

*Fourth Sunday of Easter*  
*Acts 2:14a, 36-41      1 Peter 2:20b-25      John 10:1-10*  
*Preaching by: Sister Catherine Marie Bazar*

Our Gospel today gives us one of Scripture's most endearing images of Jesus – the Good Shepherd, the Gate, the Passageway to salvation and freedom! But we also know that Jesus is the Lamb of God, the One who in silence was destined to be led through that gate when the time came for His great passage into suffering and from death to life.

We have recently experienced the passage of another great and good shepherd, John Paul II. Gates and walls and fences were opened to set free millions upon millions of helpless people during his reign. This was so magnificently symbolized in the pillared arms of the Vatican courtyard embracing the throngs of people all looking towards their shepherd for a final farewell. How did one man reach this stature?

Like Jesus the Lamb, we know how John Paul also entered his dark nights of silent, helpless prayer on a daily basis, listening to the Sound of the Master, recognizing the Master's Voice, following wherever it led. Like Jesus the Shepherd, John Paul also entered the bright days of spiritual leadership, rising up to console, rebuke, beckon, and point the way.

What does all this say to us as both followers and ministers, lambs and shepherds, of the Gospel message? Do we also faithfully enter our dark, silent places and lay ourselves open in helpless abandonment before the One who alone raises up? Do we walk in the day's brightness and shoulder our ministry with the same passion and love for God's people that so enflamed the hearts of Jesus and John Paul?

After a long breakdown and a near suicide, an artist sketched her image of the Good Shepherd who had been her lifeline to healing. Only the back head of Jesus is visible. On His shoulder looking out sits a tiny lamb curled up with deep serenity at the memory of the frightening journey it had been on and from which it was rescued. Jesus remains faceless to it.

The lamb understands only through hindsight how it had been sheltered. Yet it cannot see the future that lies ahead. Only Jesus leads. There is simply profound gratitude that somehow, someone is there to bring it to safe places.

What a blessed image for all of us – to be both silent lamb and preaching shepherd in the mystery of our calling!