

**May 12, 2025**  
**Gail Addis, IHM**  
**John 10:1-10**

We pray in thanksgiving for Pope Leo XIV's election and hope that he will follow the example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, as he leads all God's people and the whole Earth community into the future.

As we know, all names for God are metaphors. In today's Gospel, Jesus describes himself using two images or names. He is both shepherd and gate. Shepherd and sheep were a well-known metaphor in the Hebrew Scriptures and would have been readily understood by his listeners. John is telling us that in Jesus, God has become the Good Shepherd.

In the Middle East, a shepherd had an intimate relationship with the sheep. They spent a lot of time together. The sheep knew the shepherd's voice and would only follow that voice. The shepherd nurtured, protected, watched over and went ahead leading his flock. He would know when one was missing.

Jesus warns that not all shepherds are good; some are looking out only for themselves and not for those in their care. Over the years, there were a number of bad shepherds in Israel, including some religious leaders who were there listening to Jesus.

In contrast, Jesus is the good shepherd, knows his own by name and leads them. He has come to give those who follow him an abundant life. What is different is that abundant life will come from this shepherd laying down his own life for his sheep in an act of total, loving self-sacrifice.

We follow Jesus to abundant life when we, like him, empty ourselves and cling to nothing. We are still in the Easter season, new life and resurrection, but new life comes only in letting go, so something else can be born. It's the pattern of everything in the universe and doesn't cease with the celebration of Easter.

So, what might not clinging mean as we face the lack of good shepherds in our political arena? Maybe it means letting go of our strongly held opinions, evaluations, judgments, and demonizing of those with whom we disagree, so we don't make them "the other."

Perhaps it means not hanging onto our feelings of powerlessness, so we excuse ourselves from doing anything to confront the evil around us.

Maybe we let go of trying to do everything by ourselves and join with others who are also working to bring about the reign of God.

Are we being invited to give up the attitude of "I don't know what to do" **and just do something positive for others**, wherever we are, with those in our midst?

We can no longer cling to ignorance around issues but must read, study, reflect and pray to learn how best to respond.

English playwright and poet, Christopher Fry, in his work, *A Sleep of Prisoners*, writes: "Thank God our time is now when wrong comes up to face us everywhere, never to leave us till we take the longest stride of soul men (women) ever took. Affairs are now soul size. The enterprise is an exploration into God."

When we can let go of **clinging**, we will experience resurrection and life in abundance promised by Jesus, because we will be like him.