

## Surrender to God's Presence

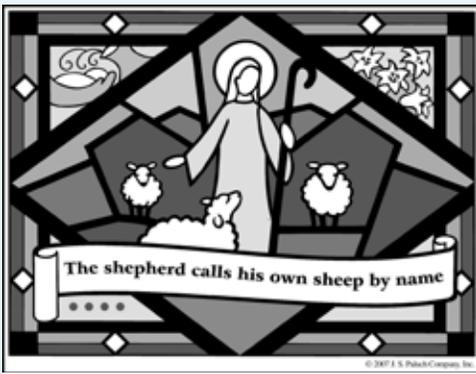
Life is all about movement, whether it be physical or psychological. Staying in the same place too long makes us stagnant and afraid of change.

This past week, my father has had to move from independent living to assisted living; this move is not welcome, nor is it being accepted. But life and its realities are setting in.

Change and movement are inevitable. When the movement means a new job or home or relationship, it usually is welcomed and joyful; if the movement means letting go, particularly of independence, it is rarely welcomed.

The Good Shepherd leads his people ...us...from pasture to pasture, sometimes through dark valleys of unwanted change to mountains of new opportunity. Life is truly a mixed bag, but the Good Shepherd, Jesus, is leading us...moving us by transforming our hearts to love and forgive, and to become the means for others to “have life and have it in abundance.” Yes, we are called to live abundantly and we live life to the fullest when we give life away...we become joyful when we give joy away.

How happy and at peace we are is determined by how we allow ourselves to be led or moved by the Good Shepherd



**The most significant movement in our hearts is the way we experience God; how we love God; how we surrender to God's Presence; how we ourselves become the good Shepherd. And we do that by becoming a door that others can walk through and be refreshed and renewed.**

and, in following Him, how our own witness and life becomes a “gateway” for others to find and experience life.

I've learned through my parents that as we grow, life is all about change and transformation. Letting go becomes the key to accepting the limitations that come our way.

As Jesus leads us from one pasture to another...we need to let go of the very realities that bring us independence and control: jobs, relationships, living arrangements and even our good health. In the various movements of life there is one abso-

lute and consistent reality: Christ, the One who guides; who never leaves our side; who is present in every movement and every letting go.

We are given this Eucharist as food for the journey through mountains and valleys... through the movements that transfigure and transform our hearts. The most significant movement in our hearts is the way we experience God; how we love God; how we surrender to God's Presence; how we ourselves become the good Shepherd. And we do that by becoming a door that others can walk through and be refreshed and renewed.

The question we all have to ask as we leave this Eucharist: do I want to be a door or gateway for another human being to find life. If I can honestly say “Yes” to that question, then I have allowed myself to let the Good Shepherd to move me to a deeper trust and surrender to grace.