

We share this “continuing reflection” on the Gospel of Luke and pray you discover a new awareness of God’s Spirit present and at work in your lives each day. For more information on any of the parish’s Faith Enrichment programs contact the Evangelization & Faith Formation Office or Dr. Little at [tlittle@olfparish.com](mailto:tlittle@olfparish.com)



### Questions for your reflection

- 1. In what ways do these images of shepherds illustrate the experience of the man born blind and those who oppose him?**
- 2. Who or what are the strangers, thieves and bandits who threaten me with harm? How do I expect the protection of Jesus?**
- 3. Why do I choose to follow Jesus rather than the other leaders of the time? What is the ultimate meaning of the Jesus’ promise in verse 10 (... to have life abundantly)?**

## Our Lady of the Fields Church Scripture Review and Reflection Saturday & Sunday September 11-12, 2021

Please read Gospel of John 10:1-10

These verses are the closest Jesus comes in John’s gospel to telling a parable. Drawing on the imagery of the shepherds in the ancient world John ends this important reflection contemplating the behavior of sheep and their shepherds during the regular “rainy seasons” of their lives together.

During the rainy seasons shepherds and their sheep remained in a grassy and isolated area of their choosing to protect against poor weather and unwanted intrusion by others, both animal and human threats. There were two ways to enter these sheepfolds – depending on one’s mission – whether to do harm or good to the sheep or to their shepherds. To enter by deception is to be a thief. Those who wish the sheep a good outcome are the shepherds. (vs 1-2) And the sheep know the difference! They respond to the voice of the shepherd and trust that the voice belongs to the one who will always walk ahead of them and lead the sheep to a welcome pasture. That is the voice the sheep will always follow and trust. (vs 4) Because each sheep is addressed by name and follows that caller to a welcome and dependable pasture the shepherds are always welcome. In the case of a stranger whose voice is not known the result is a panic and dispersion by the sheep. (vs 5). Those sheep will flee not follow!

This known imagery of shepherding provides the backdrop against which the remainder of this discourse is formed. Jesus took the images of tending sheep and uses them to form metaphors which establish two more “I Am” sayings. The care and intimacy of these images provide beautiful illustrations of the trusting bond and familiarity between the shepherd and sheep and between Jesus and His followers. Such images are common throughout the Old Testament as an expression of how God provides for God’s people. Psalm 23 expresses well God’s care from the flock’s point of view. The psalmist proclaims that God offers all that the sheep might need for an abundant life.

Jesus first proclaims, “I am the gate for the sheep.” (vs 7) and He presents himself as the gateway for all the flock to use. The opposing religious leaders are clearly imaged as thieves and bandits, as they demonstrated in their lack of care for the man born blind. In contrast to these, Jesus is the way through which all the sheep are always protected. And He is the way through which the sheep have access to good pasture (vs 9). He is the mediator who provides them what they need and desire: secure protection and abundant nourishment. He came for the sake of His followers, “that they may have life and have it abundantly.” (vs 10). This full and abundant life is salvation, the eternal life which begins in the here and now and leads on forever to eternal life for all the faithful who gather with God!