

**Good Shepherd Sunday, 2010**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter, Luke**  
**Annual Catholic Appeal Education Sunday**

Good morning. It's a pleasure once again to be with you. Today is Good Shepherd Sunday, always on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter time, and as I'm sure you know, the term "shepherd" is a term many use for the bishops of our Church, that's why they carry around that crosier, that "shepherd's staff." And so, when I say the words "good shepherd" I'm also pretty sure that reminds most of you about the troubles that many of our Catholic shepherds have had internationally over the past several weeks, including Pope Benedict himself.

I can't let that "Good Shepherd" phrase hang out there, in some kind of inglorious irony. I was very pleased that Fr. Tim last week reminded us that we in the US Church faced this trouble 8 years ago, and that Seattle has for 25 years been an example for the rest of the country. We've had our problems here, but the policies and programs established here have created a climate in this Archdiocese where everyone knows that this criminal activity will not be tolerated. But what is unwinding right now in Europe and other places across the globe... it pains us all!

I've talked with many of you about this, and I know you talk with each other and with your neighbors. We all grieve for the victims... but Catholics everywhere are also hurt, and angry, and grieve because our Church been betrayed by those bishops who knew this activity was going on but kept it quiet, and thus allowed it to happen again. And this hurt will not begin to heal until our Pope, whatever he knew at the time – I don't know what he knew – this hurt will not heal until Pope Benedict publicly says that he is deeply sorry and personally *ashamed* that this happened within his own Archdiocese when he was Archbishop of Munich, and that as pope he will do whatever is in his power to make sure that no one ever abuses the position of shepherd again.

Now, I know I've gotten you all riled up here this morning. I'm not going to say any more about this right now. I've posted a lot about this on my blog late Friday night .... I welcome your comments there.

I think this needed to be said, in the context of Good Shepherd Sunday, but now I want to go somewhere else with this. You see, my shepherd is *not* any bishop. My shepherd is not pope. My shepherd is Jesus Christ. He's the Good Shepherd. It's HIS voice I listen for – it is His voice I know and follow. And my faith, my life, is to be a disciple of Jesus, to learn to serve others as he did. That's what I've given my life for. But it's not something I could do alone -- even if I wanted to. It's something I do with you – and with you – and with you – and with you. This is OUR faith. We live it out together, in this parish, and within this diocese. The works of the Church here at St. Bridget are not Fr. Tim's – they're ours. Whatever the talents of the pastor, the deacon, or the staff -- it is all only as good as we all make it, our schools, our regular prayer & worship here, our outreach to others, our efforts to be well-formed in our faith – even our Auction. If we're half-hearted in supporting these things, *they don't work*.

And the diocese is exactly the same way. Together as a diocese we can follow Jesus and serve others in ways that no individual parish can do alone. It's the wider Church, and we have an important role in our wider community. Today also just happens to be what

they call “Education Sunday,” for the Annual Catholic Appeal. Fr. Tim asked me to talk about the Appeal & what it goes for, and truthfully, this is not a “chore” at all. Read this booklet that’s in our bulletin today, about what the Appeal supports.

**Catholic Community Services** is the largest service provider in the state, outside of state government itself, with 12 family centers in communities all over Western Washington, and 3 other specialized service systems besides.

**Catholic Housing Services** provides permanent housing in 45 different sites, places like Sacred Heart Shelter, the Matt Talbot Center, the St. Martin de Porres Shelter, Benedict House, Rose of Lima House, on and on.

Our **Schools Department** supports 59 Catholic elementary schools and 9 Catholic high schools, and does it far more cost-effectively than any government administration around. This appeal supports **Campus Ministry** Centers; **CYO** and other youth and young adult activities; pastoral care programs – you probably didn’t know that we now have a part-time bi-lingual Catholic chaplain at Children’s Hospital that reaches families in ways that I’ve never been able to. This and all the rest, thanks to the Annual Catholic Appeal.

And the Appeal supports the internal structures of our Catholic community too, in very vital ways. It provides seminarian training for young candidates like EJ, who has been with us this past year; deacon formation and training, so that there’ll be people to replace me somewhere down the line; priest services and continuing formation of clergy, so veterans like Fr. Tim will continually get renewed and refreshed. The Appeal meets our moral and legal obligations to retired priests and sisters – people like Fr. Lane, Fr. Quigg, Fr. Connole, Fr. Morelli, the Cabrini sisters, the Tacoma Dominicans, and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace – this Appeal supports the people who have been there for us, in the times we need to be there for them.

All this, and a lot more – 63 different programs. I say again, read this booklet, and be proud of what we can do together as followers of Jesus, to build the kingdom of God. It’s what we *can* do – but we do have to *want* to do it.

This Tuesday, our parish office will mail out a letter to you for this appeal. In fact, you may already have gotten a letter and an envelope from the Archbishop, about the Annual Catholic Appeal – I did, just last Monday. You may not know this, but the Chancery has cut three million dollars from its central budget in the last three years, and faces still another cut of \$450,000 this time around. In the Archbishop’s letter, he acknowledged the financial difficulties many people face – but he still asked me to consider increasing my contribution by \$50. I’ve made the decision to increase my own pledge this year by \$200, and I hope you will join me inasmuch as you are able.

I think that our first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, the Easter Church, said it very well, when Paul speaks these words for the Lord: ***“I have made you a light to the world, that you may be an instrument of salvation to the ends of the earth.”*** Let’s together be that light, that instrument of God’s love and salvation to the rest of Western Washington and beyond.

Deacon Denny Duffell  
April 25, 2010