



Father Danny Murphy is a retired Pastor from Brooklyn NY. A gifted man with a God given talent to inspire and God's gift to us at Holy Cross Church in Vero Beach Florida. This is just one of his inspirational homilies.

## Fr. Danny Murphy – Fourth Sunday of Easter – April 22, 2018

Today is Good Shepherd Sunday and today is Vocation Sunday and we'll talk a little bit about both. Good Shepherd Sunday: The image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd of the sheep is one of the most popular images of Jesus and yet, in his time, shepherds were dirty, smelly, uncouth, uneducated. They were among the lowest castes of society. So, to be defined as a shepherd, was certainly not a compliment. And sheep, sheep are frightened, pathetic creatures who often stray and seem to be just waiting to be led to slaughter. So why is this image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd of the sheep so popular? Perhaps it's because Jesus identifies himself with the outcast, the repulsive, and the rejected. Jesus is always so, so inclusive! And perhaps the charm of this image – Jesus as the Good Shepherd of the sheep – is because sheep are so utterly dependent upon a good shepherd. It seems to me that you

and I can identify ourselves with this image of Jesus being the Good Shepherd of the sheep. It might be that at times, we are confused. It might be that at times, we stray, lose our way. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, knows each of us by name and he loves each of us uniquely and individually no matter how far we've strayed, no matter how often we've strayed. He's the Good Shepherd – we're the sheep. We can say with the psalmist: "The Lord is my Shepherd, there is nothing I shall want." Because Jesus is my Good Shepherd. His care for me is gentle and tender, his love for me is excessive and inexhaustible. Vocation Sunday. Every day we are encouraged to pray for priests and to pray for more priests. But never more so than on this day, Good Shepherd Sunday. Do you know that Catholic priests are the happiest group of workers in America? It's true! A recent survey has revealed that 90 percent of Catholic priests in America are happy or really happy. That's an astounding statistic! You can look this up, I'm not making this up! We are the happiest group of workers in America! And, do you know that Catholic priests have the highest job satisfaction of any group of workers in America. About 89 percent of Catholic priests believe that what they do makes a difference in the lives of people. That's an astounding statistic! We are, by far the most satisfied group of workers in the country. You won't read about this in the papers, what you read – we'll we won't get into that!! See if you agree with this, that as a group, Catholic priests are positive, upbeat, kind, helpful, hope filled. We are celibate, but we are not isolated. We are not married, but we are not alone. As a group, we're a pretty happy bunch of guys. We really are! Now, if what I've told you is true, you tell me why are we closing seminaries?

Shouldn't they be bursting at the seams? I'm going to give you a moment to think about why this is? Why aren't more people becoming priests today when priests are the happiest group of workers in America and have the highest job satisfaction rating, by a landslide?? (PAUSE). Well, there are many theories in answer to that question. One theory caught my attention. A group of high school and middle school students were asked that question. Their overwhelming response was because priests don't make that much money. I found that so sad! Is life all about making money? Some of you might remember a commercial for Master Card several years ago that ended with these words: "Some things are priceless." Being a priest is priceless! As some of you know, I am fully retired. I have no obligation to do anything anymore. So, why do I do what I do? I do what I do because I'm trying to be like Jesus the Good Shepherd. I do what I do because I believe in what I do. I do what I do because I love being a priest. Good Shepherd Sunday. Vocation Sunday. Today, please pray for priests, today, please pray for more priests, today please pray for this priest. Amen.