

4SunEaster: If you missed my homily this weekend: A few thoughts :)

-Jesus is The Shepherd that never gives up on His sheep.

-From the Gospel: **“My sheep hear my voice; and they follow me.”**

-How should we read the Revelation to St. John: The last book of the Bible?

-The Church is in the long period of Last Days - Jesus is Gathering the elect.

-Do not make the mistake to read in a linear fashion, or in a chronological order /

NO: It is all connected from throughout human history (Our past, present, and

future) / And It is not simply doom and gloom / Jesus is revealed as the Victor

over satan and death / His Church wins, and from His Ascension until the present,

is gathering His sheep/children from all nations to His Heavenly Kingdom.

A few notes from Chapter 7 from the Book of Revelation.

1.Note: Christ is always at the center when His Church gathers. (Just like He is at the center of today's Mass).

2.He is the Shepherd that guides us to the Living Water / And Guides His Church through this past, present, and future time of tribulation.

3.Eternal Life and Eternity / Is the reason we can gather.

4.The Church is universal (Catholic) / The New Israel (Catholic Church) is now open to all who follow the Shepherd (Jew, Greek, Gentile, All Nations).

The word: Tribulation is also found in Rev: 1:9, (2.9.10.22), and here in 7:14:

5.In this time of trial and sometimes suffering, the evil one will try to separate us from the Church / from the Shepherd / And try to snatch our faith away from us / Those dressed in white have persevered until the very end.

6.Thus: (Perseverance / Fortitude) are important virtues: Pray and ask for them.

7.These saints in chapter 7 have been through the trials / suffering / broken in sin / But have chosen to follow the Shepherd / the Lamb / And though Baptism / Confession / Eucharist / Our past is washed clean (White garments) / We now carry the palms that represent that we share in Christ Jesus' Victory.

8.The (OT Prophet Daniel) speaks of this washing (White Garments) / A people of victory (Palm Branches) can be found in the (OT Maccabees). Thus, we (NT Church) are connected to the OT (Israel) through Jesus and the Prophets.

So thanks to our Jewish brothers and sisters...

-Praying the psalms (Liturgy of the Hours) comes straight from our Jewish heritage / Thank goodness for the Jews / Because without them we would not be here today, nor have St. John's vision / For Now we are grafted onto to vine / Church as the new Israel. The Acts of the Apostles replace the OT readings during Easter-Time to show that Jesus fulfills OT prophecies, and we are included in the house of Israel / And how the Church and her (Apostles) the first priests go from failure to the powerful works in Acts.

-How to know the Shepherds voice? / Find a good Catholic: Study Bible / The Navarre Bible Commentary from the Church Fathers etc., Bishop Barron Word on Fire Bibles are good / Attend Mass / Cleanse and restore your soul and your

spiritual vision with Confession / Pray the Rosary / And/Or The Divine Mercy Chaplet are both powerful spiritual weapons

You-Tube: Fr' Mike Schmitz / Bishop Barron / MIC: The Marions of the Immaculate Conception and Divine Mercy / Catholic Radio (Relevant Radio App, EWTN Radio Apps) / Listen online to Wilmington Catholic Radio / Catholic Answers Online and Radio / Chris Stefanick (Real Life Catholic) / Dynamic Catholic / Divine Mercy.org

-Remember we are a work in progress / Rome wasn't built in a day.

-I remember hearing EWTN Fr. Mitch Pacwa once say he surrounds himself daily with Catholic print and media, and that is why he is able to articulate our Catholic Faith / At the end of the day the above should lead us to a person: Jesus Christ.

Adoration and learning to be comfortable in silence.

-To hear His voice become comfortable with silence. Visit IOP Adoration Chapel. Start with 5 minutes and then lengthen time with each visit until you have a Holy Hour / Along with prayer try to also sit, in silence, before the Monstrance.

-For Mother's Day / The power of My mother's and then Mary's prayers / I was away from the Christian Faith for many years, but I know part of my coming back to hear the voice of the Shepherd was the prayers of my mother. And when I called her and told her I was coming back to Jesus, we both wept / I think of how St. Monica's prayers brought St. Augustine to the Catholic faith and early Christianity. And then it was Mary, our Blessed Mother, who called me to the fullness of Christian faith found in the Catholic Church.

My precious Mothers: never give up / You have no idea how powerful your prayers are for your children / If you have young children: plant the seeds now / If your children are older, or away from the church / Pray daily for them and for a deeper conversion.

For Mothers without children: I call you a mother, because God has a unique plan for you in the kingdom, and has called you to be a spiritual mother in prayer for your adopted and/or spiritual children.

Happy Mothers Day on this 4th Sunday of Easter.
Father Vic Gournas