

## FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER - HOMILY

Fr. Antony Chundelikkat

The fourth Sunday is known as *Good Shepherd Sunday*. It is also the *World Day of Prayer for Vocation*, reflecting on the meaning of God's call and to pray for vocations. Twice in the Gospel, Jesus proclaims himself, "I am the good shepherd". He is a Shepherd who guides his sheep. So there is a mutual bond of love and intimacy. Jesus tells us what a good shepherd really is – one who is willing to lay down his life for his sheep. The good shepherd is not only the one who holds, but the one who really focuses on his/her sheep. He is a Shepherd who feels compassion for his sheep. He is a Shepherd who cares for his flock- the self-sacrificing element. The story is told about three boys who were relating how their grandfathers died. The first one said: "My grandpa died as a soldier serving our country." The second one said: "My grandpa died as a policeman in the line of duty." The third one said: "My grandpa died peacefully in his sleep, unlike the people around him who were all screaming in the bus he was driving." Jesus is our gate and if we enter through Him we will be safe and can freely go in and out and be sure of finding pasture. Today's Gospel says that we have Jesus our defender.

Therefore do not waste our time and energy to involve in battle against others. We need to put our reputation in God's hands rather than in people's hands. In this terrifying and distressing time we do not rely on other people but on God. Because our worth and value come from God and not from the people. Because there is a Good Shepherd to guide and protect us and we are crowned with favour. Even in this time of worrying and upsetting we need to leave all our fear and worries to God's hands because he stays at the gate of our life. He cares us always so let us say we are good, healthy and under the great protection of God. He calls each one by name and could tell you the personal story of each one of the sheep.

Amen.