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St Mary Magdalene's Church

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PARISH MOTTO - 'THE BEST IS YET TO COME'

4th SUNDAY OF EASTER,

30th of April 2023



Dear Parishioners and Friends of our parish, we are so happy that you could join us today to celebrate the Forth Sunday of Easter.

So many writers spend so much of their time trying to describe human love. It seems to be an inexhaustible topic. Millions of books and songs have been written about love. When it comes to describing divine love, there also are many thousands of writings that attempt to describe the love between God and humankind. But if we are looking for some way to describe our relationship to God, we need not go any

For today's Mass

Responsorial Psalm

The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.

Gospel Acclamation

I am the good shepherd,
says the Lord;
I know my own sheep
and my own know me.

further than the psalm we just heard. Psalm 23 describes in such beautiful and poetic words who God is for us. "The Lord is my shepherd." God is one who is known by the quality of everlasting care that is shown to each of us. Rest, refreshment and nourishment are the promises made to us.

The image of God as shepherd tells us so much about how God wants to care for us. In our own lives, we are also asked to bring God's caring to one another. We do this in many, many ways, but each of us shows our caring in a specific way according to the vocation to which we are called. Married couples bring tremendous and self-sacrificing care to their children and to one another. Marriage is often a calling that requires great sacrifice and selflessness. There are also many single people who remain unmarried so that they can give more freely of themselves to the wider community. And lastly, there is a vocation to the priesthood and religious life.

These men and women are asked to devote themselves in a special way to the spiritual care of others. They take on the task of shepherding and nourishing others who are on the spiritual journey. Today we are asked to especially pray for all men and women who are called to this kind of life. Today is the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. Throughout the world, the Catholic community is asking God to help men and women respond with generous hearts to God's call. How does a man or woman know they are called to live such a life? I know that this is a rather large and complicated question, but allow me to offer some simple first thoughts on the question.

There are, at least, three basic signs that a person should have if they are seriously considering the priesthood or religious life. They should have a desire for the life, the proper motivation and a fitness for the life. If you met a person who told you that he or she was going to get married, but they really didn't want to, I'm sure you would tell them that they shouldn't get married. God uses our natural inclinations to help lead us through life. Marriage as a vocation must be entered into willingly and freely.

The same principle applies to a religious vocation.

A man or woman must have a desire to serve God in this particular way. When they think about becoming a priest or sister or brother, they should sense a satisfaction and an attraction in that thought. We say that "grace builds on nature". That's just another way of saying that God works with us through our natural inclinations and attractions. So the first sign of a vocation is an attraction to the priesthood or religious life. Secondly, a person must want this kind of life for the right reason.

Here the Church looks for some very positive spiritual reasons, for example, "I want the religious life because I want to serve God in a very direct way or I want to further the love and knowledge of God or I want to extend the kingdom of God...or I want to work for the betterment of the world..." (Martin Pable, OFM Cap.) A desire for security is not the right reason. Nor is the desire to have a special status in the Church and have power over people. The priesthood or religious life is above all not an escape from genuine relationships with other people.

You must have a certain degree of maturity if you want to truly and genuinely love others. The third sign is a certain fitness for the religious life. You must have the natural abilities to live such a life without constantly being under tension or always struggling with unhappiness. Forcing yourself to be a kind of person you are not, only leads to disaster. Some very good people are just not fit for the religious life or the priesthood. These are only three signs of such a vocation, but important signs. Today and throughout the year may we pray for all of those men and women who are called to such a life.

Have a great week—stay well and enjoy the gifts and blessings God has given us. May God bless you always,

Fr Bogdan SDS

PRAYERS

Please pray for the repose
of the souls of Savas Filippou
who died recently
and for
all whose anniversaries
occur about this time.

**Eternal rest grant
unto their souls, O Lord.
May they rest in peace. Amen.**

Thank You

We thank you for your spectacular generosity. Your generous support of our Parish and your help with the needs of our community is greatly appreciated!

Sunday 23rd April 2023 – £827.00.

Shrine Candles – £36.00

Lent – ‘Wee boxes’ £145.00

**This Sunday 30th April 2023 our Second
Collection is for The Apostolate of Com-
munication.**

Priest's musing

Late one Saturday evening, a woman was awakened by the ringing of her phone. In a sleepy voice, she said "Hello?" The party on the other end of the line paused for a moment before rushing breathlessly into a lengthy speech. "Mom, this is Susan and I'm sorry I woke you up, but I had to call because I'm going to be a little late getting home. See, Dad's car has a flat but it's not my fault.

Honest! I don't know what happened. The tire just went flat while we were in the theater. Please don't be mad, okay?" Since she didn't have any daughters, she knew the person had misdialled. "I'm sorry, dear," she replied, "but you've reached the wrong number. I don't have a daughter named Susan." "Gosh, Mom," said the young woman, "I didn't think you'd be this mad."

Important Memorials

Memorials can be dedicated in memory of a loved one, to celebrate a special occasion—birthdays, anniversaries, living and dead etc... or for your own special intention by ordering a Holy Mass. Offering a stipend for a Mass intention is a way of contributing to the upkeep of your priest. It is a donation. Thank you for all your orders!

Bishop's Retirement Mass

There will be retirement Mass of Bishop Stephen Robson to mark the recent retirement, held in St Andrew's Cathedral on Thursday, 11th May, 2023 at 7pm. All are welcome to attend.

First Communions

We will celebrate our First Communion Mass on Saturday 13th May at 11am for Polish Class and on Sunday 14th May at 10am for English Class. Please keep our children and their Families in your prayers.

The Good Shepherd

During the Palestinian uprising of 1980s, a small village near Bethlehem refused to pay its taxes to Israel claiming that by paying they would be financing the occupation of their own land and country.

The army retaliated by confiscating all the animals from the villagers and placing them in a large barbed-wire pen. Few days later the officer in charge was approached by a woman who begged him to release her animals explaining that she is a single mother and the animals were the only source of livelihood for her and her children. The officer humorously inquired how she was intending to find her animals among hundreds in the pen. And because the woman appeared absolutely certain that she would in fact be able to identify her sheep among the rest, the officer agreed and opened the gate.

The woman's son started playing a simple tune over and over again on a reed flute and soon sheep heads started popping up across the pen. The boy continued to play, walking back home with his mother, followed by their flock of twenty-five sheep. When it comes to our relationship with Christ – the Good Shepherd of our lives – there is nothing we can reveal to him that he does not already know.

The good shepherd is not someone who is hired to look after the flock, instead the sheep belong to him, He knows each by name and is bound to them by a relationship and trust. He is not just any shepherd, but "The Good Shepherd" in the same way as he is "The light of the world", "The Door", "The True Vine" and "The Bread of Life". The sheep recognize his voice and will only follow him. The Good shepherd is ready to give his own life to protect his sheep.

NORMAL MASS SCHEDULES

Monday
No public Mass

Tuesday – Saturday
9am

Friday
7pm (Polish)

Sunday
8.30am (Polish)
10am (English)
12noon (Polish)

CONFESSIONS

Saturday
9:30am (after Mass)
or call to make an appointment.

SAINTS DAYS and SPECIAL OBSERVANCES THIS WEEK

Monday 1st May
Fourth Week in Eastertide

Tuesday 2nd May
Memorial of St Athanasius

Wednesday 3rd May
Feast of St Philip and St James
Apostles

Thursday 4th May
Fourth Week in Eastertide

Friday 5th May
Fourth Week in Eastertide

Saturday 6th May
Fourth Week in Eastertide

ARE YOU GOING TO BE IN HOSPITAL? DO YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO IS IN HOSPITAL?

Name _____ Hospital _____ Ward _____

Please complete/ tear off and hand it to Fr Bogdan after Mass