

**Homily - 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, B 2018**  
**by Rev. Bob Schramm, OSFS**

I got word recently that a couple who have been coming here  
on Sundays for some time  
have decided not to return  
because they're not happy with the politics here.

I have to say, hearing that saddened me.  
Now you might be thinking,  
"So what does that have to do with what we just heard in the Scripture?"

To my admittedly limited way of seeing things,  
it has a lot to do with today's Scriptures.

Jeremiah, in the first reading, thunders against shepherds  
who "scatter the sheep and drive them away."

The person who writes in St. Paul's name to the Church at Ephesus  
speaks of Christ, the Shepherd, breaking down the dividing wall of enmity,  
creating one new person in place of two, establishing peace.

There was a huge rift at the time that letter was written  
between Christians who were Jews  
and those who were non-Jewish, the so-called "pagans."

And Jesus, in the Gospel we just heard  
was "moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd."

The phrase about Jesus being "moved with pity"  
is much stronger in the original Greek  
Something like, "His insides were wrenched at the sight of them."  
He was moved with compassion, a willingness  
to suffer with his sisters and brothers.

So, Jesus is teaching here, by showing his followers,  
that if they are to carry on his mission, his work of shepherding  
they had to be in touch with—feel—the real needs of people.

I talk regularly about how baptism is a commission for ALL OF US  
to shepherd in the name of Christ.

A quote I found this week says it well:  
"Surely no one of us is so naive as to suppose  
that God's thundering against miserable shepherds  
is meant only for priests who aren't good enough."  
That thundering is a warning for each one of us.  
Every person has many of God's needy ones, little ones in her or his care.

Some folks who demonstrated shepherding:  
IHM aides with Luann Brooks  
Kevin and Melanie Eccles as young parents  
David Wilder shepherding his wife Jackie to “the other side.”

Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg spoke of  
"government of the people, by the people, for the people.”

The Second Vatican Council, in its document  
"The Church in the Modern World," says:

“The joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time,  
especially of those who are poor or afflicted,  
are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as  
well.”  
(Gaudium et Spes #1)

Gandhi, the great Indian and world leader, once said,  
“Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

Today’s liturgy tells us to become the shepherds our world needs.

So that brings us back to my sadness about our friends who have left us  
because they are "unhappy with the politics here.”

I believe there is a very important distinction  
between being political and being partisan.

Partisan has to do with taking sides politically – republican, democrat.  
My intention is to never be partisan when I preach.

Politics, on the other hand, is really a recognition that we are all in it together.  
The task of POLITICS is working things out among different groups  
so the needs of all are addressed  
and the common good is served.  
The word is connected to the word POLITE.

There really is no such thing as being "nonpolitical"  
Everything we do either affirms or critiques the way things are.

So, if you find yourself disagreeing,  
rather than walk away, the reasonable and healthy thing is to talk it out.

The Eucharist is a profoundly political act.  
We will spend the next six Sundays exploring the meaning of Eucharist  
from the perspective of John’s Gospel.