*Host or designated reader/leader begins the Upper Room prayer hour by reading this message from Fr. David:*

 **Message for November 2018**

Dear Friends in Christ;

The third title of Christ we will explore from John’s Gospel is “I am the Good Shepherd.” This title appears in Chapter 10 of John. This teaching or revelation of Jesus contains much discord for the Jews (at the time) which we will examine. This title of Jesus has been depicted visually by contemporary artists. I like the print of Jesus as the “Good Shepherd” putting his life at risk, while craning down from the side of a cliff to rescue one of His lambs. As we move into this Upper Room, let us call to mind the lost, the lapsed and the searching souls for Christ and intercede for them. May His voice reach their ears, may His eyes discover their look of longing and His mercy cleanse their souls through His redemptive Blood.

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In Christ

Fr. David

*Open with Sign of Cross and then this prayer:*

**Prayer to the Holy Spirit**

L: **Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth Your Spirit, O Lord, and they shall be created.**

R: And You shall renew the face of the earth

L: **Let us pray – God our Father, pour out the gifts of your Holy Spirit on the world. You sent the Spirit on Your Church to begin the teaching of the Gospel; now let the Spirit continue to work in the world through the hearts of all who believe. Through Christ our Lord.**

R: Amen

L: **You, O lord, will open my lips.**

R: And my tongue shall announce Your praise.

L: **Incline unto my aid, O God.**

R: O Lord, make haste to help me.

L: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit**.

R: As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen

**Read John 10:1-21**

1. Jesus says that he is the “gatekeeper” and “the gate” here. Does that make any sense? How does it make sense to you? *(Don’t read any further* ***(the bolded type)*** *as I will provide an answer for you here if you did not come up with one. Give the latter questions some discussion first):*

**In those times shepherds in the field would create enclosures with “field stones” for their flocks at night. The opening was just that, an opening, and because there was not a lot of wood or lumber in those days, gates were “few and far between.” And so the shepherd would lie down in the opening on the ground, the sheep (if they wanted to get out) would have to go “through” him but this was difficult because the opening was suited to the shepherd’s size, he was not only the gate, but the gatekeeper as well. The sheep would not go anywhere until he called them and would lead the way out for them.**

1. Jesus says that His flock goes in and out of the enclosure (they have freedom to do so) and they find pasture (food) through Him. Talk about your freedom in Christ in a tangible way and also give examples about how Jesus feeds you.
2. Even though it is not a part of this chapter, in another Gospel we hear Jesus speak about the Lost Sheep and leaving the 99 to find the lost one. Why would this be so risky for the shepherd in those days and would you do the same? What does the story of the Lost Sheep tell you about the mind of Jesus?
3. Recently I wrote a bulletin column and I used the acronym **FLOCK** to designate the types of people who make up most Catholic Communities:

**F**aithful Catholics

**L**apsed Catholics

**O**ccasional Catholics

**C**asual Catholics

**K**indling Catholics

Discuss them in terms of what each group looks like (though their actions). Now discuss how Jesus responds or relates to the people in these groups. (I know that the second part of the question is nearly impossible to answer.) We have mostly assumptions. See if you can find something in the Catechism to read for the group.

1. “Not of My flock.” Have you ever felt separated from people because of their faith expressions? I recently was handed a tract at the Holiday in McGregor while filling up. The man who gave it to me and the wife (who stayed in the car) were like people from a different planet to me. It was eerie, disturbing and odd. I can’t imagine being more foreign from these two in terms of my life and beliefs and theirs. Share similar stories and then (again) try to understand how Jesus reconciles this reality with His words in 16 and 17.

**Read CCC753-757**

I just want the group to listen to these paragraphs as they are read and if they spark any discussion, discuss. Thanks.

The Litany of the Good Shepherd

 God the Father of the Lamb, have mercy on us.

 God the Son, Sacrificial Lamb, have mercy on us.

 God the Holy Spirit, Life of the Lamb, have mercy on us.

O Good Jesus, Shepherd of the just, hear Thy sheep.

Vigilant Finder of lost sheep, guide us.
Fervent Hope of the fallen lamb, guide us.
Constant Gatherer of a broken flock, guide us.

O Good Shepherd, hear Thy sheep.

Purest shelter of the yearning heart, feed us.
Perpetual Feast of the hungry soul, feed us.
Lasting Bread of perfect Life, feed us.

O Good Shepherd, hear Thy sheep.

Patient Tamer of rebellious wills, shear us.
Loyal Teacher of all kind commands, shear us.
Tender Purger of all blemish of sin, shear us.

O Good Shepherd, hear Thy sheep.

From the lures of false shepherds hiding in Thy guise protect us.
From mirages of richer fields, conquering our minds protect us.
From diseases of the soul, separating us from Thy flock, protect us.

**O Good Shepherd, at once the Guard and Lamb,
Who knows well the sheep He leads,
Guide us, feed us, shear us,
and bid us come unto Thee,
delighting in Thy Heavenly pasture,
and praising Thee
forever and ever.** *Amen.*

*Next month’s UPPER ROOM is on the 4th of Jesus’ Titles in the Gospel of John.*