May 3, 2020

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

So many of us are now confined to our homes and we would find it strange to hear a knocking at our door because everyone else should be confined to their homes. We question ourselves who could it be or what could it mean. But if we had ordered something to be delivered we would be listening for the knock or bell or some sort of notification, in anticipation of what was expected. Is it groceries, an important letter, a package or even someone unexpected? In either case we proceed to investigate: we look, listen and maybe gently open the door.

What if the person on the other side of the door calls out our name; are we more likely to answer? I would suspect yes, especially if you recognize who the person is.

So now we come to Jesus, who describes himself as the “Good Shepherd.” The one who knows our name and calls us by it. He not only is the shepherd but also the gate through which we pass in order to enter into his life. The shepherd is the protector of the sheep who leads them to green pastures and cool running water. It does not mean that life will be all sweetness and roses. The Shepherd carries a staff and a rod. The staff sometimes pulls us out of thorny issues and the rod sometimes beats off the wolves, predators, and even a knock upside our own head to get us moving in the right direction.

How do we view Jesus in our life? Do we see him as protector, nourisher, and life giver? Jesus says, “I come that they might have life and have it more abundantly.” Does life mean for us solely living out our biological existence? If so we are merely like plants or the lesser animals. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that, “Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life, from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being.” This is why intentional homicide, abortion, euthanasia, or suicide is against the commandment; “You shall not kill.” Yes there are nuances to this commandment but the basic teaching is that we are given the gift of life by God and we are to care for our life and the life of others.

God does not abandon us and in his book The Road Less Traveled, M. Scott Peck, begins with the sentence, “Life is difficult.” Once knowing this we can also know that Christ travels this road with us. He is always by our side and he helps us to face the challenges that come our way. This is why Jesus says that we can have life more abundantly because it is life with God. At our very beginning until our last breath we live with Christ. Realizing this the Apostles were able to live without fear and move from locked rooms into the streets, villages, and cities. to proclaim Christ is Risen and He invites us to journey with Him and answer the call he offers to each of us. Mary said yes, Joseph said yes and the saints throughout the centuries have said yes. Isn’t now our time to say yes to the life Christ calls us to live. Maybe it is the call to Priesthood, Married life, Single life, whatever it may be it is a life filled with joy and happiness if lived with Him. Do not hesitate to answer His invitation to live life to the fullest. You won’t be disappointed or discouraged. For there is no greater love than the love god has for us.

I want to thank so many of you who have prayed for Fr. Jack, Deacon Bill and myself. we know your love and concern for us and be assured we love and cherish each of you.

blessings on your day.