

## 4<sup>th</sup> Easter – 2018 “He Knows The Shepherd”

April 22—He was one of the most famous and celebrated actors in the world, with a long and distinguished career on stage and screen and was now being hailed at a gathering for yet another honor. As a gift to his many friends and gathered guests he told them that he would perform for them any scene from any play or movie from his entire career that they would request. As you can imagine the room got very quiet as people began to think, and then from the back of the room a faint voice was heard as an old priest stood and said, *“I think you should perform Psalm 23, the one that you learned so many years ago as a student in our school.”*

The actor paused and smiled and said, *“Father, I accept but on one condition, that when I am done reciting it you will do the same.”*

The priest agreed and the actor began, *“The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want, in verdant pastures he gives me repose, beside restful waters He leads me, He refreshes my soul.”*

His voice and intonation were perfect. Every syllable of every word rolled off his tongue with poise and grace and held his audience spellbound. As soon as he finished, the entire crowd was on its feet with a standing ovation and a thunderous round of applause. It was a GREAT success. As the excitement died down and the guests were seated again, the old priest rose and slowly walked to the front of the room to face the same crowd with the same words of the same psalm, *“The Lord is MY shepherd, I shall not want, in verdant pastures He gives me repose, beside restful waters He leads me, He refreshes my soul.”*

His voice was not remarkable. His phrasing far from perfect but when he finished no one stirred, no one moved, no one applauded, and there wasn't a dry eye in the place.

Then silently, as in awe, the famous actor rose to his feet and in a quivering voice faced his many fans and guests and said, *“My friends, notice well what has happened here. I reached your ears and the good Father reached your hearts and for one very good reason. You see, I know the psalm but Father knows the shepherd.”*

My friends, what a thrilling faith we have and what a great privilege is ours, to know the Shepherd—the GOOD Shepherd who laid down His life for us His sheep. We can so easily and often forget that at the head and helm of our stumbling, stubborn, and often wandering flock stands a gentle and loving shepherd to guide us and to keep us safe.

We can get caught up in the bustle of life, tied down with its chores, focused on our many duties, and easily forget the words of the Gospel, telling us that we are never alone, never orphaned, never even forgotten because of the arms of a Good Shepherd who gave His life so that He could embrace us with His love.

Today, (Saturday, April 22) in St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas, First Lady Barbara Pierce Bush was laid to rest. Of the many accolades spoken of this wonderful woman and of her many years of service to others, the most glowing remarks came when people closest to her, and those who barely knew her, spoke of her deep and abiding faith in the Risen Jesus, whom she had as her friend, for the entire long journey of her life. In these modern days when so much is said of the diminishing of faith in our culture, how interesting to see that the powerful of this earth, sat in that grand church to admire and honor a woman, who was simply a devoted wife and mother, a proud grandmother, and a devout sheep of the flock of the Good Shepherd. When all is said and done, when all the duties and chapters of life close, it is only faith that matters.

My friends, let us resolve this day to stand beside that kindly and holy old priest who was mentioned at the outset of this homily and be sure that we know and love and serve the Good Shepherd in this life so that we can one day we can meet Him in the next.

God love you.