

Easter II

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 April 2024

Preacher: Father Randall Russell

[0 : 00] Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

This morning I'd like to point out that right before our Lord Jesus Christ says, I am the Good Shepherd. He first says, I am the door. In John chapter 10 verse 7, which is not a part of this morning's gospel reading, but does come right before it.

Jesus says, I am the door of the sheep. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

And this morning we, of course, have a great example of how our Lord is the door for his sheep. In the baptism of little Willowmean Dawn Fisher.

For Willowmean's baptism into the body of Christ is her entrance into the kingdom of God. The beginning of her life of faith as a member of Christ's one holy Catholic and apostolic church.

[1 : 21] For again, our Lord Jesus Christ says, I am the door. But a door is just an entrance. Which is why our Lord goes on to say in John chapter 10 verse 11, this morning's gospel reading, I am also the Good Shepherd.

For our Lord wants for us all to not only enter through the door of his kingdom, but to continue to follow him in his kingdom as our Good Shepherd as well.

For sad is the fate of all those who enter through the door, but out of ignorance or outright defiance, never ascend past the foyer or the entryway into the eternal banquet hall of their heavenly father's home.

For they are like someone who, having just won the lottery, continue to live in absolute poverty, never enjoying any of the riches which they have been given, and never spending a dime to enrich anyone else's life either.

For at holy baptism all of God's riches are bestowed upon them, but it matters little, because they stubbornly refuse to grow in grace, refuse to live as the children of God, and grow up to wander away from the flock in order to become just another lonely lamb without the guidance of a Good Shepherd.

[2 : 56] May God preserve little Willow Mean, as well as us all, from such a miserable end. For again, our Lord Jesus Christ said, I am the door for the sheep.

If anyone enters by me, he will be saved. But then our Lord follows that up by saying, I am the Good Shepherd, and I lay down my life for the sheep.

And how does our Lord lay down his life for the sheep? He lays it down by giving it away. In other words, our Lord gives his life to the sheep so that his life of forgiveness and love and self-denial has now become our life of forgiveness and love and self-denial.

Or do you not know, writes St. Paul, that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

Therefore we were buried with him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

[4 : 16] So may all those who are baptized and enter through the door, which is Christ, also now follow their Good Shepherd, who is also Christ, for both aspects of our faith are necessary for salvation.

Entrance into the kingdom of God by virtue of baptism and the life we now live by faith and selfless acts of mercy and love as we follow both the lead and the example of our Good Shepherd.

Both are necessary. Therefore, to the newly baptized Willowmean Don Fisher, on behalf of this congregation, I say to you today, happy baptismal birthday and welcome to the family.

You have entered through the door. Now let us all follow our Good Shepherd together as brothers and sisters in Christ. For this morning our Lord tells us, and other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock and one shepherd.

For before St. Paul taught that there is but one Lord, one faith, one baptism, our Lord Jesus Christ first taught that there is but one Good Shepherd, one flock, and one door.

[5 : 54] In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia. Amen.