“This is what I am asking you, be shepherds with the smell of sheep”

— Pope Francis, March 28, 2013

The Good Shepherd

The Good Shepherd is one of the best known and best loved images of God (Psalm 23, Micah 7:14, Isaiah 40:11, Genesis 48:15). It appears in art and literature, as well as hymns. Our natural and grateful response to what we see, read, and sing is to understand ourselves as sheep.

In the Gospel of John, the images of shepherd and sheep have a thought-provoking relationship. John the Baptist saw Jesus and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.” (Jn 1:29) This refers to what Jesus will accomplish through his future suffering and death on a cross. Later, Jesus identifies himself as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep (John 10:11–19) referring to what he is accomplishing through his active ministry and implying a greater ministry to bring all people together.

The relationship of shepherd to sheep describes an intimacy depicting the unique identity Jesus shares with the Father and with us. In choosing to be sheep and called to be shepherds, we share in a love that no art, literature, and hymn can express.

Sincerely in the Risen Christ,

Fr. Bob Kelly, OP

UPDATES ON COVID-19

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TO SERVE ALL PEOPLE

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