

## Divine Security

Good Shepherd Sunday-Fourth Sunday of Easter-May 7, 2017

Most of us here in Iowa live in a relatively secure and safe environment. Granted we have locks on our doors which lets us sleep pretty soundly at night. The idea of having a shepherd, who cares for the needs of the flock, putting his or her life on the line, seems not much more than a quaint story. Yet, in today's world with violence as the weapon of choice to solve differences, and the real threat of nuclear conflict brewing, we might take heart in the gospel for this week. We as a human race need a Divine Shepherd to follow.

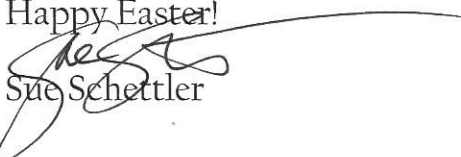
In ancient Israel, shepherds were nomadic people who followed the grazing of their flocks. For protection at night a rough pen might have been made from a natural-occurring rock formation or wooded thicket with the flock gathered together in the confines of that area. The "gate" at the entrance was none other than the shepherd who would literally lie down across the opening, guarding the livelihood of the community from thieves and wolves.

This week, Pope Francis, Shepherd of 1.2 billion Catholics world-wide, has called for diplomacy in the face of rising tensions between North Korea and the U.S.A. Pope Francis said. "Today a wider war would destroy I won't say half of humanity, but a large part of humanity and culture. It would be terrible. I don't think humanity today could bear it." The Pope is calling on the both sides to take up diplomatic actions in order to save the flock. He is calling the entire world toward the sheepfold, to lay down a non-violent solution to international conflict. He is convinced that as a human species we cannot survive a nuclear detonation. I agree with him.

St Peter addresses our Christian responsibility in these times of suffering and fear. "When he was insulted, he returned no insult; when he suffered, he did not threaten; instead, he handed himself over to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness."

This is the path to Divine Security, to follow Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd, to listen with open hearts to his successor on earth, Pope Francis, to pray for righteousness to prevail. And, ever more importantly, to work for justice where everyone might enjoy what Jesus promises this week: "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

Happy Easter!



Sue Schettler