

# Pastoral Message: May 8, 2022

---

In today's gospel we hear the story of Jesus the Good Shepherd. The readings today make us aware that following the Risen Lord will not be easy, but we have a certain hope that he will direct us into the future. I recently read a story about a village in India. In this particular place, many of the shepherds gather together to take turns watching the various flocks during the night in the same place. They can gather together as many as 50,000 sheep at the same time. The fascinating thing is that at day break when the shepherds call their sheep, by the pitch of the shepherd's voice, they find their shepherd. I bring this up because this is a good image for us. Baptism and risen life should make us more sensitive to hearing the Good Shepherd's voice. This gospel Jesus tells on the Feast of Booths which was a feast to commemorate Israel's honeymoon period as the Lord led them day by day to freedom in the desert. We are never completely certain if we are following the Lord's direction, but we can have a sense because we will be led to a greater life of freedom and service. The gospel of John also helps us realize our dependence on the Lord. Like the sheep, we are not as brave and smart as we sometimes think we are. But it is by listening to the Lord in our relationships and through scripture and prayer that we can be assured of the Lord's guidance. An image that came out of this week's Bible study was that if sheep go about on their own they will literally eat all the pasture up and eventually continue to eat even when there is just dirt. This reminds us during the Easter season that we are called to grow and change, not stay in the same place; that the Lord will lead us to green pasture and feed us if we are open. May we, during this Easter season, be more sensitive to the new life in the Spirit and allow the Lord to direct us even when life and our world seem difficult. The scriptures remind us of the hope of the inclusiveness of the gospel message to bring life, and life abundant, to all people.