

PASTOR'S MEANDERINGS

11 – 12 MAY 2019

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY



SUNDAY REFLECTION

This liturgy reminds us of the boldness and joy of the early disciples as they proclaimed the Good News to the ends of the earth. Their proclamation gives strength to those who suffer to persevere and follow the Lamb to the springs of living water. The readings also comfort us with the shepherd image and the ultimate insight of the Christian message that we share in the union of love between Jesus and the Father. As we reflect on these insights, we embrace the gift of the Lord in the Eucharist and rely on His strength to transform our lives in the week ahead.

STEWARDSHIP: Paul and Barnabas encountered both violent rejection and joyful acceptance of the message that they preached. We, too, may meet with mixed reactions when we use our gifts in the service of God. But, the Gospel assures us, the reward for those who follow faithfully is eternal life.

St. Augustine of Hippo

“Christ is not valued at all unless He be valued above all.”

READINGS FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

19 MAY '19

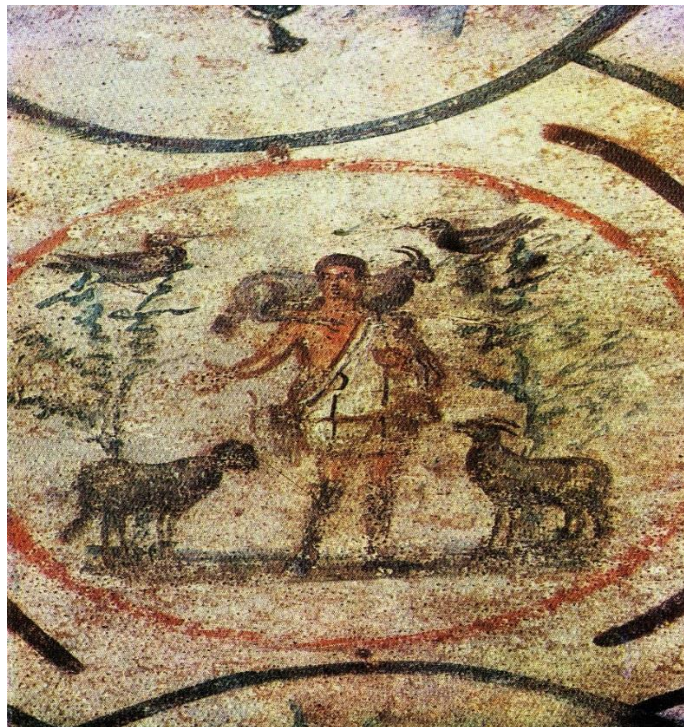
Acts 14:21-27: Paul and Barnabas journey through Lystra and Iconium on their way to Antioch. As they do, they encourage all they meet to persevere in the faith, even in the face of hardship.

Rv. 21:1-5: A new Jerusalem appears where God lives among humans. God will wipe away the tears from every eye and there will be no more death.

Jn. 13:31-35: A new commandment given by Jesus, to love one another as He has loved us, will identify us as true disciples.

Frederick W. Faber

“Kindness has converted more sinners than zeal, eloquence and learning.”



GOOD SHEPHERD IMAGE:

One of the earliest examples of Christian Iconography that has survived to this day is the depiction of Christ as the Good Shepherd. For at least the first two centuries Christ was represented almost exclusively as the Good Shepherd. This is an image rich in scriptural and cultural significance that was not merely an early Christian exercise in aesthetics, but an epiphany of God's personal revelation in His eternal Son, Jesus Christ. The key to unlocking the hidden depths and riches of this sacred Icon is in the proper placement of the Icon in the place and at the time of the Eucharist.

The Good Shepherd is the one who calls the sheep saying, *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”* (Jn. 10:27) The Good Shepherd calls forth His people, shaping them into the ἐκκλησία/Church (which literally means to be called).

The Eucharist from a very early date was called Synaxis, the gathering. The Eucharist was the gathering of God's people (Laos) in and around Christ the Good Shepherd. In Ezekiel 34:12 we read, *"As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day."* This verse which the early Church was certainly familiar would have been applied to Christ who gathers His people together in order to feed them. Isaiah 40:11 tells us that, *"He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young."* The food He gives them is not food that perishes but the food of eternal life because Christ has said, *"I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."* (Jn. 6:48-51)

The Eucharist is also a remembrance of "all that came to pass." We remember the death of Christ who said, *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep."* (Jn. 10:11) The Shepherd did not only lay down His life for the sheep but became as one of them in every way except sin. The Shepherd becomes the Lamb that was slain so, *"that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted."* (Heb. 2:14-18)

We remember the Resurrection and enthronement of Christ the Shepherd who became the Lamb, slain and raised from the dead. It is He that we worship in the Divine Liturgy. *"Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying:*

*'You are worthy to take the scroll,
And to open its seals;
For You were slain,
And have redeemed us to God by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
And have made us kings and priests to our God;
And we shall reign on the earth.'*" (Rev. 8:10)

It is perhaps already evident in what has been said that the Eucharist is an Eschatological event, an Icon of the Lord's Kingdom which is to come in the last times. It was thus fitting that the Image of the Good Shepherd be present at the Eucharist because Christ identifies Himself in His second coming as Judge with a shepherd. *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left."* Mt. 25:31-33) Another Eucharistic element found in the image of the Good Shepherd is ecclesiological. The bishop, or perhaps more accurately the presider of the Eucharist, is understood as the living

Icon of Christ the Shepherd. This is evidenced in the ancient Western tradition of the bishop holding as his staff the shepherd's crook and in the East the Gospel periscope read on the feast day of a hierarch is from Chapter 10 of St. John.

In conclusion we see in light of the Good Shepherd Icon that the Eucharist is:

1. The assembly who hears the Shepherd's voice
2. Those who are gathered together by the Shepherd
3. The sheep receiving food and drink from the Shepherd
4. The food and drink itself which is the body and blood of the Shepherd become Lamb that was slain and has risen
5. The Worship of the Lamb with celebrations, hymns, incense, and prostrations
6. A foretaste of the coming Judgment by the Shepherd-King
7. An Icon of God's Kingdom made tangible in the person of the bishop the par excellent icon of the Shepherd.

Psalm 23

A Eucharistic Psalm of the Good Shepherd

The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want.
He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.
He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD
Forever.

MAY THE MONTH OF MARY MARIAN DEVOTIONS IN THE CHURCH:

"God wills that all his gifts should come to us through Mary" (St. Bernard)

It was in Rome, towards the end of the eighteenth century, one fine evening in May. A child of the poor gathered his companions around him and led them to a statue of Mary, before which a lamp was burning, as is the custom in that holy city. There, these fresh young voices sang the

Litany of our Lady. The next day, the little group, followed by other children, again gathered at the feet of the Mother of God. Next came their mothers, to join the little assembly. Soon, other groups were formed, and the devotion rapidly became popular. Holy souls, troubled by the disorderly conduct which always increases and becomes graver at the return of the pleasant springtime, saw in these growing practices the hand of God, and they cooperated with the designs of Providence by approving and promoting this new devotion, as a public and solemn act of reparation. The Month of Mary was founded.

“This is the month in which, in the churches and individual homes, the most affectionate and fervent homage of prayers and devotions from the hearts of Christians are raised to Mary. It is also the month in which from his throne descend upon us the most generous and abundant gifts of the Divine Mercy.”

The Importance of Marian Devotion

As we are reminded during the Advent and Christmas seasons, “Jesus is the reason for the season.”

Simply put, without Jesus we have no New Testament, no Christian Church, no Christian faith. Understanding this, then what is the proper place of Marian devotion and piety in the Church? Why is it important and how can it strengthen our faith?

Pope John Paul II, in the introduction to the Vatican’s 2001 *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines*, explains that “Popular piety is an expression of faith which avails of certain cultural elements proper to a specific environment... Genuine forms of popular piety, expressed in a multitude of different ways, derives from the faith and, therefore, **must be valued and promoted**. Such authentic expressions of popular piety... predispose the people for the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries.” Indeed, popular piety is seen as “**a true treasure of the People of God**” (*Directory*, #59).

The Directory, in chapter five, discusses extensively “the veneration of the Holy Mother of God, which occupies a singular position both in the Liturgy and popular devotion”. Let us take a brief glance at the history of Marian devotion over the centuries in order to better understand what Pope John Paul II has stated.

The Roots of Marian Devotion

The Scriptures show Mary's role in the mystery of Christ's life, death and resurrection. She is involved intimately in the most important events of Christ's life. She is blessed in her maternity, as shown in the Annunciation and Nativity. In the Gospel of John she is the model of the believing Church. John also shows her at the foot of the cross where Jesus gives Mary to the Church as mother of all believers (Jn. 19:26).

As the Church's understanding of Jesus deepened, appreciation of Mary's importance place also grew. The Fathers of the Church wrote about Mary as the "new Eve," associated with Christ the "new Adam" (Sts. Justin and Irenaeus). She is referred to as "mother of the living," and, finally, at the Council of Ephesus (431 AD), she is spoken of dogmatically as the "God-bearer," mother of Jesus-both-human-and-divine. After this most significant event, Marian feast days proliferated in both the East and the West.

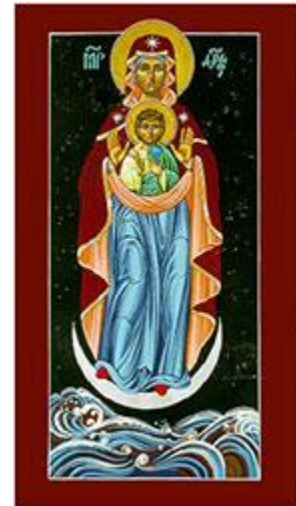
During the Middle Ages, Marian devotion celebrated her role as heavenly queen, spiritual mother and all-powerful intercessor. The prayer, Hail Mary, attained its current form only in the 15th Century, in connection with the Psalter of Mary or the rosary.

Consecration to Jesus Christ through Mary was in practice by the 18th Century. Many missionary orders founded during the past two centuries gave prominence to Mary's role in their apostolate. This is evident in the names of many of the communities. During the same period, Marian devotion flowered due to the great apparitions: La Salette (1846) and Lourdes (1858), both in France; Knock (1879) in Ireland; and Fatima (1917) in Portugal.

The Popes of the 20th Century have consistently encouraged devotion to Mary and defined the dogmas of her Immaculate Conception and her Assumption. Pius XII in his encyclical on the Sacred Liturgy, *Mediator Dei* (1947) declared that Marian devotion should respect the central place of liturgical prayer and Eucharistic celebrations. This was reiterated in the concluding chapter of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church from Vatican Council II in 1964, placing Mary within the fabric of the mystery of Christ and the Church.

Pope Paul VI's Apostolic Exhortation, *Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary (Marialis Cultus)*, insured that Church renewal would continue to encourage new or renewed ways of expressing devotion to Mary. His words are straightforward. Mary is "a teacher of the spiritual life for individual Christians" (MC #20), and always holds "the highest place and the closest to us after Christ" (MC #28).

The proclamation of the Marian Year (1988–1989) by Pope John Paul II expressed his desire "to promote a new and more careful reading of what the Council said about the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the mystery of Christ and of the Church." His emphasis on the proper place of "authentic 'Marian spirituality,' seen in the light of Tradition" came from his own deep devotion to Mary, the Mother of God (*Redemptoris Mater*, 48).



**Icon of Mary,
the new Eve**

PRAYERS

The Angelus

This prayer originated in 11th cent. Italy. It commemorates the mystery of the Incarnation – that the Son of God assumed a complete human nature and was born of Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. By tradition it is usually recited at 6 a.m., Noon and 6 p.m. You will notice that the bells ring at those times.

The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary:
And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou
among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the
hour of our death. Amen

Behold the handmaid of the Lord:
Be it done unto me according to Thy word.

Hail Mary

And the Word was made flesh:
And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of
The promises of Christ.

Let us pray: Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our
hearts; that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made
known by the message of an angel, may by His passion and cross be
brought to the glory of His resurrection, through the same Christ,
Our Lord. Amen

PASTOR'S UP-COMING SCHEDULE

Saturday 11 May	Vigil Mass of Fourth Sunday of Easter 5:00 p.m.
Sunday 12 May	Masses Fourth Sunday of Easter 7:00 a.m. 8:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m. 5:00 p.m. Brig 7:30 p.m.
Monday 13 May	Pastor's Day off Funeral Mass Sophia Norton 11:00 a.m. Reception Burial A. E. Horton Vet. Cemetery

Tuesday 14 May Brig 7:40 p.m.
 Mass 8:30 a.m.
 Mass Willow Creek 10:00 a.m.
 Mass St. Brides 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday 15 May Mass 6:30 a.m.
 Confessions
 Mass 8:30 a.m.
 Mass Indian Creek Correctional Facility 6:00 p.m.

Thursday 16 May Mass 8:30 a.m.
 Appointment 9:30 a.m.
 Confessions 5:00 -6:30 p.m.
 Mass 6:30 p.m.

Friday 17 May Mass 8:30 a.m.
 Appointment 10:00 a.m.
 Appointment 11:00 a.m.
 Quiet Adoration & Reflection 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Saturday 18 May Mass 8:30 a.m.
 Confessions 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.
 Vigil Mass 5th Sun of Easter 5:00 p.m.

Sunday 19 May 5th Sunday of Easter
 Masses 7:00 a.m., 8:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m. 5:00 p.m.
 Brig Mass 7:30 p.m.

Monday 20 May Pastor's Day Off
 Mass 8:30 a.m.
 Brig 7:40 p.m.