

Easter 4A - 2026

Insight of Children

He told the children about sheep, that they weren't smart and needed lots of guidance, and that a shepherd's job was to stay close to the sheep, protect them from wild animals and keep them from wandering off. He pointed to the little children in the room and said that they were the sheep and needed lots of guidance. Then the pastor put his hands out to the side, palms up in a dramatic gesture, and with raised eyebrows said to the children, *"If you are the sheep, then who is the shepherd?"* He was pretty sure that all the kids would point out to him as the shepherd. A silence of a few seconds followed. Then a young girl said, *"Jesus! Jesus is the shepherd."* The young pastor, obviously caught by surprise, said to the little girl, *"Well then, who am I?"* The girl frowned thoughtfully and then said with a shrug, *"I guess you must be the sheep dog."*

Known by number

One could wish it were a bit more human and personal. But the IRS knows me by my tax number. My state knows me by my driver's license number. My bank knows me by my bank account number. My employer knows me by my social security number. Prisoners are known by their number. On and on it goes for you, for me, for everybody. Everybody knows my numbers.

I am not sure that anyone knows me! — The numbers game that is played in our culture is one symptom of loneliness and alienation that surrounds us today. *"All the lonely people, where do they all come from?"* That is a line from *"Eleanor Rigby,"* an early song by the Beatles. Loneliness. Isolation. Alienation. These are the realities of contemporary civilized life. *"I am the Good Shepherd."* These are Jesus' words in our reading from John's Gospel text for this sermon. *"I am the Good Shepherd; I know My own and My own know Me ..."* Today's Gospel tells us that Jesus knows us personally, by name, and loves us. (<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>).

The Bismarck

In the beginning of World War II, the Nazis commissioned a massive battleship named the *Bismarck*. It was the biggest fighting vessel the world had seen up to that time. With the *Bismarck*, the Germans had the opportunity to dominate the seas. Very soon after it was commissioned, the *Bismarck* sank tons of Allied shipping and allied aircraft. Its massive armor plating resulted in the boast that the *Bismarck* was unsinkable. But the *Bismarck* was sunk. And it was sunk due to one

lone torpedo which hit and demolished its rudder. As a result, the battleship zig-zagged through the sea, unable to reach harbor. It was only a short while before the British navy was able to overtake and destroy it. — No matter how large the battleship may be, it is doomed without a rudder to direct it. Floundering on the waters of chaos without a rudder, the *Bismarck* is a modern-day image of a world without the direction of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Without the Lord, the world is headed toward chaos. But with the Lord there is guidance, direction and purpose in life. (<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>).

"But I never jumped."

A paratrooper who had recently resigned from the military was asked how many times he had jumped out of an airplane. He said, "None." A friend of his asked, "What do you mean, 'none'? I thought you were a paratrooper!" He said, "I was, but I never jumped. I was pushed several times ... but I never jumped." — The hired hand never jumps. He has to be pushed. Churches often have hired hands in them — not our Church, of course! But other Churches are full of people who have to be pushed to do what they know they ought to do. Jesus did not have to be pushed. Do we need to be pushed? (<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>).

You might have heard of Napoleon Bonaparte the French emperor who conquered most countries of Europe and wished to conquer the whole world. Somebody asked him a question, "What is the most important day in your life?" They expected answers like the day of his coronation as emperor, the day of his royal wedding, the day of his famous victories. But he said, "The most important and the most memorable day of my life is my First Communion Day." For each one of you this day should remain as the happiest and most memorable day of your life.

What will you do after receiving Jesus in Holy Communion? **First**, you have to invite Jesus into your heart. Then you have to **thank Jesus** for coming to your heart. Then you have to **tell him all your needs** and the needs of your parents, relatives, teachers and friends. **Finally**, you must remember that you are carrying Jesus to your homes and schools as Jesus' mother Mary carried Jesus to her cousin Elizabeth. It means that you have to behave well because you are carrying God Himself in your heart and soul. **Ask Jesus** to make you a good boy or girl, one who is kind and is caring for others.