

2022 C 4th Sunday of Easter May 8

Happy Mother's Day to all our mothers and mother figures in the congregation. Parents, both moms and dads have the hardest job in today's world. Without their love, sacrifice and perseverance this world would be in a terrible shape. Of course, it is not easy to be a Mom.

In a TikTok video, a mom named Nicole DeRay explains one of the challenges of motherhood. She says, "My kids wanted to know what it was like being a mom. So, I woke them up at 2.00 am to let them to know my sock came off."

Another mom on Twitter wrote, "Parenting is 70% me, yelling, 30% asking the kids why they're yelling, & 10% trying to find where I left my coffee."

Speaking of misplacing your coffee here's one Mom's recipe for iced coffee": She wrote, "Have kids ... Make coffee ... Forget you made coffee ... Put in the microwave ... Forget you put it in the microwave ... (Finally) ... Drink it cold."

The fourth Sunday of Easter always celebrates **Christ as the Good Shepherd**. This year, our readings **focus more on the sheep than on the shepherd**. In spite of the comforting image of Christ as the Good Shepherd, **hearing the shepherd's voice is important and requires his followers can expect to receive the same treatment as he did**. Paul and Barnabas in the first reading for preaching the gospel faithfully were found themselves rejected as was Jesus, and they took that as a promise and confirmation of their ministry.

A good shepherd knows and accepts that his job is 24/7 – fending off predators, going after strays, carrying infant lambs, nursing the sick and the hurt and so on. But Good shepherd doesn't mind, because he comes to know and love each individual sheep, perhaps even giving them names. And the sheep, in their turn, come to know and trust his voice, and follow him. It's a wonderful description of God and his followers.

Of course, **A good mother is such a powerful example of God's love**. Many mothers are willing to do almost anything to communicate their love to their children. Some desperately trying to keep up with the changing styles of the young these days. Good luck with that.

The last sentence of today's 2nd reading from the book of Revelation expresses powerfully not only God's love for us as a Good Shepherd but also of mothers' love for their children. **"God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."**

A few years ago, there was a story in one of the newspapers of a powerful example of a mom's love and comfort. A woman named Donna Copeland wrote the story. "On my first day of kindergarten my mother gave her wedding ring to keep in my sock as a reassurance I would be all right and that she would return for me."

Can you imagine a mother entrusting her kindergartener with her wedding ring? That's a powerful symbol of comfort. Her wedding ring was a reminder to her frightened child: You will be all right, and I will come back for you.

Isn't that what God offers us in the image of the good shepherd and the cross? Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God left us a powerful symbol of comfort: You will be all right, and I will come back for you. There are times when we need to be reminded of that promise.

We all come to those times when we need God's tender care—when no one else can offer the comfort we need. There are hurts that only God can heal. There are burdens only God can lift. There are fears that only God can put to rest. So, it is with great joy that we read the good news for the day from the book of Revelation, "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Life is sometimes very, very hard. We don't understand why it is hard. But it is. John the writer of Revelation knew about tears. He lived in a time when Christians were thrown into gladiator pits, torn apart by wild animals, burned alive. He himself was in exile in the island of Patmos. He could only pray and weep for his fellow believers. Sometimes that is all any of us can do and offer--a word of encouragement.

Love is a two-way street. Indeed, love at its best is not only between us and God, but it is also to be shared—particularly with those who have tears in their eyes. God loves and calls each of us by name. We need only to listen to his voice, our Good Shepherd and follow him always, even in odd times, find rest in his constant love and tender care, and also in our mother's love and tender care.