

June 18, 2023



THE GOOD SHEPHERD

By Sr. Jane DeLisle, CSJ

An Excerpt From Today's Gospel

At the sight of the crowds, Jesus' heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest." Then he summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to drive them out and to cure every disease and every illness.

MATTHEW 9:36-10:1

Reflection

Happy Father's Day! For many of us, our fathers are now with God. May they rest in peace and know God's great loving embrace and mercy. For others, their

Dads are very much alive and bearing the responsibilities of parenthood. While some entered the relationship with their children with enthusiasm, others struggled and may have been more absent.

Whatever the case, today's Gospel from St. Matthew offers us "the good shepherd" as an apt image of the qualities of fathers. We pray that the "master of the harvest" sends good men to be fathers who labor as a good shepherd for their children, as God intends.

A father's role in a child's life is significant. Like St. Joseph, who fulfilled this responsibility and role in Jesus' life, may our fathers -- young or old -- recognize and rise to the occasion in the world today. Let us pray for our own dads and fathers everywhere.

May all fathers have the wisdom to properly nurture, love, teach, and care for their children.

May all fathers have the courage to witness the steadfast love of God, the Father, for their children.

May all fathers greet their new-born children with affection, delight, and tenderness.

May all fathers be a dedicated shepherd of kindness, compassion, and mercy in the lives of their children.

May all fathers care for their children with gentle strength and reassurance in sickness and in health, in happiness and sorrow, and in the valley of ordinary living.

May all fathers be a faithful witness of God's great love that is unconditional, all-inclusive, and self-giving in all circumstances.

May all fathers delight in, play with, and teach their children the ways of Jesus and the manner of St. Joseph -- protector, spiritual guide, and mentor in life's reality.

May all fathers protect and guide their children by the witness of their own lives well lived, and demonstrate how to apologize when mistakes are made, to forgive when emotional hurt or error is realized, and how to begin again in the face of life's trials that are part of being human.

May all fathers be emotionally and physically present and patient with the natural ups and downs of growing up, growing older, and sorting through what is life-giving and what is death-dealing.

And may sons and daughters respect, love, and honor their fathers throughout their lives.



An Irish shepherd
Photo by Sr. Jane DeLisle, CSJ

For Pondering

- What is a good and favorite memory of my father?
- For what am I grateful?
- For what do I apologize?
- For what do I mourn that was missing from my relationship with my father?

For Prayer

Loving and gracious God, who is Father of us all, I pray for my father.

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