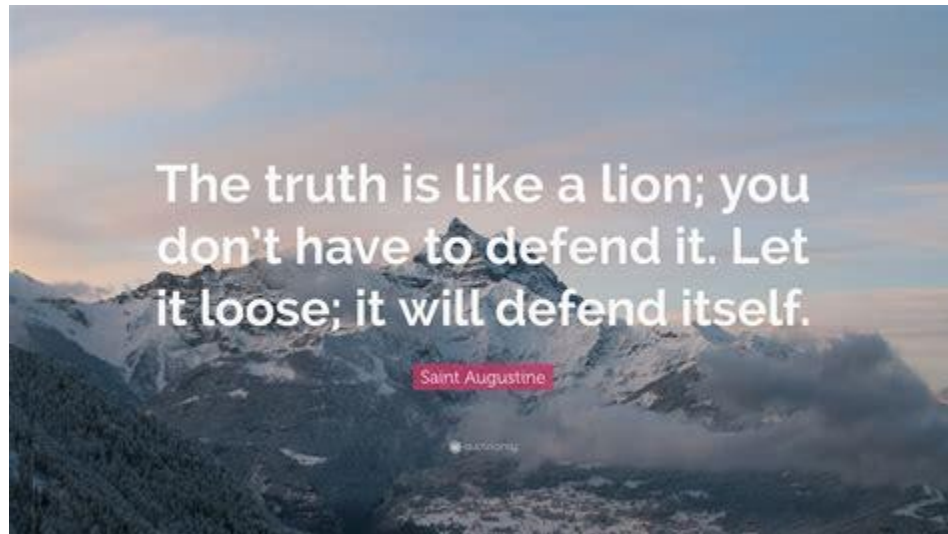


**FROM FATHER JOHN:** *"So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, 'How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.' Jesus answered them, 'I told you and you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify to me. But you do not believe, because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can take them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can take them out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one.'"* (John 10:24 - 30)



Fr. Don McLaughlin, God rest his soul, always like to joke 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. Yet, Jesus tells us that he's the good shepherd, that we are his sheep, that he knows us, that we will listen to his voice and follow him.

John's gospel is different from the other three gospels. 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, 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 Jesus Christ truly is.

Jesus makes a statement (above) that will mean one thing for a secular humanist who doesn't believe in God and something else for a Catholic Christian. Our Lord Jesus says, "The Father and I are one." A secular humanist might conclude that Jesus is simply

saying that he and God the Father work in coordination, that Jesus knows what the Father wants him to do and then strives to do it. But a Catholic Christian would say, “yes that’s true, but there is so much more.” For us, Jesus’ oneness with the Father has a huge depth of meaning. It means that Jesus is “God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father.”

The Book of Revelation, speaks of early Christians, of the Martyrs: *“These are the ones who have survived the time of great distress; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb... They will not hunger or thirst anymore, nor will the sun or any heat strike them. For the Lamb who is in the center of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to springs of life-giving water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”* (Rev.:7:14 - 17) Christians have suffered, have shed their blood and have died defending the Truth since the time of Christ.

A number of years ago, a member of the parish I was assigned to gave me a short article from the magazine *First Things*. One quote from that article stood out to me and I’ve kept that quote all these years. I thought I would share it with you.

“Among the most infamous of Nazi war criminals was Dr. Josef Mengele. At Auschwitz he was known as the ‘Angel of Death’ for his lethal ‘scientific’ experiments on prisoners. After the war, the Angel of Death escaped to Argentina, where authorities have now opened the files on Nazis who found refuge there. It turns out that Mengele made his living in Argentina as an abortionist. It figures.”  
(*First Things*, March 2009, pg. 66)

My sisters and brothers, the Truth is important, very, very important. St. Augustine wrote, “Where I found Truth, there I found my God, who is the Truth itself.” Doctrines and dogmas are very, very important. Just like St. John the Evangelist and St. Augustine, we are, as Catholics, 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. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, has spoken. We are his flock, we hear his voice, and we follow Him.

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