

# *Sunday Families* by **FR. TONY**

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## **Sunday Homily 04-26-2026**

In American English we have all kinds of idioms and sayings and wife's tales about work and how to do it correctly. A stitch in time, early to bed, cut corners. One that carries way more weight than the others is, "Garbage in. Garbage out." If you put substandard in, expect only substandard out. We call this weekend Good Shepherd Sunday. We continue our reading through the Acts of the Apostles and the First Letter of St. Peter, add the Good Shepherd Psalm and one of the Shepherd stories from the tenth chapter of Gospel of John. This year we hear about the sheepgate, next year the good Shepherd lays down his life, and the following year, that the sheep hear the voice of the Shepherd.

So though we call it Good Shepherd Sunday, this year we hear about Jesus as the gate. I am the Gate for the Sheep. He keeps the garbage out. I have only two images for this weekend's homily. What do we let in and what do we let out. A gate, a doorway, a passageway works both ways, and if Jesus is the barrier how do we interact with the swing of the gate to let the good in and keep the bad out, how do we let the good out and remove the bad. And just what happens with the fence around gets broken.

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Every single one of us here is broken. There is a part of our lives that is damaged, sometimes from our own making, sometimes from outside our control. Sometimes it is broken in such a way that he can still maintain our integrity as we try to patch it up. We have the tools and the ability to make the repairs. In the spiritual language of the Church we need a return to prayer, or the sacraments, or study. The wall, the fence is only damaged it isn't destroyed. It could have been caused by a million of little things. Words that caused hurts, or sins that are not habits or soul crushing, or actions of ourselves or others that are mended and soothed with heartfelt apology and forgiveness. Other times we are not able to make the repairs without assistance. Those words, actions, slights, attacks from without and within, that completely tear down all our defenses and all kinds of things leak out and seep in. These more damaging moments of trauma, pain, and sin require more in depth cure. Sometimes seeing a therapist, or medication, or spiritual director, or a more in-depth and lifegiving experience of the Sacrament of Reconciliation not just an expression of penance, the act of restoring a completely torn and broken relationship with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to that which was given at our Baptisms.

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We all bare the scars of our brokenness, sometimes they are healed, smooth and practically invisible, others are still wide open and weeping, still others are healed but the make left behind is still visible for all who look to see. These roadmaps of pain and suffering those healed and those awaiting the consolation of Jesus Christ are the evidence of the path of our Christian walk with our Savior and his people broken and healed.

Jesus is the sheepgate of salvation. Welcoming those into the fold who have chosen grace and to follow him. But we are responsible as well for the care of the sheepgate of our souls. What do we let in and what do we let out? And it is a mixed bag, because we are not the sinless one. We will let in those things that are for our good and for our ill. Just as we will allow words to pass our lips that are complete with consolation, compassion, and grace, and words that drip with accusation, neglect, and indifference. Just as we cannot escape and guard every single words that falls from our lips, or actions that our hands contemplate and complete, or the thoughts that race through our minds, we also cannot so completely guard and protect our hearts and souls that sin, pain, and death have no entrance there.

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But Jesus Christ is our constant companion. He calls us home when we wander and stray. He applies the soothing balm of consolation and health when we are injured. He repels the acts of evil from the world around, and he forgives the acts of sin that have become the works of our hands. He gathers all the broken with healing in his hands.