

*FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER - C - APRIL, 17, 2016*

*JESUS SAID: "MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE; I KNOW THEM, AND THEY FOLLOW ME."*

*OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH ANIMALS IS INTERESTING, ISN'T IT?*

*TO BE SURE, IT IS DIFFERENT FOR EACH OF US....*

*FOR EXAMPLE, I RECALL BEING AT A WORKSHOP AND FOR THE ICEBREAKER WE WERE ASKED TO SELECT AN ANIMAL THAT WE MOST RESEMBLE - TELL THE PERSON NEXT TO US THE ANIMAL WE HAVE CHOSEN AND OUR REASONS....*

*WHAT ANIMAL WOULD YOU CHOOSE THAT IS MOST LIKE YOU AND WHY?*

*E.G. I DON'T REMEMBER THE ANIMAL I PICKED, HOWEVER, I DO REMEMBER SOMEONE ONCE TOLD ME THAT I REMINDED THEM OF A BLUE HERON I.E. RATHER TALL, THIN AND, I GUESS, LOPING OR GANLY....*

*WHAT ANIMAL IS LIKE YOU?*

*WHAT ANIMAL DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH?*

*NOT JUST PHYSICALLY - BUT PERHAPS IN TERMS OF PERSONAL QUALITIES, E.G. SOME PEOPLE LOVE CATS - THINK OF THEMSELVES AS BEING LIKE A CAT -. LOVABLE, QUIET, GENTLE, BUT PERHAPS CUNNING I FIND IT INTERESTING HOW SPORTS TEAMS/ORGANIZATIONS PICK AN ANIMAL MASCOT ON THE BASIS OF SOME DESIRABLE QUALITIES...*

*E.G. THE DAYTON DRAGONS.....*

*A DRAGON IS POWERFUL AND FEARSOME, LOOKOUT, HERE WE COME !*

*WE ARE STRONG AND FEARFUL.....APPEAL TO CHILDREN & FAMILIES*

*MY HIGH SCHOOL - CHAMINADE, NOW C-J EAGLES.....*

*EAGLES ARE STRONG AND POWERFUL, HAVE A KEEN EYE  
OUR COUNTRY HAS THE BALD EAGLE AS ITS ANIMAL TO REPRESENT  
ITSELF - AMONG ALL THE BIRDS PROBABLY THE STRONGEST AND MOST  
POWERFUL - LOOKING, AT LEAST, IT CAN SWOOP DOWN AND CAPTURE ITS  
PREY...*

*E..G SAN JOSE SHARKS BACK IN THE '80'S I THINK WERE THE FIRST TEAM  
THAT I KNOW OF THAT PICKED THEIR MASCOT AND COLORS SOLELY ON  
THE BASIS OF MARKETING CONSIDERATIONS....*

*I.E. BLACK AND TEAL - AND SHARKS (JAWS)*

*DESPITE BEING LAST IN THE STANDINGS AND A NEW FRANCISE THEY  
WERE SECOND ONLY TO THE CHICAGO BULLS AND MICHAEL JORDAN  
IN THE 80'S IN TERMS OF SALES OF SPORTS APPAREL*

*BUT MY POINT HERE IS THAT MOST OF US, NO DOUBT, WOULD NOT PICK  
AN ANIMAL THAT IS WEAK AND VULNERABLE.....*

*NOT PARTICULARLY INTELLIGENT AND VERY DEPENDENT*

*E.G. A SHEEP.....*

*THE ONLY SPORTS TEAM THAT I CAN THINK OF THAT HAS DONE THAT - IS  
THE CHICAGO CUBS ---- A YOUNG BEAR*

*MOST SPORTS CLUBS PICK VERY STRONG ANIMALS, E..G SHARKS, LIONS,  
BENGALS, EAGLES, JAGUARS.....*

*A CUB, BEING A YOUNG BEAR, IS RATHER VULNERABLE, DEFENSELESS....*

*AS A RESULT, YOU SEE WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM - THEY HAVEN'T WON  
THE WORLD SERIES IN OVER A HUNDRED YEARS....*

*THERE IS A REASON WHY THEY ARE THE DAYTON DRAGONS AND NOT THE DAYTON SHEEP...*

*WE USUALLY DON'T CHOOSE WEAK, VULNERABLE, DEPENDENT AND DEFENSSELESS ANIMALS TO REPRESENT US.....LIKE SHEEP*

*SHEEP ALSO LACK BOTH THE STRENGTH AND THE DISPOSITION TO ATTACK AND FIGHT...*

*THEY DO NOT HAVE THE SPEED TO FLEE AND ESCAPE...*

*BUT SACRED SCRIPTURE HAS DONE EXACTLY THAT - EVEN THOUGH WE MAY NOT LIKE IT....*

*SACRED SCRIPTURE HAS SELECTED SHEEP TO REPRESENT US - THE PEOPLE OF GOD...*

*AND SACRED SCRIPTURE HAS A WISDOM THAT IS TIMELESS IF WE ARE OPEN TO IT....*

*IT REPRESENTS THE WISDOM OF THE AGES - I GUESS WE COULD SAY NOT TO MENTION A DIVINE WISDOM....*

*WE NEED TO PAY ATTENTION - EVEN IF OUR FIRST REACTION IS: NO, THANK YOU!!! NO WAY!*

*NO DOUBT, IT DOESN'T SQUARE WITH OUR SELF-IMAGE...*

*WHICH IS STRONG AND BRAVE, SWIFT, POWERFUL AND CUNNING....AND THAT IS FINE - WE CERTAINLY NEED THOSE QUALITIES ALSO AT TIMES..*

*BUT THE TRUTH IS THAT WE ARE ALSO QUITE VULNERABLE.....*

*PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY*

*I GUESS WE REALIZE THAT PARTICULARLY AS WE AGE....*

***WE DEVELOP PHYSICAL AILMENTS***

***BUT IT IS NOT ONLY PHYSICAL VULNERABILITY...***

***OUR HEARTS CAN BE BROKEN.....OUR SPIRITS CAN BE BROKEN.....***

***PARTICULARLY AS A CHILD.....BUT AS ADULTS ALSO.***

***WE ARE VULNERABLE - LIKE SHEEP***

***AND MOST IMPORTANTLY WE NEED THE HELP OF SOMEONE WHO CARES***

***ABOUT US AND IS ABLE TO CARE FOR US - JUST LIKE SHEEP***

***ALTHO IT IS VERY DIFFICULT FOR US TO ADMIT OUR NEED TO BE CARED***

***FOR - LIKE SHEEP....***

***PROBAAABLY IF I WAS BACK OUT AT MERCY SIENA THE COMMUNITY***

***WOULD BE MORE OPEN TO THINKING OF THEMSELVES AS SHEEP....***

***BUT HERE COMES THE GOOD NEWS!!! TODAY!!!!!***

***WE DO HAVE SOMEONE WHO CARES FOR US....***

***WE ARE LOVED AND ACCEPTED AS WE ARE..***

***IT IS NOT ALWAYS EASY TO ACCEPT ---- WE CAN FEEL SO LONELY***

***WE DO HAVE A LOVING AND CARING SHEPHERD - A VERY GOOD***

***SHEPHERD...***

***OF COURSE, WE NEED TO SPEND SOME TIME IN PRAYER***

***ACKNOWLEDGING OUR VULNERABILITY AS SHEEP AND OUR NEED TO BE***

***CARED FOR BY THE GOOD SHEPHERD....***

***ALONG THOSE LINES, I HAVE A SUGGESTION....***

***SOMETIME IN THE NEXT WEEK OR SO GO TO THE INTERNET....***

***DO A SEARCH FOR:***

***JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH'S "SHEEP MAY SAFELY GRAZE"***  
***CANATATA # 208***

***SUB TITLE - 72 NAMES OF GOD***

***IT WAS WRITTEN IN 1713 .***

***THERE ARE SEVERAL BUT THAT ONE WILL GIVE YOU BEAUTIFUL  
SCENERY FROM AROUND THE WORLD OF SHEEP GRAZING SAFELY -  
KEEP TRYING - YOU MAY HAVE TO TAKE IN A 15 SECOND COMMERCIAL  
FOR CHARMIN TISSUE FIRST***

***BUT YOU MAY FIND IT EXTREMELY RELAXING AND COMFORTING FOR 5  
MINUTES -***

***DEEPEN YOUR CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN THE GOOD SHEPHERD...  
5 MINUTES - VERY BEAUTIFUL MUSIC AND SCENERY - VERY PRAYERFUL..  
STUNNING VIDEO.....I HIGHLY RECOMMEND IT -***

***OVER A 1,000 LIKES AND 30 OR SO DISLIKES  
CHECK IT OUT - SEE IF YOU CAN HAVE SOME EMPATHY FOR THOSE  
SHEEP AND ACKNOWLEDGE THAT OUR SITUATION MAY NOT BE  
COMPLETELY UNLIKE THAT OF THE SHEEP -  
AND RELAX AND ENJOY IT PRAYERFULLY***