

Pastoral Reflection

July 15, 2021

“The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.” (Psalm 23). We acclaim with great thankfulness and praise this Responsorial Psalm in Sunday’s Mass. As the pandemic recedes in our community, we are invited by Christ’s message of love and truth to reflect upon a Christian ‘renewed normal’ in our daily lives.

We joyfully recite Sunday’s Gospel acclamation: “My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord; I know them, and they follow me.” (See, John 10:27). As Baptized Christians, God grants us the virtues of faith, hope and charity, and divine Gifts of the Holy Spirit (such as wisdom, fortitude and good counsel). Being members of the Body of Christ, we strive to follow Christ’s path as we grow in holiness during our spiritual journey on earth. Our spiritual growth is fostered by hearing Christ’s Word and carrying out His will with the help of His grace, by earnest and constant prayer, by participation in the Sacraments (especially the Sacrament of the Eucharist), by practice of all the virtues, and by active brotherly and sisterly service showing Love of God and Love of Neighbor. (See, the Vatican II document, Lumen Gentium, par. 42).

By God’s grace, we are returning to the hopefulness and at times challenges of post-pandemic daily life. In addition, during the remaining summer many families may enjoy some reduced work and school schedules, so we may have more time for prayer and discernment. This spiritual reflection can result, for example, in a virtuous commitment to an increase in daily prayer and meditation, a rededication to participation in weekly Sunday Mass (along with periodic receipt of the grace of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation), and a reaffirmation of our fidelity to Christ through acts of charity to our family members and our neighbor in need.

As we reflect upon the ‘renewed normal’ of our daily lives, we also are invited to recommit ourselves to core Christian beliefs that God sanctifies every person, from conception until natural death. And as so sanctified, that each person of every race, culture and creed deserves to live in equal dignity. These fundamental Christian beliefs can move us in love and compassion to provide assistance to those in great need, such as the poor, the homeless, refugees fleeing violence and oppression, migrants seeking to provide stewardship for their families; and further to strive earnestly for racial understanding and equality.

In our renewed devotion to our faith and Christ’s way of love and truth, along with the psalmist we rejoice: “Only goodness and kindness follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for years to come.” (Psalm 23).

Best wishes to you and your family for a Blessed, Peaceful and relaxing summer,

Deacon Don