

Reflection for April 25, 2021

The Fourth Sunday of Lent

from Jon Metz

Today's gospel is about the "Good Shepherd," but this is not the gospel that immediately comes to mind when we think of this familiar image. This is not the parable from Luke or Matthew's gospel that focuses on leaving the 99 to find the one, but it is the words of Jesus and shares the same theme of devotion and focused love. This, of course, comes from the gospel of John when Jesus calls himself the "Good Shepherd." John goes further than the parable of the Good Shepherd. Not only will the shepherd leave the flock to find the missing one, but "a good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." Of course, this brings us back to the images of Easter when we celebrated in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Jesus goes on to describe the difference between a shepherd and a "hired man." These two do not have the same devotion to the flock. If a wolf comes, the hired man runs away. This is not what the shepherd does. The shepherd loves his flock, and he knows his flock intimately. The shepherd would lay down his life for the flock. How powerful it is to know that our shepherd loves us so intentionally.

- Do you know how much God loves you?

- Have you ever reminded someone else about the love God has for them?

- If God loves you with such intentionality, what is then asked of you? How do you respond to that love?