

Fourth Sunday of Easter 2017

May 7—There is a story about a very religious lady who traveled quite a bit for her job and, hence, did a lot of flying. But since planes made her very nervous, she always took along a Bible to read that helped her relax on the longer flights.

One time, when she took out her Bible and began to read, the man seated next to her glanced at her and chuckled. Then, with a smirk, went back to what he was doing.

But a little while later he turned to her and asked, “You don’t really believe all that stuff, do you?”

The woman answered, “Why, yes I do; it is the Bible!”

“Well, what about that guy who was swallowed by the whale?” he asked.

“Oh, yes,” she said, “His name was Jonah and I do believe it because it’s here in the Bible.”

“Well,” he continued, “How do you suppose he survived all that time inside that whale?”

“I really don’t know,” she said, “But when I get to heaven, I will ask him.”

“And what if he isn’t in heaven?” the man asked with a sarcastic grin.

To which she replied with a coy smile, “Then you can ask him!”

Ah yes, the mysteries of life, the road we travel and the answers that are ours can often be hidden, complicated, or confusing. The answer to this dilemma is the exact point of today’s Gospel [JN 10:1-10], Our Blessed Lord telling us that He is the Good Shepherd and we are His sheep—the flock that he tends and guides.

It was a familiar scriptural image, found throughout the Old Testament, especially in the familiar and beloved Psalm 23, speaking of “... the Lord, as our Shepherd and there is nothing that we shall not want ...”

Almighty God had promised the chosen nation of Israel that He would guide them, but just like sheep of an earthly flock, they wandered and they strayed. So, with inspiration and conviction, with dedication and determination, this Divine Rabbi appeared and assured them, as He does us, that He would be the shepherd. In fact, He would be like no other on earth for He would be the Good Shepherd sent from heaven who would lay down His life for His sheep. He would prove His love, not only in words, but in action by climbing the lonely hill of Calvary so that the flock might be safe and He its shepherd forever.

My friends, may we heed the voice of the Lord, the Good Shepherd, through His Church. May we follow His guidance through our prayers, and may we always know that we are safe in the arms of the One who died and rose again so that His flock—each of us—might one day live with Him forever.

God love you.