

A NOTE FROM FATHER EICKHOFF

Today is Good Shepard Sunday in the Church. This Sunday takes its title from the Gospel reading today which comes to us from the Gospel of John. In it, Jesus remarks that He is the “Good Shepard,” the one who will always stand by and protect those who are under His care. Obviously, it is a great comfort to us to know that we have such a guardian for we so often need protection and help against all the forces surrounding us that would seek to do us harm. Thus, the image of the of the Good Shepard is a powerful one in our minds. We often think of Jesus as the Good Shepard. I also think that it doesn’t hurt that the image of the Good Shepard makes for great artistic representation in paintings, sculpture, and song. Perhaps it is because it is so easy to imagine a lively scene in which Jesus is the Good Shepard that we don’t think so often of Jesus as another title that we hear in today’s scripture readings. Today in the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, Jesus is described as the “cornerstone.” Now I will admit it is probably difficult to create a lively artistic image of a cornerstone. Which is why I suspect we don’t often think of Jesus as the cornerstone, but I want to explain why we should take the time to consider Jesus as the cornerstone.

Consider how important the cornerstone is to a building. Without a solid foundation the entire building would collapse into a heap of broken stone and wood. In the same way without Jesus Christ our lives run the grave risk of collapsing into ruin. Without the teaching of Christ, we human beings so often end up wrecking our lives and the lives of others by our selfish actions. We need a solid foundation for our actions. And that solid foundation, the foundation that should form the very basis and core of how we act in our lives, is Jesus Christ. So often when we today think of cornerstones, we think of a ceremonial stone that is embedded into the wall but does not serve a practical purpose of holding the building up. This is the wrong way to think about Christ. The role of Jesus should not be some outward marker of status that is nice to look upon but does not have a practical effect. Rather, Jesus Christ should be foundational to whatever role in which He is there from a building to a human life. If we display our Christian identity to the world that is good. Better still, is to first make sure that Christ is the foundation of our human life even if that foundation – the cornerstone – is not visible to human eyes.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Stephen Eickhoff
Pastor