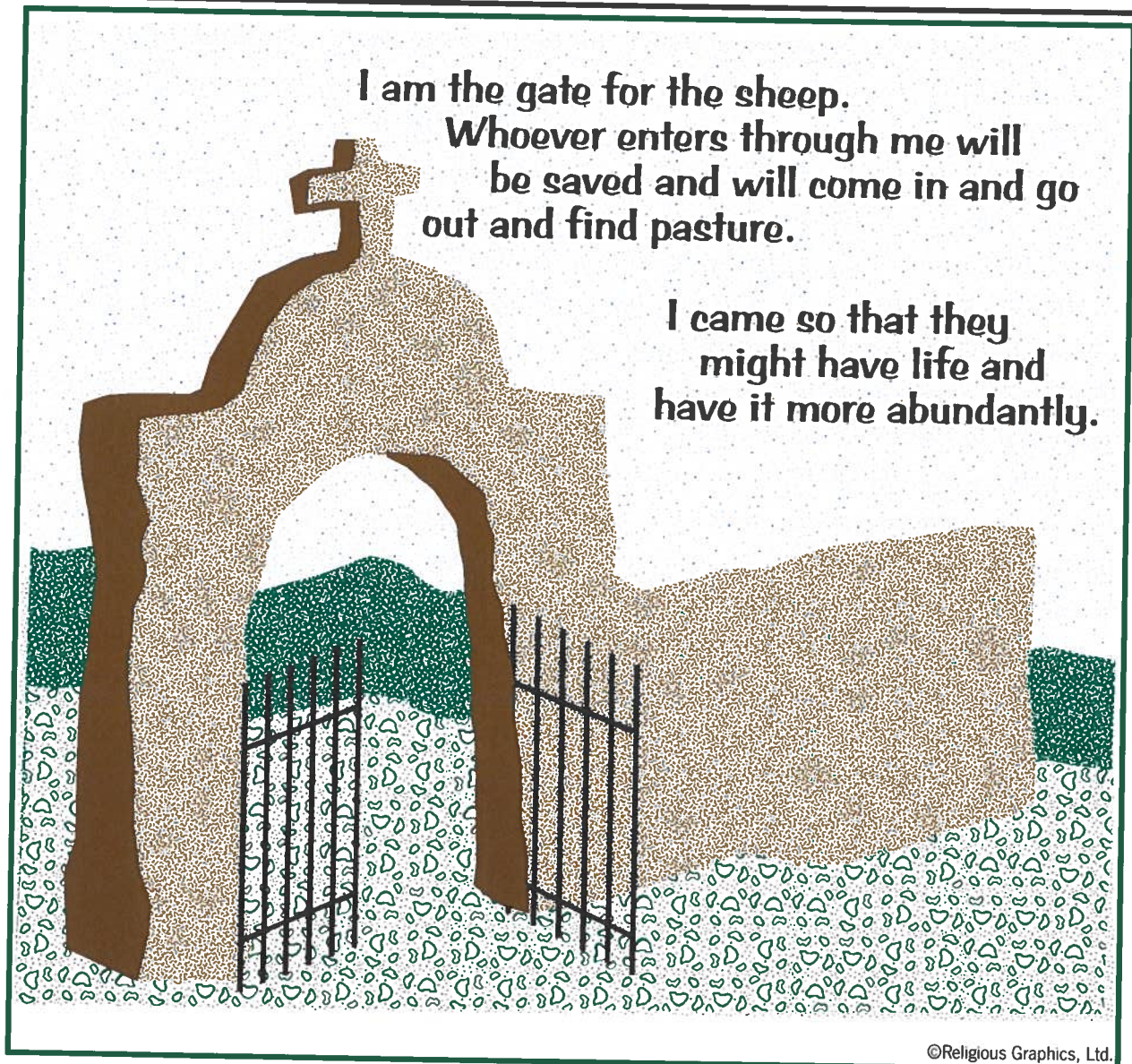


The Roman Catholic Parishes of
Sacred Heart, Goodrich
St. Margaret Mary, Herscher
St. James the Apostle, Irwin

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

APRIL 25-26, 2026



Weekend Masses:

St. Margaret Mary Sat. 5:00 pm Sun. 10:30 am
Sacred Heart Sun. 7:30 am
St. James Sun 9:00 am

Confessions:

St. Margaret Mary Sat. 4:15 pm -4:45pm

Church Mailing Address: 207 E. 5th Street Herscher, IL 60941 Phone: 815-426-2550

Quotable- “Peace be with you all!” Beloved brothers and sisters, this is the first greeting of the Risen Christ, the Good Shepherd who has given His life for the flock of God.
 —Pope Leo XIV

Fifth Sunday of Easter				May 2-3, 2026
Liturgical Schedule	St. Margaret Mary Saturday, May 1 5:00 pm	Sacred Heart Sunday, May 2 7:30 am	St. James Sunday, May 2 9:00 am	St. Margaret Mary Sunday, May 2 10:30 am
Celebrant	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron
Ushers	Todd Datweiler Galen Fritz Bob Schultz Gery Wright	Kyle Ferris Daryl Ferris	Youth Mass	Youth Mass
Lector	Dave Emling	Alicia Kirkpatrick	Youth Mass	Youth Mass
Eucharistic Minister			Dena Coy	Dana Masching
Servers				Youth Mass
Greeters			Greeter—Youth Mass R. Leader—Youth Mass	Youth Mass

Mass Intentions for the Week

Monday, April 27 (SMM)

8:00 am +Donna Ruder (The Family)

Tuesday, April 28 (SH)

8:00 am No Mass

Wednesday, April 29 (SJ)

8:00 am No Mass

Friday, May 1 (SJ)

8:00am +Sheila Koerner (The Family)

Saturday, May 2 (SMM)

5:00 pm For All the Parish Family

Sunday, May 3

7:30 am (SH) +Edwin Boudreau (Janet Andrzejewski)

9:00 am (SJ) +Jason Wood (The Wood Family)

10:30 am (SMM) +Mary McDonald (Bev Buckley)
 Michael Fox (Jeff/Diane Long)

Looking Ahead

Friday, May 1—First Friday Mass at SJ

Saturday, May 2—First Communion at SJ for St. James and St. Margaret Mary students 10:00am

Sunday, May 3—Youth Mass St. Margaret Mary

Sunday, May 3—Youth Mass, May crowning and last religious ed class at St. James

Weekend of May 2-3—Diocese collection for tornado aid

Monday, May 11—SMM CCW meeting at 7pm

Pastor— Fr. Ron Neitzke- 815-426-2550

Deacon – Ron Gagnon— rjgckg@aol.com

Home—815-933-4077

Parish Email – smm_sja_sh@yahoo.com

TriParish web page – www.triparishcatholics.org

Like us on Facebook triparishcatholic communities

Tri Parish Church office –Barb Riker 426-2550

Julie Bisailon 426-2550

Bulletin – Debbie Jensen - 426-2550 debjen04@gmail.com

Religious Education –

St. MM – Jill Fulton jfulton.stmm@gmail.com

Sacred Heart – Rhonda Berns – 426-5015

St. James—Tanhya Osenga tosenga81@gmail.com

Parish Nurse – Jackie Eberle – 815-421-4048

Prayer Line—

SMM -Janice 815-426-2574 jdstreefarms1@gmail.com

Question of the week—

How can I live my life more abundantly? What specific things can I do this week to increase the love and mercy in my life?

Collections Weekend of April 18-19, 2026

St. Margaret Mary—\$2,134

St. James—\$1,465

Sacred Heart— \$1,887

Thank you for your generosity!

Gospel Shorts—

Marching to the Bleat of a Different Drummer

We are faced in our world today with so many faces and forces telling us to do, where to go and how to behave. Everywhere we turn, it seems there is another idea demanding our attention, another voice screaming that we must listen to it. Where and to whom will we turn for guidance in life?

Jesus alone provides the guidance we need, since he is the shepherd of the sheep. We need to be actively listening for the clarion call of his voice amidst all the competition for our time. But we also must listen to what Christ is saying, respond to it and seek to follow him. Ultimately, that's what the sheep do: they listen, they respond, they follow. So must we. Otherwise, life remains confusing and directionless.

 **Mille Grazie!**

Thank you to all who came to support St. Margaret Mary's CCW Night in Italy. A special thank you to everyone who helped make the night a success, from cooking the sauce, setting up, cleaning up, donating food, and serving. You are



A Stewardship Moment

Fourth Sunday of Easter Weekend of April 25/26, 2026

Saint Peter plays a prominent leadership role in the first two readings, urging his listeners to be baptized and accept the gift of the Holy Spirit; and encouraging them to follow in the footsteps of Christ. We have just renewed our baptismal promises at Easter and the Holy Spirit dwells in us in a special way. Are we good stewards of those baptismal vows? Have we renewed our commitment to follow in Jesus' footsteps? Have we opened our hearts to discern the will of God in our lives? Take some time to reflect on the importance of our baptismal renewal and our lives as disciples of the Lord.

Parish News:

All Parishes—

⇒ Tri-Parish Office Hours— Our office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 9am—12 pm.

St. Margaret Mary-

⇒ Congratulations to Dana Masching on being selected as St Margaret Mary's CCW woman of the Year!

St. James-

Sacred Heart—

⇒ The week of April 26th, the Blessed Virgin Mary candle burns in prayer for Keaton O'Connor, Lily O'Connor and Saoirse O'Connor as they receive their first Holy Communion .

⇒ Thanks to all those who contributed in anyway to the success of Sacred Heart CCW's Spring Luncheon. Cash prize winners were: Ane Marie Kieffer \$150, Carter Palinski \$100 & Gary Cloonen \$50. Thanks also to those members that contributed food and served for the recent funeral lunch & Confirmation.

⇒ Sacred Heart Church is again going to honor our mothers for Mother's Day by placing flowers on the altars. The white represent pure love and are honoring the deceased mothers. The pink are a symbol of a mother's undying love and are representing living mothers. There is a basket on the table near the entrance with envelopes for the money & names. There are copies of last years lists you can look at. If there is no change, write "same as last year" on your envelope. Checks should be made out to Sacred Heart CCW.

The Good Shepherd
lays down his life
for his sheep

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CCW SPRING INSTITUTE

The Kankakee Deanery Council of Catholic Women Spring Institute will be held at St. John Paul II on Wednesday, June 3. All women are welcome to attend. Please sign up by May 14.

There is also a list of items that will be collected that evening to benefit Harbor House.

SMM—signup sheet is in church entrance. Your cost will be \$11. If you have questions, please call the office.

SH—There is a sign up sheet at the entrance of the church. Please pay Laurie Palinski \$12 if you plan on attending.

SJ—There will be a signup sheet in the church entrance for all interested ladies.

Saint of the week: St. Peter Chanel (April 28) was born to a peasant family. He was a shepherd as a boy. He was also an excellent student and was ordained in 1827 at age 24. He was assigned to Crozet, a parish in decline; he turned it around, in part because of his ministry to the sick, and brought a spiritual revival. Peter joined the *Society of Mary (Marist Fathers)* in 1831 and taught at the Belley seminary for five years. He led a band of missionaries to the New Hebrides in 1836, an area where cannibalism had only recently been outlawed; he was the first Christian missionary on the island of Fortuna. He converted many, often as a result of his work with the sick. He learned the local language and taught in the local school. He was killed by an order of Niuliki, a native priest-king who was jealous of Peter's influence; the king's own son and daughter had become Christians. He was the first martyr in Oceania.



Other obscure saint of the week: St. Paschasius Radbertus (April 28) was a foundling whose background is completely unknown. He was raised by monks after being found by nuns on the steps of Notre Dame of Soissons. Unruly in his youth, even with the monks, he would later become a Benedictine monk under Saint Adalard of Corbie. He moved to Corbie Abbey in 822 and helped make its school one of the most famous places of learning in its day. A spiritual teacher of Saint Ansgar, Paschasius traveled Europe, speaking at councils, negotiating political and religious conflicts.

Against his will he was elected abbot of the Corbie in 844. During undescribed trouble in the monastery in 851, he resigned his position to settle the dispute. He retired as a hermit to the Saint Riquiet monastery in Cenula where he spent the rest of his life writing on history, philosophy, and theology. His "The Body and Blood of Christ" started the first controversy on the Eucharist and cleared the way for a precise understanding of Transubstantiation.



Special Message
from Bishop Dennis E. Spies
April 2026



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
Happy Easter! As we continue celebrating the joy of the Resurrection, I have a special request for the people of our diocese on behalf of our brothers and sisters in Kankakee County.

On March 10, severe storms and tornadoes caused widespread destruction in the area, damaging homes, vehicles, Bishop McNamara Catholic School, and affecting families throughout our diocese—including those of some of our priests. Many now face a long and challenging recovery. We continue to pray for all who were injured or suffered loss.

A Special Second Collection

To offer concrete support, I am asking every parish in the Diocese of Joliet to take up a special second collection the weekend of May 2-3 or May 9-10, 2026.

How the Funds Will Be Used

Every dollar collected will directly support two urgent needs:

Families in Need - Catholic Charities of Joliet will administer a grant process to provide financial assistance to families who have suffered significant hardship.

Bishop McNamara Catholic School - Assistance with repairs to buildings, buses, athletic fields, and other property not covered by insurance.

Where to Send Collections

Collections should be sent to:

Diocese of Joliet
c/o Finance Office
16555 Weber Road
Crest Hill, Illinois 60403

All funds will be distributed responsibly to those in need. Thank you for your prayers, generosity, and care for one another. May the hope of Easter strengthen us as one Body of Christ.

Dennis E. Spies

Sincerely in Christ,
Bishop Dennis E. Spies
Apostolic Administrator for the Diocese of Joliet



Kankakee County Storm Damage
3/10/26



Questions Catholics Ask

What does it take to be recognized by the church as a saint?

Becoming part of the official register or canon of the church's saints has been an evolving process. There used to be one sure way to get there: martyrdom—which, in centuries of persecution, was a serious possibility after baptism. After Christianity became an established religion of the Empire under Constantine in 325, martyrs were rare. "White" martyrdom—the sacrifice of one's life to prayer and penance—led to the monastic movement. Gradually, a virtuous life became the popular standard for sanctity.

Today's potential saints face a ladder of steps to be entered into the canon. You live a heroically virtuous life. That's the easy part. You die or are killed. (It's necessary to be dead. Canonically, there's no such thing as a living saint.) Five years pass; though for both Mother Teresa and Pope John Paul II, even this brief waiting period was waived. Next a *petitioner*—a parish, diocese, religious community, lay association, or civil body—must adopt (promote and finance) your cause. Then a *postulator* or official agent is named from the diocese in which you died. (If you die outside the place your virtue was best known, another diocese can petition to have your case returned to them.) At this point, everyone is calling you a Servant of God.

A formal inquest begins in the Congregation for the Causes of Saints (CCS). The local bishop collects any information about you, including all your published and unpublished works. (In the future, this will hang up the process indefinitely unless prospective saints routinely delete their e-mail.) Two theologians read everything in search of red flags. If there are none, they recommend you for the *nihil obstat* (no apparent obstacles).

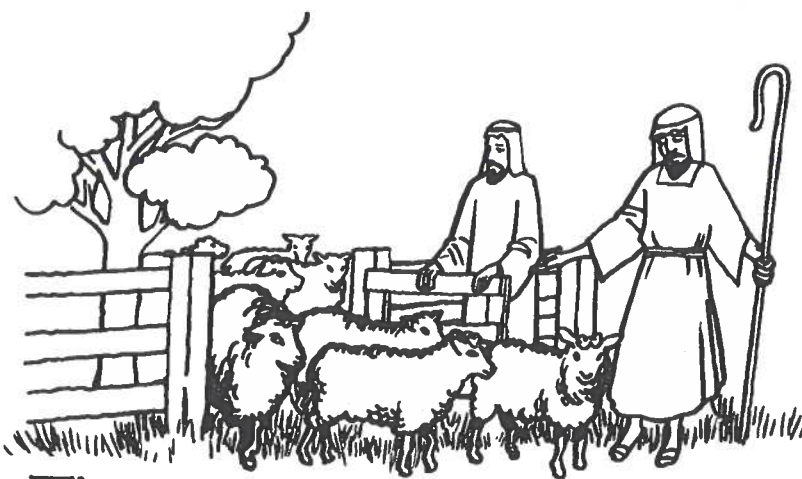
Eyewitnesses are now interviewed extensively and transcripts made. If all goes well, a *decree of validity* is added to your cause by the CCS. The most crucial step follows: composing the *positio*, an enormous document including a comprehensive biography and the written testimonies. Three bodies of experts at the CCS comb through the *positio*: historians, theologians, and prelates. If your cause survives their scrutiny, you'll either be fast-tracked to beatification as a martyr, or attain the title Venerable for your heroic virtues.

Once you're venerable, you only need one exceptional miracle attributed to your intercession (vetted by the CCS) to become beatified and earn the title Blessed. From beatification to sainthood takes one more proven exceptional miracle. After your canonization, don't expect to retire. People will be asking for your help forever.

Scriptures: Leviticus 20:7; Deuteronomy 7:6; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:17; 6:11; Ephesians 2:21-22; Colossians 3:12-14; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; 5:23; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 2:9



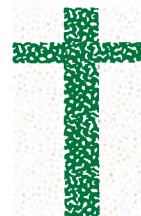
Today's potential saints face a ladder of steps to be entered into the canon.



The sheep hear his voice
JN. 10:3

Kids Helping Kids at St. James

The students at St. James will be selling raffle tickets for a Lottery Basket before and after Mass on April 26 and before Mass on May 3rd. Tickets will cost \$5.00 for 1 or 6 for \$20.00. Winner will be picked after Mass on May 3rd. All proceeds go to the Ronald McDonald House. Thanks for your Support!



**FOLLOW THE
VOICE OF
THE LORD**

The Sunday Gospel in Everyday English

“Let me set this before you as plainly as I can. If a person climbs over or through the fence of a sheep pen instead of going through the gate, you know he’s up to no good—a sheep rustler! The shepherd walks right up to the gate. The gatekeeper opens the gate to him and the sheep recognize his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he gets them all out, he leads them and they follow because they are familiar with his voice. They won’t follow a stranger’s voice but will scatter because they aren’t used to the sound of it.”

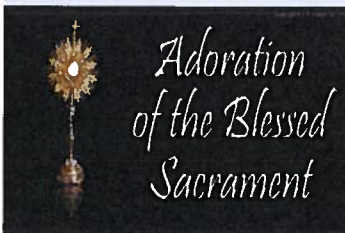
Jesus told this simple story, but they had no idea what he was talking about. So he tried again. “I’ll be explicit, then. I am the Gate for the sheep. All those others are up to no good—sheep stealers, every one of them. But the sheep didn’t listen to them. I am the Gate. Anyone who goes through me will be cared for—will freely go in and out, and find pasture. A thief is only there to steal and kill and destroy. I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of (*from John 10*).

Reflection- Conscience

It praises, it blames, it promises, it threatens, it implies a future and it witnesses to the unseen.

It is more than a human’s own self. The person has no power over it, or only with extreme difficulty; he may not make it, he cannot destroy it, he may refuse to use it, but it remains...

Its very existence throws us out of ourselves, to go seek him in the heights and depths, whose Voice it is.



First Friday Mass and Adoration will be at SJ on May 1

Venerable Norbert McAuliffe on the Blessed Sacrament

“There is no other food for the soul than the Eucharist.”

Ministry Alert! Ministry Alert! Ministry Alert! There are times when the printed monthly ministry list is different than what is printed in the bulletin for the following week. After the monthly one is printed, concerns/needs are often brought to our attention in the office which results in changes being made. We hope you are able to check the bulletin for the most current listings and that you are able/willing to make the necessary changes. Thank you for serving our parishes.

Questions Catholics Ask

Why did Peter return and Judas did not?

Judas, for reasons we can only partially understand, steps outside of it. That is the real tragedy of his story.

At the Last Supper, Peter and Judas were sitting in the same room. They heard the same words from Christ, shared in the same moment, and within hours, both would fail Him in profound ways. One would deny Him three times, and the other would hand Him over. From the outside, their sins are different, but the more revealing part of the story is not what they did, but what they did afterward.

Peter’s failure is deeply human. He had promised loyalty, even to death, and yet when confronted, he denied even knowing Christ. When he realized what he had done, he wept. There is no attempt to justify himself, no attempt to explain it away. His sorrow is real, and it is painful. But it does not lead him away from Christ. It leaves him open. Even in his failure, he remains within reach of mercy.

Judas also experiences something after his betrayal. Scripture tells us that he returned the silver and admitted that he had sinned. But his sorrow takes a different direction. Instead of turning back toward Christ, he turns inward. What he feels does not lead him to hope, but to despair. The difference between the two is not that one sinned and the other did not, but that one trusted in mercy and the other did not.

There is something in this that applies directly to us. At some level, we should feel sorrow and be ashamed of our sins. It would be strange if we did not feel some discomfort in recognizing that we have turned away from God. But there is a kind of shame that does not lead us back to Him. It settles in, grows, and eventually keeps us from bringing our sins to God at all. This kind of “undue shame” leads us to hide from God rather than allow Him to heal what we have done

At that point, something subtle has shifted. We are no longer simply sorry. We begin to believe, even if we would not say it outright, that what we have done is beyond forgiveness. That our sin is somehow greater than God’s mercy. But as the tradition reminds us, this is not humility. It is a hidden form of pride. To believe that our actions can outweigh the Cross is to place ourselves above the very mercy we claim to need.

Peter does not do this. He does not deny his sin, but he also does not deny Christ’s mercy. Judas, for reasons we can only partially understand, steps outside of it. That is the real tragedy of his story. Mercy was not withheld from him. It was refused.

That is where this becomes more than a reflection on two figures from the Gospel. It becomes a question for us. Most of us will never betray Christ in the way Judas did, but we do experience the same hesitation, the same temptation to hold something back. There are moments when it feels easier to carry a sin ourselves than to bring it honestly before God. There are moments when we delay, avoid, or quietly convince ourselves that we will deal with it later.

But the pattern remains the same. Both men failed—both experienced sorrow. The difference came in what they did next. One returned, even in weakness. The other did not.

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April 26, 2026

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:14a, 36-41 | 1 Pt 2:20b-25 | Jn 10:1-10

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

Today's readings invite us to reflect on our willingness to hear the voice of the Lord, especially when he speaks a word that will convict our hearts. In the first reading, Peter stands up and proclaims Christ crucified and risen, and some three thousand people who heard this were "cut to the heart" and were baptized. Peter's message was not an easy one to hear; he was, in part, reminding them that they had put Jesus to death. But something about Peter's words made it clear that he was speaking the truth. And they repented. They recognized, as we hear in our second reading, that they "had gone astray like sheep" but now they "have returned to the shepherd and guardian of [their] souls." As we seek to grow in discipleship, may we learn to recognize the Lord's voice in our lives, especially when he speaks a word that convicts our hearts, because it is only through him that we find abundant life.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Our Gospel tells us that the sheep recognize the shepherd's voice. We "sheep" who know the Lord have the awesome task of helping others to come to know his voice. One of the most powerful tools we have at our disposal in the work of evangelizing is simply sharing about our own walk with the Lord. Take some time to talk with someone about the ways you recognize the Lord's voice in your life. Those for whom a relationship with God seems far-fetched or difficult can draw great encouragement from hearing about what that relationship looks like in your own life. Often, our own sharing can make it clear that it is possible to hear and communicate with God in a personal and life-changing way, leading them to seek that in their own life.

REFLECT

St. Ignatius of Loyola outlined several rules for the "discernment of spirits," a way of recognizing God's movement in our hearts. A simple summary of the rules says that when we stray from the Lord, the Spirit convicts our hearts, drawing us to repentance. When we are moving toward the Lord, the Spirit encourages our growth toward holiness by gifts of his peace and consolation. Spend some time reflecting on this current phase of your spiritual life. How is the voice of the Good Shepherd speaking to draw you toward his abundant life?

SPIRITUALITY

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

John 10:14

R. Alleluia, alleluia.
I am the good shepherd, says the Lord;
I know my sheep, and mine know me.
R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel John 10:1-10; L49A

Jesus said:

“Amen, amen, I say to you,
whoever does not enter a sheepfold
through the gate
but climbs over elsewhere is a thief
and a robber.

But whoever enters through the gate is
the shepherd of the sheep.

The gatekeeper opens it for him, and
the sheep hear his voice,
as the shepherd calls his own sheep
by name and leads them out.

When he has driven out all his own,
he walks ahead of them, and the sheep
follow him,

because they recognize his voice.

But they will not follow a stranger;
they will run away from him,
because they do not recognize the voice
of strangers.”

Although Jesus used this figure of
speech,
the Pharisees did not realize what he
was trying to tell them.

So Jesus said again, “Amen, amen, I say
to you,

I am the gate for the sheep.

All who came before me are thieves and
robbers,

but the sheep did not listen to them.

I am the gate.

Whoever enters through me will be
saved,

and will come in and go out and find
pasture.

A thief comes only to steal and slaughter
and destroy;

I came so that they might have life and
have it more abundantly.”

Reflecting on the Gospel

On an old television quiz show called *Let's Make a Deal*, contestants could choose to trade a modest prize for a chance at a grand prize. Suspense built as they picked door number one, door number two, or door number three. Only one door had the big prize—a trip, a car, or a bunch of money. The other two concealed a “zonk,” or gag prize. Sometimes a contestant got lucky and chose the door with the big prize.

In today's gospel, Jesus speaks of himself as the door that leads to the most desirable of gifts. Unlike the quiz show designers, who for their own gain might deliberately try to mask the location of the grand prize, Jesus shows himself openly to be the gateway, and declares his desire for all to choose this door.

At the beginning of the reading, Jesus speaks about himself as the shepherd of the sheep who enters the sheepfold properly, through the gate. He contrasts himself to the thief or the robber who scrambles into the sheepfold some other way, and who will have no success in getting the sheep to follow him out. The thief is a stranger and the sheep will run away from him; they do not recognize his voice. Later in this chapter of John's Gospel, Jesus elaborates further the image of himself as the Good Shepherd, but in today's gospel the focus is on himself as the gate for the sheep.

An important aspect of this image is that the gate swings in two directions. Not only do Jesus's followers come into the sheepfold through him but they are also led out by him. All who are led in by him find in the embrace of the believing community a place of refreshment and rest, a space where wounds can be healed, and where all can be nourished by the word and at the table. But whoever enters is also led out to find pasture, the verdant space of mission. Jesus is the gate that opens in and out.

Later in the gospel, the image of the open gate takes another form. Jesus's open side, pierced by the soldier's lance (19:34), also beckons us to enter, so that we can then go out in the power of his risen life. All who enter into his way of life, which offers the most forgotten and downtrodden verdant pastures of plenty, risk reprisals from those who try to enter another way.

The open tomb on Easter morning completes the image. The gates of death have been breached by the One who came so that all “might have life and have it more abundantly” (10:10). The door now lies wide open for all. The invitation to enter through Jesus and his way of life is difficult for some to accept. The Pharisees, representing those who choose not to understand, do not accept Jesus's invitation to come in and go out with him and through him. They think there is another way over or around the gate. But there is no trick to choosing the correct door. It stands wide open before us.

