

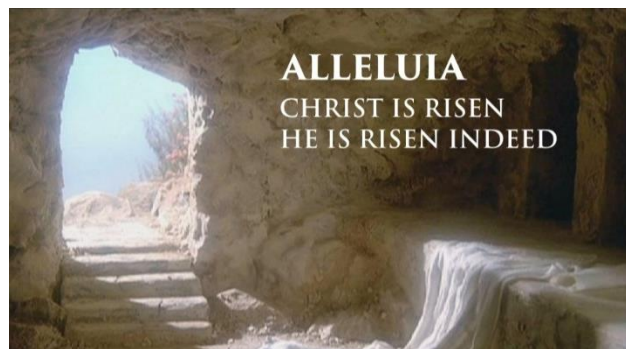
Grace Notes in Miniature

For Monday May 4, 2020

Dear friends:

May the (fourth) Force be with you."

—Obi-Wan Kenobi, to Anakin Skywalker



Although I am not really a Star Wars fan, there are some references one cannot avoid. This one resonates with many people in the same way in which I am reassured by hearing, "The Lord be with you." and, in responding, "And with your spirit", slip into a comfort and rhythm of the familiar liturgy. In the same way, we find reassurance in the flow of our Church year – and in knowing that Divine Mercy Sunday will follow Easter, and that Good Shepherd Sunday will follow on the Fourth Sunday of Easter.



I was struck by Brother Robert Lentz's icon of the Good Shepherd from a book entitled "Christ in the Margins" which featured his artwork and writings by Edwina Gateley (Published May 1st 2003 by Orbis Books) precisely because it is an unfamiliar image. So often we see pictures of Christ, the Good Shepherd, with a spotless white lamb in his arms or around his shoulders. A friend and colleague, Father Terry Lozynsky, pastor of Christ the Good Shepherd/St Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church in Etobicoke, gave an interesting homily on the subject based on a conversation with a contemporary shepherd. Apparently, the sheep who would wander away from the flock is very unlikely to be a lamb, as they wouldn't be far from their mothers; the miscreant would far more likely be a stinky, dirty, matted, crusty, bad-tempered, old ram. And what a different experience that would be, recovering him and carrying him home!

It also reminded me of Pope Francis' comments at the Blessing of the Oils during Holy Week in March 2013: [He] called on the world's priests to bring the healing power of God's grace to everyone in need, to stay close to the marginalized and to be "shepherds living with the smell of the sheep."

Those priests "who do not go out of themselves" by being mediators between God and men can "gradually become intermediaries, managers," he said March 28 during the chrism Mass in St. Peter's Basilica.

"This is precisely the reason why some priests grow dissatisfied, lose heart and become in a sense collectors of antiquities or novelties — instead of being shepherds living with 'the smell of the sheep,'" he said. "This is what I am asking you," he said with emphasis, looking up from his prepared text, "be

shepherds with the smell of sheep," so that people can sense the priest is not just concerned with his own congregation, but is also a fisher of men." (<https://www.thecatholictelegraph.com/pope-francis-priests-should-be-shepherds-living-with-the-smell-of-the-sheep/13439>)

One of the oils being blessed at that Chrism Mass was the Oil used to anoint at Ordination, Confirmation and at Baptism: "As Christ was anointed, Priest, Prophet and King so may you live always as members of His Body, sharing everlasting life." Recognising that each of us is anointed at Baptism to share in the priesthood of the Baptised, we also share in that admonition to reach out to the marginalised and to not be repulsed by the idea of smelling like sheep! And, after all, as Psalm 100 reminds us, "we are God's people, the flock of the Lord". You may enjoy this arrangement by David Haas and Marty Haugen <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsiZq0djBwI>

Good Shepherd Sunday is also an opportunity to pray for vocations and we have heard that this year's ordinations are being postponed until August or September because of the safety limitations imposed on us by Covid-19. This may be a good time to invite students to enlarge their spiritual bouquets. They need simply keep track of their prayers and then at the end we can send all the tallies to m.mullen@rogers.com; Marjorie asks us each year on behalf of the Hamilton Serra Club to create bouquets for seminarians and those entering religious life.



Today is the first day of Catholic Education Week and there are many beautiful offerings on the Board Web page (<https://www.hcdsb.org/News/Pages/Igniting-Hope-During-Catholic-Education-Week.aspx>) and Twitter feeds to nourish us during this time. Note the Masses on Wednesday (Cardinal Collins at St Michael's Cathedral) and Friday (Bishop Crosby) which you can join by clicking on the link.

In looking for a piece I couldn't find, I was delighted to find this "Song of Hope" to share with you. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkbDJda24xl> involving over 100 individual tracks from a Facebook musicians' group from all around the world. Efforts like this do bring us joy as we realise that it is possible to still reach out of our isolation and connect in a harmonious way!

With every blessing,

Gillian