

# COLORFUL SCRIPTURE

April 21, 2024

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## The Good Shepherd Calls Us to Follow Him

Based on: Acts 4:8-12; 1 Jn 3:1-2; Jn 10:11-18

By Marianne Couture

Today's readings highlight God's unending love, care and concern for us – his children.

In the Gospel, Jesus says he is the Good Shepherd. Sheep are timid, gentle animals that live together in flocks and depend on people for protection. A good shepherd takes care of his sheep by giving them grazing pasture, water and protection from thieves, bad weather and other animals. A good shepherd knows each sheep. When he calls, they follow because they know his voice and trust him. A good shepherd is even willing to die so that the sheep might live.

Jesus says a hired man paid to take care of sheep will not give the same care as the shepherd because the sheep don't belong to him. When a wolf comes near the sheep, the hired man cares more about saving himself than about saving the sheep.

Jesus uses the example of shepherd and sheep to explain his love and care for us. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, loves us, knows each of us by name, knows all about us, cares for our needs and watches over us. He never abandons us. He calls us to follow him.

In the Gospel, Jesus is not referring to cute little animals grazing in the field. He is referring to the poor, homeless, hungry, sick, lonely and needy members of his flock.

What Jesus said to Peter, he says to us, "If you love me, feed my sheep" (Jn 21:17).

You don't have to do big things. You can be a good shepherd, too, by:

- Forgiving anyone who may have hurt you.
- Visiting the sick.
- Sharing your toys and spending time with younger brothers/sisters.
- Being a friend to a classmate who others do not pay attention to.
- Helping Mom and Dad with chores without being asked.
- Praying for others.
- Giving some canned goods to your parish's food pantry.

Jesus, help us to love you by loving those you put into our life; help us to follow you as our Leader, our Good Shepherd!

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