

Today is the fourth Sunday in the Easter Season. Our gospel offers us the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. This tender image evokes feelings of God's great care and compassion for us.

Although we may not personally know a shepherd, the people of Jesus day would have readily understood this metaphor. A good shepherd cares for his sheep, not because it is his job. It goes deeper than that. It comes from the heart.

A good shepherd cares if a sheep is hurt or lost or cold or hungry. A good shepherd will find a lost sheep, hold them close and carry them home.

In referring to himself as the Good Shepherd, Jesus is reminding us that our concerns are his concerns – Jesus will lead and guide us and hold us close. This is how much we are cared for.

And once we know that and accept it, it is easier to become a good shepherd for others. The care given to us can flow through us to others. Jesus' becomes the care we offer to others.

Today may we know the Good Shepherd loving us...holding us close...and sending us forth to be good shepherds to love and care for others in Jesus' name.