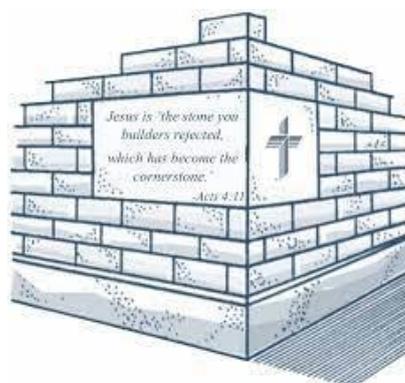
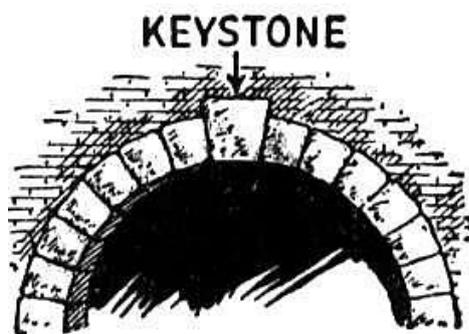


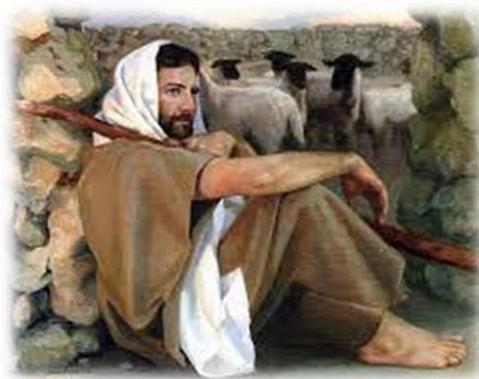
Fourth Sunday of Easter Year B

In each of the Church's liturgical years, A, B and C, the fourth Sunday of Easter has the theme of Christ, the Good Shepherd and is the World Day of Prayer for Vocations to the Priesthood and the Religious Life.



Today's first reading says that Jesus is the stone which was rejected, but which is now the keystone. Whether we see Jesus as the keystone or the cornerstone (as in the psalm), the message is clear: the Risen Jesus is the firm foundation on which our faith rests.

In the Gospel, Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd – the one who lays down his life for his sheep. Jesus shows how the shepherd loves and cares for the sheep. At the time of Jesus, a shepherd would put himself at the entrance (gate) of the sheepfold in order to protect his sheep. This was in contrast to a hired hand who would abandon the sheep at the first sign of trouble.



Jesus carries us with great tenderness and gazes on us with eyes full of love. He is our shepherd and our friend who surrounds us with not only his love, but people in our lives who show us love. Take some time now to reflect on the following:

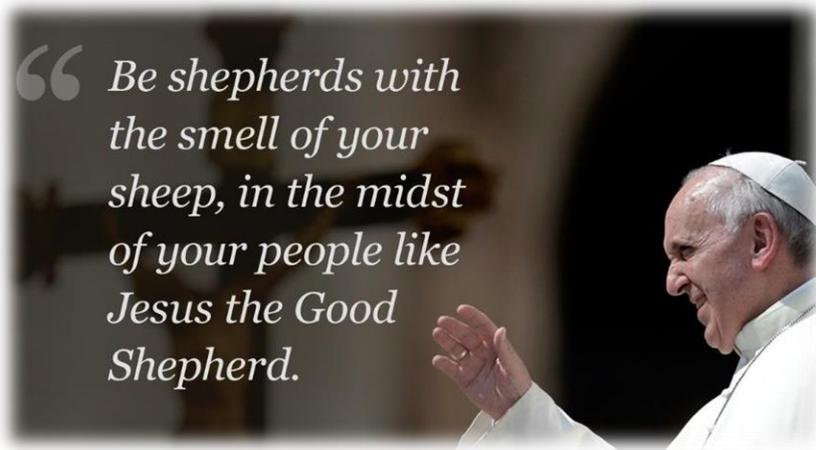
Who has shown you love this week?

To whom have you let the gaze of God's love shine through your eyes this week?

How have you let God carry you this week?

How can you carry another person with God's tenderness in the coming week?

Pope Francis asks all priests (and may I suggest Religious Sisters and Brothers also) to:



We need Priests, Religious Sisters and Brothers who are deeply pastoral people; who don't mind getting their hands dirty in ministry; who know how to act justly; who know how to love tenderly; who are not seeking to lord it over the people of God; who know how to serve others; who are not career climbers; who do not claim perfection; and who, above all, have Jesus, the Good Shepherd as their role model.

So when we pray for Vocations to the Priesthood and the Religious Life, let us be clear that these are the characteristics that we would wish those who serve us in ministry to have. In this way, all members of the Community of Faith will be able to follow the example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

When we eat the bread of life, we claim to be your sheep, Lord.

We say we know your voice, because we claim you as our Shepherd.

When we drink the cup of life, we claim to be your beloved.

We say that we will follow your ways.

Let the words we claim be the life we lead. Amen.

