

Throughout the Easter season we encounter similar themes and topics each year as we make our way through these Easter days. We began with Easter Sunday when we heard the story of the account of the Lord's Resurrection. The second Sunday of Easter we heard the story of doubting Thomas, then we heard the story about the disciples and their encounter along the road to Emmaus. This week we encounter the parable of the Good Shepherd.

It is important for us to take a few moments to reflect on what this parable of the Good Shepherd means for us.

Of course we know that Jesus is the Shepherd. He leads us and guides us along the journey that we make through life. Hopefully this journey leads us to eternal life with Him. But Jesus is not the only shepherd out there. There are many other "shepherds" that are in our world that are also trying to lead us. Some of them are okay to follow. . . think about your employer or a school teacher, maybe a member of your family. These are all shepherds and it is important that we follow them. But there are also bad shepherds that want to lead us astray, distracting us and keeping us from drawing nearer to Jesus.

As we take inventory of our lives, it is important for us to look at the different shepherds, or as Jesus calls Himself in today's gospel, the "gatekeeper." We need to make sure that we are placing our trust in "gatekeepers" that are going to allow us to enter into a pasture in which we will be safe. If we go to the wrong gate, to a pasture that God does not want us to feed on, then we run the risk of allowing thieves and robbers to overwhelm us.

Jesus wants nothing more than to keep us safe and under His protective care, but ultimately it is up to us. He cannot watch over us and protect us if we choose to enter the wrong pasture or go through a gate that is NOT guarded by our Good Shepherd. Let us take time to examine the gate that we are entering through and let us also learn to recognize our Lord, so we know which gate we can enter through and be safe.