



## Sunday Reflection With Fr. Rafal

Dear St. Joseph Parishioners and Visitors,,

This Sunday (which is called a **Good Shepherd Sunday** and the World Day of Prayer for Vocations as well) Jesus tells us that he is the Good Shepherd who willingly lays down his life for his sheep. Then he adds: *"I have other sheep who do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice and there will be one flock, one shepherd."*

Who does Jesus want in his flock? The answer is simple: Everyone! St. Paul states that God "wills everyone to be saved and come to knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim 2:4 NAB)

Christianity came from a Jewish matrix, but rapidly embraced Samaritans, Greeks, Ethiopians, Celts (a.k.a., Galatians), the people of distant India, etc. Each Sunday we profess our belief in the "Catholic Church." "Catholic" means universal, but it means something even more profound. St. Cyril of Jerusalem said that the Church "deserves the title Catholic because it heals and cures unrestrictedly every type of sin that can be committed in soul or in body."

Jesus wants to embrace people not only in the diversity of their cultures, but also in our weaknesses. Jesus and the Church he founded is completely inclusive. Jesus wants everyone - and so do we.

If you were to ask what the most inclusive religion is, the answer would have to be the religion of Jesus - the Church he founded.

One way we express this inclusiveness, this universality is by a collection we take up each year at this time. It is called the Catholic Faith Appeal and it is our way of reaching out to all our brothers and sisters: children, youth, married couples, seminarians and future priests, divorced, seniors, the homeless, people struggling with addictions, the imprisoned - no one stands outside the embrace of Jesus. And we want them, we need them as part of Jesus' Body - the Church. Because of Jesus, we belong to the most inclusive religion: reaching not only the most remote corner of the globe, but also the most remote corner of the human heart.

You have probably heard the phrase, "think globally, act locally." We are part of a global Church, but we live that reality locally, and I thank all of you who have participated in the 2020 CFA. We exceeded our goal of \$171,000, and I am very, very grateful for your generous hearts.

This year, as we are still in this COVID pandemic, I would like to ask each one of you, my dear Friends and Parishioners, to support the 2021 Catholic Faith Appeal so we can serve together not only within our St. Joseph parish but also in the 10 counties of the Diocese of Venice. Our goal for this year is the same as last year - \$171,000. Thank you in advance and may the Risen Christ bring you always His Peace, Joy of the Resurrection and Good Health this year and in the years to come.

Have a Blessed Week!

*Fr. Rafal Ligenza*

St. Joseph Parish Administrator