

4th Sunday of Easter (A)
April 26, 2026
“Shepherds v. the World”

“You have now returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls” (1 Pt. 2:25). Shepherds have been in the news a lot lately. First, there is the war of words between President Trump, who calls Pope Leo “weak” on immigrant, crime and foreign policy, and Pope Leo, who urges all nations to seek peace, dialogue, justice, and reconciliation of differences. Archbishop Zinkula shared the sentiments of the U.S. Catholic Conference President, who was “disheartened” at the language the president used about the Holy Father.

Meanwhile, the Episcopal bishop of New Hampshire recently urged his clergy to have their wills written and their affairs in order because they might be called to stand up against tyranny in the United States to the point of martyrdom.

That same day, the Catholic archbishop of the armed forces, Timothy Broglio, who oversees chaplains and spiritual care for the armed forces, says it would be morally acceptable for U.S. service members to refuse orders from this president to invade a country he is threatening, namely, Iran.

Then, three top U.S. cardinals, overseeing Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Newark, New Jersey, lambasted U.S. foreign policy in the Iran war, which they believe to be “unjust” because it does not meet the criteria for just war in the *Catechism* (2309).

No matter where you stand on these issues, it is clear that clergy are bringing their moral voice to bear on behavior regarding immigration and war that they find to be abhorrent.

Shepherds have been part of the Church going back to the Old Testament: Abraham sacrificed a ram in place of his son on Mount Moriah; Moses received his call to liberate Israel while tending the flock of his father-in-law; the psalmist reflects on the Lord as shepherd; Isaiah and Jeremiah spoke about good and bad shepherds; shepherds were the first witness of the newborn Christ-Child in Bethlehem.

And today, the Church reflects on shepherds and shepherding. A shepherd has natural equipment to do his work.

First, he has **eyes** to see. He sees sheep of his flock, including those who wander away from the majority. He sees their strength in numbers and their weaknesses as individuals. He sees their wounds when they suffer. He sees them in their dependence on his guidance and protection.

He also has a **voice** to call them by name. In the ancient world, sheep were housed in outdoor stone-wall pens for the night, while shepherds kept watch. Several flocks were put together in a "sheep-fold." In the morning, the shepherds came to the sheep-fold, and called their individual flocks. The sheep recognized the unique voice of their shepherd, and followed him into the fields to feed throughout the day. The voice calls God's people to follow and it instructs them in his teachings, as well as comforting them in their sufferings.

The third natural equipment is his **hands**. Hands point to the future. They hold a staff to fight off wolves. They lead and direct the sheep to good pastures. They call them to stop when necessary. Hands also caress them and assure them that he cares about them.

On this Good Shepherd Sunday, let us pray for all who shepherd God's people, from the Holy Father in Rome to the smallest faith community, that we will use our eyes, voice, and hands in the service of the Lord Jesus, who called us to serve and continues to guide us in doing his work.

God bless you.