

Homily — 4th Sunday of Easter, C 2019
by Rev. Bob Schramm, OSFS

Today is what we traditionally call "Good Shepherd Sunday."
It's also Mother's Day.

Rather than saying, "Happy Mother's Day,"

I want to say "thanks" to ALL the moms present here.
Now, our Catholic imagination tells us there are a lot more MOMS here
than meet the eye.

I don't know how many of us are here this morning.
I believe that for every one of us whose Mom is not here in a bodily way,
she is fully present in some unseen way.
The name we give that unseen way is LOVE.

So, let's take a moment and all say loudly together
to both those seen and unseen, "Happy Mother's Day, Mom!"
Just imagine the radiant smile on all their faces.

Now, let's bring Good Shepherd Sunday into focus.
I think it all ties powerfully together in that word LOVE.
A mother's love is nothing less than God's love in flesh,
in some real sense a sacrament of God's love.

And God's love becomes fully present to us in the one we call shepherd
who is also the lamb whose blood was shed for us.

This lamb, who is also the shepherd, "will lead them
to springs of life-giving water, and wipe away every tear from their eyes."

How does the Shepherd give them eternal life?
First of all, that term "eternal" doesn't only refer
to whatever happens after we die.
It means a full and meaningful life,
both on this side of it all as well as after this life.

A long time ago, after Jesus' resurrection, the Shepherding tasks were taken up
by people like Paul and Barnabas.
We heard about them in our first reading this morning.
They were willing to risk it all out of love
just like Jesus did, the model shepherd.

Let me point out three examples of where I have seen evidence
of this shepherding continuing in our world today.

1. You may know that last week in Denver, a kid came into a classroom
brandishing a gun . . . again.
Another student, Kendrick Castillo, rushed the kid with the gun
trying to stop him.

**Kendrick was killed, but saved the lives of many other students.
Now I think of that as an act of selfless love in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd.**

**2. Recently, I read two reports about a 16 year-old Swiss student,
Greta Thurnberg.**

She has begun a campaign called "School Strike for Climate."

**Not long ago, she met with Pope Francis, addressed the European Union,
the United Nations and the British Parliament.**

**This past March 15, one-and-a-half million students around the world turned out
for a global strike at her invitation.**

And Greta has a form of autism that interferes with her speech.

Greta, I think literally embodies the spirit of the Good Shepherd

3. A final example —

**I had dinner the other evening with a family who were parishioners
when I was pastor sat St. Mary Parish in Adrian.**

The parents have two beautiful kids — Grace, who is 12 and Grant, who is 11.

**At the end of our meal, Dawn, the mom, was telling me about the summer project
she is planning with both children.**

She is going to teach them how to cook.

**I was thinking afterwards what a simple, beautiful act
of shepherding both those kids.**

Pope Francis speaks of "the unruly freedom of the word of God."

He says, "In order to allow our religious convictions to grow,

we must be convinced that God is bigger than our theology or spirituality."

**He says, "we must hold lightly to our certainties if we desire
to hear the voice of the Shepherd today."**

So once again, Happy Mother's Day to all mothers present

**and to all those others who demonstrate so many of the qualities
we often attribute to mothers.**

And to all of us, may Christ truly be the Shepherd of our hearts.