

**Sixteenth Sunday Ordinary Time– Year B**

**July 22, 2018**

**Christ the Good Shepherd, ORCC**

**Reflection by Father Charles Blanchard**

First Reading: Jeremiah 23:1-6

Psalm: 23:1-3, 3-4, 5, 6(1)

Second Reading: Ephesians 2:13-18

Gospel: Mark 6:30-34

PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR OFF and PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR!

WELCOME to this AMAZING Church; CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD, where all are welcome to hear God's Word and feast; with great delight, at this Table for spiritual comfort! This maxim (i.e., standard of practice); of being open to all God's people, highlights Christ the Good Shepherd's charism!

Like the Good Shepherd of today's Gospel reading; as is the case with this Parish, sheep and shepherding are very much part of the theme of today's scripture readings.

Jesus, the good shepherd, is moved with pity in today's Gospel scene. He satisfies the spiritual hunger of those who are desperate by teaching them many things. By doing this he shows himself to be the faithful shepherd of a Israel.

For example, though Jesus retreats to a deserted place; a private place for relaxation, alone time and perhaps recuperation, the people pursued and hastened to find him.

Without being annoyed, exhausted or presenting as overwhelmed, Jesus teaches his Apostles and those who pursued about a Shepherd's compassion, care and about a Shepherd's need for balance.

In fact, Jesus encourages the Apostles to “Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while” wherein the balance between life’s demands and God’s Peace and Love is found.

The image of shepherd is not original to Jesus. The image is drawn from the Prophet Ezekiel 34, in the Old Testament, where God unleashes his anger at the shepherds of Israel who have fattened themselves on the weak and vulnerable, instead of caring for them. Jesus, the Gospel today reveals, is the shepherd of Israel, and for all people.

This image of the Good Shepherd reminds me of a story; about life’s difficulties and the importance of preparation (e.g., The Gethemani Abbey Treat & “ In the eyes of the world, you and I are nobody, but in the eyes of Jesus you’re golden”).

Today, you are invited into a deeper awareness of the plight of others and for the grace and gift of compassion when faced with their plight.

My sisters and brothers, you and I are invited to become more aware of the vast and growing deserts in which our contemporaries, and perhaps even we, are living today – places that are not human because they lack genuine compassion. We are also invited to ask the Lord to help us find the solitude and repose we need in order to live well the command of Jesus: “Be compassionate as your God of Peace and Love is compassionate”.

**Engage prayer, stay focused and remember You’re Golden given God’s Peace and Love. “Do not be afraid, just have faith” and effect positive change in your life and the lives of others!**