

In Nomine Jesu

SHE, HAVING HEARD JESUS' VOICE, STILL FOLLOWS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Our sermon for this day the Church in this place has chosen to remember the Faith that God gave to His servant June Garverick, is drawn from the readings God guided Kirk to choose for this day. Hear again the Word of the Lord, as Jesus continues to say:

I, I AM the Shepherd, the Beautiful One, and I know Mine and they know Me.¹

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

Kirk, family and friends of June Garverick, the Church rejoices that June is still known by Jesus the Christ, and that she now fully knows Him. The reality that she is alive in Christ even now is revealed to bring comfort to you in this time of earthly loss. That consolation continues to come to us through God's promises. From them, we know that the now fully-sainted June Marguerite Garverick, having heard Jesus' voice throughout her mortal life, still follows that Good Shepherd.

For several years, even before her husband Ed fell asleep in the Lord six years ago, June had become accustomed to hearing, receiving and tasting God's Word in her earthly dwelling places. Jesus spoke to her through her daily devotions, certainly. Yet, even more visibly, the Good Shepherd spoke to her through the visitations of the members of the Church who brought God's Word with them. His Voice was heard in her home, and in the care center through this congregation's lay deacons and

¹ *John* 10:14.

deaconesses, those-in-training for service in and to the Church including our vicars, as well as through her pastors. They all, in different ways, were working to ensure that she heard Jesus still say to her:

*I, I AM the Shepherd, the Beautiful One, and I know Mine and they know Me.*²

As I wrote that, I paused a moment to recall how many different people God used from this congregation and our former mission during the past decade to visit and share God's Word with June. There were quite a number of them. They all are human reflections of the blessings that come from following the Beautiful Shepherd, Jesus. Such people are found in congregations that hear, understand, and follow-through in the biblical role of following the Voice of Jesus to support fellow members of the Body of Christ.

If you are not connected to a congregation of the Church in a given place, let this funeral service serve as God's call to you to become re-attached. Use that which you hear today from the Voice of Jesus to join God's people in a place where the Beautiful Shepherd's Voice continues to be heard. Jesus is calling you to join a Church communion that shares the pure Word of God. He means for you to hear Him, not just on the Lord's Day, or at funeral services such as this, but in your daily lives, in homes as well as other centers of care.

Regular earthly gatherings of believers in Jesus the Christ, the ones whom He calls *one flock* under *one Shepherd*, lead God's people into many

² *John* 10:14.

blessings.³ The foremost of those is the joy that is experienced when we care for one another, person-to-person. Such Christian care comes from living in the reality that Jesus continues to call His flock together to hear His Voice. He truly, through our hearing of His Word, continues to lead us into one verdant eternal dwelling place. That, the chosen texts for this day declare, and so we hear from them again,

*In green pastures, He causes to make me lie down, upon still waters He leads me.*⁴

*Blessed are the dead who continue to die in the Lord from now on. "Yes," says the Spirit, "They will have rest from their labors, for their works follow after them."*⁵

From divine promises such as those, in time, our sainted sister in Christ has entered fully into God's eternal rest. She, in Christ, has been freed from all of that which caused her, in this life, toil, weariness, burden and any kind of strife. That, and more, is revealed in the pastoral imagery of today's texts.

Such word pictures were chosen by Jesus to communicate to us divine mysteries, those which our mortal senses cannot fully grasp on this side of heaven. His use of descriptions of idyllic pastures provide us with images of peace and tranquility. His referring to still or quiet waters provides us pictures that enable us to reflect on beauty.

These things Jesus uses to help us remember that none of this life's struggles are present for those who fall asleep in Christ. They no longer have anything or anyone anymore to muddy the eternal calm given to

³ John 10:16.

⁴ Psalm 23:2.

⁵ Revelation 14:b.

those who, like June, have followed the Voice of the Beautiful Shepherd into His Promised Land. Remember, Jesus still says:

*I, I AM the Shepherd, the Beautiful One, and I know Mine and they know Me.*⁶

June, who used to light up with joy in describing life in Ohio and Michigan now dwells in the light of joy that is reserved for all who fall asleep in Christ. Her struggles to remember things that happened over the past decade are now gone. Her sorrows have ended.

All of that is a result of God's work in and for Saint June. Christ Jesus knew her through his adoption of her into His flock. She knew Jesus, the Good Shepherd, because His Voice was there throughout her life to guide her. His work began through her hearing His Voice through His proclaimed Word. It appears that began while she was still in her mother's womb. Then, in time, as an infant, God again spoke to her. He called her by His Name, that which He gave her through the water and Word of Holy Baptism.

God, in Christ, continued speaking to her from that time, calling her to follow Him. By His grace, through the record of her confessing the Faith in her confirmation vows, we understand that she continued following the Voice of the Good Shepherd. From then on, throughout the rest of her mortal days, Jesus continued leading her with His Word to the eternal rest she fully entered into at the end of this past July. It is on account of the Holy Spirit working through June Marguerite's having heard Jesus' Voice

⁶ *John 10:14.*

that she followed Him, the eternal God/Man Who is the Good and Beautiful Shepherd.

That same Beautiful Shepherd is speaking to you today. It has been given for you to hear His Voice calling to you through His Word in the order of this funeral service, through the readings chosen for the day, through the hymns and prayers that have been and are yet to be offered among us. Among the truths the Good Shepherd is calling out for you to hear today is this:

Jesus said again, "Truly, truly, I say to all of you that I, I AM, the Door of the sheep...."⁷

With the words there rendered, *I I AM*, Jesus declares that He is God. He applies the Divine Name to Himself. Out of that, as He did for his daughter June, Jesus applies His Divine Name to those whom He calls by His Name. With words that He gave for His people to recite as they carried His Voice to others, Jesus continues to call individuals into His flock. Such words your mother surely heard when, in her first year of mortal life, Jesus said, *June Marguerite, I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*

From declaring that He is the I AM, the God Who causes and names His people to be His own, Jesus then proclaims that He is the right way for God's people. They are the ones He calls His sheep. For them He continues to open heaven's door that they might ever enter into His Presence. Such who enter through Him are people who bear His Name through hearing His Voice and believing in Him. They are those whom the Church

⁷ John 10:

remembers wear the white robes of the saints, even as we behold her earthly remains draped in white.

God reveals in today's texts that He is the only perfect, good and beautiful Way to enter into God's good eternal promised land. To ensure that those who would hear Him in every generation since would be very clear about that which He came to do, Jesus again reinforces Who He is, saying, *I, I AM, the Door...* as He then He continues to explain what that means, as He says,

*"...through Me, if someone may come in, he will be saved, and he will go in and go out and pasture he will find."*⁸

Jesus is the only Door to the true God's eternal Household. That is the truth because, as you heard again, He is God, and God is the Truth. It is through God the Son that anyone may enter the Father's eternal rest. It is through God the Holy Spirit that anyone may behold Christ as the Door to salvation. Father and Spirit together reveal Jesus to be the Good Shepherd Who leads people, from all nations, all ethnicities, all places who follow His Voice, to lush pastures and quiet waters. That Saint June is there ahead of those who believe and yet live in these mortal bodies is what we are called to remember today. She, having heard Jesus' Voice, still follows the Beautiful Shepherd.

Hear this then: on the Last Day, we who continue to follow the Beautiful Shepherd shall behold June again in the body, risen, glorified and perfect. That will be so, for in His death, Jesus destroyed death's hold on

⁸ *John* 10:9.

His people. In His resurrection from the dead He sealed their resurrection to everlasting life in the body.

As we wait for that Day, we are free to follow His Voice as He still says: *[It is] good [for the one] waiting silently for the salvation of YHWH*. His salvation has come. His salvation is here. Hear His Voice as He says to you this day:

The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus

Trinity XI

Funeral Vespers: June Marguerite Garverick

Psalm 23; Lamentations 3:22-26; Revelation 14:13; John 10:7-16

August 18, 2018

Pastor Michael A. Morehouse BBA, MDiv, DMin

Soli Deo Gloria