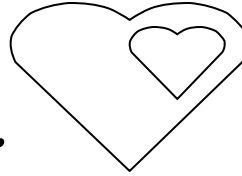


*Good
Shepherd
Sunday*



Peace is...



Acts 4:12 ***“There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved.”***

1 John 3: 1 ***“See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God.”***

John 10: 14, 15 ***“I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me... and I will lay down my life for the sheep.”***

Reflection:

A good shepherd knows his sheep intimately, even giving nicknames to individual sheep. He is with them day and night. He protects them from predators and thieves, often lying across the entrance of the cave or shelter where they rest, to guard the fold overnight. He knows where to guide them for the best grazing and watering. At the end of the day he may not even need to count them, being able to look over the fold and know if they are all present. The sheep know the shepherd's voice, and they trust him completely. The shepherd delights in the lambs which are born, and in the abundance of milk, butter, and cheese which comes as a result.

The shepherd-for-hire, as Jesus tells us, has a reputation for running away when the wolf comes. The wolf then catches and scatters the sheep, since the shepherd-for-hire does not have heartfelt concern for the sheep, as a good shepherd does.

Jesus is The Good Shepherd, and we are His sheep. He knows us intimately. Do we know His voice? Do we recognize Him when He speaks to our hearts? He guides us, protects us, and ministers to us, even when we are unaware of His presence and graces and blessings.

Jesus also tells us in the gospel that He has other sheep that belong to another fold. Yet all together, we make up His one flock. We are all God's children, and must remember to treat all others as God's children, for He loves us all alike. So must we love others, no matter who they are. This is our challenge.

Jesus indeed laid down His life for us. He suffered and died for our salvation. How do we show our gratitude for this tremendous gift?

Action:

- Let us pray, “Open my eyes, Lord, help me to see your face...¹”** in all those I encounter today... especially in those you wish me to serve.
- Let us pray, “Open my ears, Lord, help me to hear your voice...”** in all those who call out in pain or hunger or loneliness, that I might reach out to them as I would to you.
- Let us pray, “Open my heart, Lord, help me to love like you...,”** that I will love others, especially those whom I find difficult to love or forgive or understand this day. **Amen.**

¹ from song #196, *Open My Eyes*, by Jesse Manibusan, in *Spirit & Song 1, A Seeker's Guide for Liturgy and Prayer*, OCP Publications, 1999.