

FROM FATHER JOHN – *“Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes. I will give thanks to you, for you have answered me and have been my savior. The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. By the LORD has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD; we bless you from the house of the LORD. I will give thanks to you, for you have answered me and have been my savior. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his kindness endures forever.”* ~ Psalm 118

The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone!!!

One year ago tomorrow, April 26, 2020, Fr. Peter Jarosz passed away. It was a very sad day for all the people of St. Ann Parish, for the Diocese of Joliet and for all of Fr. Peter’s friends and family. He is missed by all of us here at St. Ann’s and among the priests of the Diocese of Joliet. We priests call each other *Brother Priests* and when one of us passes away the rest of us lose a brother. Rest assured that Fr. Peter is in my prayers as you and your family are.

In baptism we become children of God the Father. Born again by water and the Holy Spirit, our life is opened to new life in Jesus Christ. St. Paul teaches us in the sacred scriptures that we die to our old selves in waters of baptism and then, filled with the Holy Spirit, rise from baptismal waters to new life in Christ Jesus.

Fr. Peter became a child of God in his baptism. In the waters of baptism, he died with Christ and rose with Him to new life. May he now share with Him eternal glory.

Let us pray ...

***Almighty God and Father,
it is our certain faith that your Son,
who died on the cross, was raised from the dead,
the first fruits of all who have fallen asleep.
Grant that through this mystery
your servant and priest, Fr. Peter Jarosz,
who has gone to his rest in Christ,
may share in the joy of His resurrection.
Look with mercy on him
And give him the rewards of his labor,
the fullness of life promised to those who preach your holy Gospel.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.***

Eternal Rest grant unto him, O Lord.

And let perpetual light shine upon him.

May he rest in peace.

***May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed,
Through the mercy of God, rest in peace.***

Amen.



The Diocese of Joliet began a program over the winter called *Be Formed*. The program was very successful and had over 600 people across the diocese participating in the program. The diocese has announced that we will be starting Season 2 of *Be Formed* on May 9th and running through August 6th. The program is led by Fr. Burke Masters, the Director of Christian Formation for the Diocese of Joliet. The goal of the program is to help people grow closer to our Lord Jesus, deepen their spiritual life and to become missionary disciples.

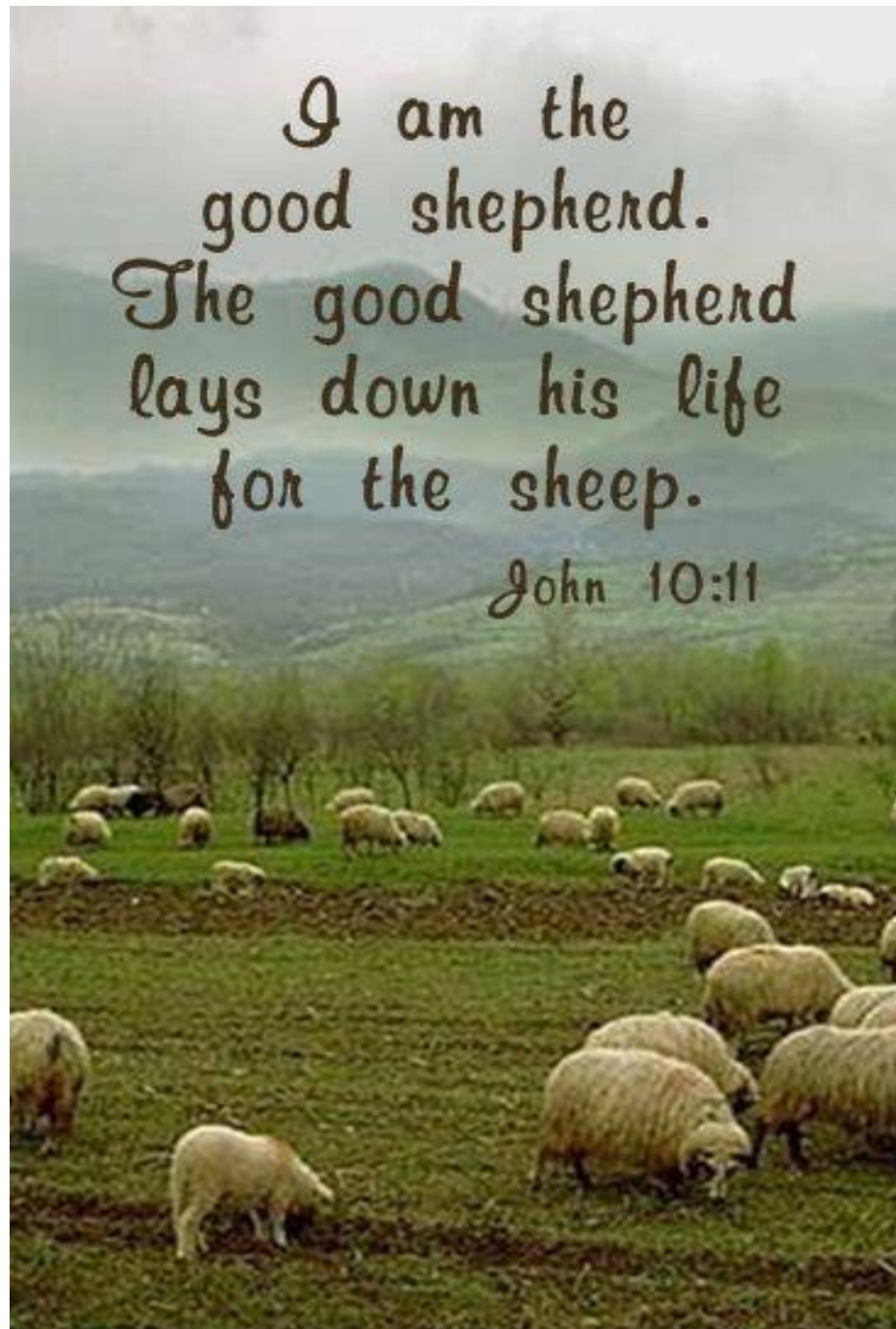
The program offers methods to deepen your prayer life, a daily Video from Fr. Burke Masters unpacking Sacred Scripture and the Catechism, a Personal Workbook for Prayer, a Weekly Reading Plan for Section 4 of the Catechism, a Customizable Commitment Card, regular virtual small group sessions and monthly virtual large group sessions.

Please note that anybody can register for Season 2 of *Be Formed* regardless of whether they participated in Season 1. To register, go to:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfoQkacFdANiX1CmithIcIDYI7EPMwa9-pIUukaMhpl_ACEhQ/viewform

To see testimonials from people who participated in Season 1 and to learn more about Season 2, go to:

<http://www.dioceseofjoliet.org/layformation/sectioncontent.php?secid=23>



Here is the direct link to the readings for the Fourth Sunday of Easter, also known as Good Shepherd Sunday.

<https://bible.usccb.org/Bible/readings/042521.cfm>

Today is Good Shepherd Sunday. St. Peter calls Jesus the shepherd and the guardian of our souls. *“When he was insulted, he returned no insult; when he suffered, he did not threaten; instead, he handed himself over to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you had gone astray like sheep, but you have now returned to the **shepherd and guardian of your souls.**”*

I have a priest friend (an American from the suburbs) who always says that the closest he’s ever been to a sheep is his sweater. I imagine that this is pretty much true for most of us and that very few of us have actually ever been on a sheep ranch to see how a shepherd interacts with his sheep. I know I haven’t.

But, I was talking to a priest friend of mine from Zambia in Africa once about sheep. They have sheep in Zambia and he’s seen lots of sheep. He told me how five or six shepherds will all bring their sheep to the same sheepfold overnight and one shepherd will stay to guard all the sheep. The sheep will mingle together during the night. In the morning, each shepherd will return to the sheepfold to collect his sheep. A shepherd will call out to the sheep and his flock of sheep, and only his flock, will leave the sheepfold and follow him. The other sheep wait for their shepherd.

Sheep follow the voice of their shepherd – they will not follow anyone else’s voice.

John's gospel is different from the other three gospels. It’s very different. In the other three gospels, the evangelists wrote down what Jesus said and did. They recorded Jesus’ miracles. But, John went further, he focused on the deeper meanings of the miracles, the deeper meanings of the things Jesus said. In fact, he never uses the word miracle. He speaks of signs which are followed by long sermons that explain the signs. John’s gospel is a book of prayer and meditation and doctrine that has a deep and specific purpose. It is written to help us believe, it is written to strengthen our faith and it is written to tell us who this Jesus Christ truly is.

In his book *The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity*, Richard Steigmann-Gall argues persuasively that the Nazis did not reject Christianity, but reinterpreted it to fit their own ideology. They talked about something which they called “Positive Christianity” which at first glance seemed very appealing and which was opposed to something they called “Negative Christianity.”

The “Positive Christianity” of the Nazi’s emphasized good feelings and feeling good about yourself. And, for that reason, was quite adaptable. “Negative Christianity” was worried more about the Truth than whether people felt good about themselves. Thus, it resisted adaptation to popular opinion.

The Nazis looked down upon “Negative Christianity” and they particularly despised the dogma and the ritual of the Catholic Church and the Truth that is taught by the Catholic Church.

The Truth is important. Doctrines and dogmas are important. Just like St. John the Evangelist, we are doctrinal Christians. We follow something very particular, something that has been handed down to us across the centuries from the time of the Apostles. We follow the long tradition of the Church, we follow the long tradition of Sacred Scripture, we follow the Truth as given to us by our Lord and Savior and we follow it for one simple reason. Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, has spoken. We are his flock, we hear his voice, and we follow after Him and no one but Him.

May God Bless you and all those who love the Lord.

