bring the compassion and peace of Jesus to our land and to our hearts.

We come to you with confidence, knowing that you truly are our compassionate mother, health of the sick and cause of our joy.

Shelter us under the mantle of your protection, keep us in the embrace of your arms, help us always to know the love of your Son, Jesus. Amen.

Sacrament of Reconciliation Sacrament of the Sick

You may call the office to schedule an appointment for confession. If there is no answer please leave your name and phone number and Father Jim or Father Hugo will return your call. Please do not schedule an appointment if you are sick, please wait until you are well to protect yourself and the priest. Priest and parishioner will be required to wear a mask and maintain a safe six foot distance during confession.

The Sacrament of the sick will still be available for those who are terminal and is now available to those who have an upcoming surgery. Please call the office if you or a loved one is in need of this sacrament.