



*5th Sunday of EASTER*

*May 03, 2026*



I AM THE WAY



© JPPC

**Mission Statement**

“Good Shepherd Parish, under the guidance of the true Shepherd Jesus Christ, is a Catholic faith based community seeking to proclaim and live the gospel message. Recognizing our diversity, we strive to bring together a church family, welcoming all people as we grow together in faith, hope and love.”

**954 Stuyvesant Ave Irvington NJ 07111 Phone: (973) 375-8568**

**Fax (973) 375-7040 Email [gsirvington@comcast.net](mailto:gsirvington@comcast.net)**

**Website: [www.goodshepherdnj.com](http://www.goodshepherdnj.com)**



**SERVED BY**

Rev. Valentine Ugwuanya Pastor  
 Denise Perry Secretary  
 Christian Veliz Music Minister

For more information on our parish please go to:  
 Goodshepherdnj.com  
 Or email us at  
 gsirvington@comcast.net

**Pastor’s Reflection on 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter May 3, 2026.**

One of the United States of American president, Franklin Roosevelt said “Fear is useless,” what matters is faith in God. Fear disrupts our status quo, fear cripple humanity, fear of the unknown. When we think that all is lost, we lose hope and fear sets in. It is very simple. Whoever has experienced fear or uncertainty knows that to regain peace and composure, it often takes only the reassurance of companionship and few words. Maybe this is why we exist with one another. Maybe this is the ultimate goal of living in community. From time to time, we all experience fears, worries, and anxieties. Because we are prone to fear, anxiety, and worry, it is no wonder that several hundred times the Bible advises us not to worry. Why does the Bible keep telling us not to worry? Because our faith is weak and instead of looking at God, too often we look at the problems. If we prayed more, I’m sure we would see God sending us help from somewhere.

In the Gospel today, we heard Jesus preparing his disciples for the time when he would no longer be with them. He said to them, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places... (John 14:1-3).

Then in the midst of all this trying to know Jesus’ identity and confusion, Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father and Jesus responded, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? To have seen me is to have seen the Father.” (John 14:9) If Jesus were to ask that question of us, I think we would all answer that we do know something of Jesus, but we don’t know him very well. That is why we worry. If we knew Jesus better, we would not focus on problems and difficulties but focus on Jesus instead. We could imagine Jesus saying, “Have I been with you all this time and you still do not know me?” Have I been with you all this time in the Mass and sacraments and the Word of God in the Bible and you still do not know me? Have I been with you all this time in the faith of your community and when you pray to me, and you still do not know me?

Thus, if we had more of Jesus in our lives we would have less fear, worries, and anxieties. We would still have problems; God never promised that we would not have problems, or be problem free. Jesus himself had a big problem; he was sentenced to death as a common criminal. Jesus is the “living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen and precious in the sight of God” (1 Pet 2:4).

In the First reading we have an interesting story of conflict resolution in the early church. This ideal of communal life was threatened and struck by an even worse virus that selfish indifference and clannish mentality among the group. One can imagine the dread of being one of the Greek widows in today’s first reading, who lost all forms of material support. It is in this context that the Christian community does what it knows best: accompany and serve. This is how we make God present. The widows had less to fear because Christ’s disciples were with them. These were the same Apostles who one day heard Jesus said to them: “It is I do not be afraid,” and “do not let your hearts be troubled.” We are all frail, all equal precious. May we be profoundly shaken by what is happening all around us: the time to eliminate inequalities, to heal the injustice that is undermining the health of the entire human family!

Let us learn from the early Christian community described in the first reading today. It is mercy and lived with mercy: “All who believed were together and had all things in common...” (Acts 2:44-45). This is not some ideology: it is Christianity. Let us show mercy to those who are most vulnerable, for only in this way we build a new world. Let us bear in mind that fear will always be there. Where the main structures opposed to the Church now social and economic. In a world where many are victimized, where marginalized people- the poor, the refugees, the migrants, the prisoners, the outcast, oppressive structures, a truthful word can elicit violence, derision and war. As St. Peter said in his first letter: We are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people God has chosen as his own...called out of darkness into his wonderful light (1Pt. 2:9).

**Good Shepherd Parish Schedule for Mass & Worship (schedules are subject to change)**

Saturday (anticipated) 5:30pm  
 Holy Day TBD.

Sundays —9:00am, 11:00am  
 Reconciliation: Saturdays 4:45-5:15pm

National Holidays —9:00am  
 Adoration Mo-Fri 7:30am-5:00pm

Mass Intentions For the week of May 2, - May 9, 2026

Saturday 5:00PM For God's Guidance and Protection of Graylin Banks

May 02

Sunday 9:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Uchenna Nworu

May 03 11:00am For the Repose of the Soul of David Morado

Monday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Uchenna Nworu

May 04

Tuesday 7:00am For the People of Good Shepherd Parish

May 05

Wednesday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Uchenna Nworu

May 06

Thursday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Uchenna Ibe

May 07

Friday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Uchenna Nworu

May 08

Saturday 8:30am For the Repose of the Soul of Francis Uzoma

May 09 5:30pm For God's Guidance and Strength of Denise Perry

*Kindly keep our parishioner's family, with health and other challenges, in your prayers*

Let us always remember in our prayers the sick members of our Parish

Paul Kocum	Sandi Mosley	Debbie Watson	Rihanna Scott	Venus Matthews
Curtis Richards	Carlos Quinones	John Valfour	Corizon Abuzied	Margarete Victor
Bob and Barbara Nezlick	Patrick Roylance	Graylan Banks	Aloysius Patrick Osuji	Avenelle Samaroo

\* Please advise if any names should be added or delete from the list

Hospital Privacy | Please remember that current privacy laws regarding patients in hospitals do not allow hospitals/ pastoral care offices to contact parishes. If you or a loved one are in the hospital and want a priest to visit, please call the I office at (973)375-8568

SAFE ENVIRONMENT CORNER

HOW TO REPORT ABUSE

The Archdiocese of Newark takes very seriously any and all allegations of sexual misconduct by members of the clergy, Religious and lay staff of the Archdiocese. We encourage anyone with knowledge of an act of sexual misconduct to inform us so that we may take appropriate action to protect others and provide support to victims of sexual abuse. Call the Coordinator for the Office of Accompaniment in the Archdiocesan Department for the Protection of the faithful at

**201-407-3256**

**Ministries:** If you're interested in ministries of service either as a Lector or Eucharistic Minister, please call the rectory at 975-375-8568 or fill out the Information below and place in the collection basket.

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Lector \_\_\_\_\_ Eucharistic Minister \_\_\_\_\_



## **HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV**

*Yaoundé-Ville Airport  
Saturday, 18 April 2026*

Dear brothers and sisters, peace be with you! It is the peace of Christ, whose presence illuminates our path and calms life's storms.

We celebrate this Holy Mass at the conclusion of my visit in Cameroon, and I am very grateful for how you have welcomed me and for the moments of joy and faith which we have experienced together. As we heard in the Gospel, faith does not spare us from tumult and tribulations. At times, it can seem that fear has the upper hand. However, we know that even in these moments, Jesus does not abandon us, just like he did not abandon the disciples on the Sea of Galilee.

Three of the four evangelists recount the episode proclaimed today, each in their own way, with a message suited for their intended audience. Saint Mark (cf. 6:45-52) narrates that the Lord comes to the disciples while they are struggling to row against the strong wind, which ceases as soon as Jesus climbs into the boat with them. Saint Matthew (cf. 14:22-33) adds a detail: Peter wants to go to the Lord by walking on the waves. Once he steps out of the boat, however, he lets himself be overcome by fear and he begins to sink. Christ takes him by the hand, saves him and rebukes him for his incredulity.

In Saint John's version, which was proclaimed today (cf. 6:16-21), the Savior draws near to the disciples walking on the water and says: "It is I; do not be afraid" (v. 20). The evangelist emphasizes that "it was now dark" (v. 17). According to Jewish tradition, "water" with its depth and mystery, often calls to mind the netherworld, chaos, danger and death. Together with darkness, it evokes the forces of evil, which human beings by their own power are not able to dominate. At the same time, however, by remembering the miracles wrought in the exodus, water is understood as a place of passage, a crossing through which God powerfully frees his people from slavery.

Throughout the ages, the Church has navigated many storms and "strong winds." We too can identify with the feelings of fear and doubt experienced by the disciples while crossing the lake of Tiberias. Such is our experience in moments when we seem to be sinking, overcome by adverse forces, when everything appears bleak and we feel alone and weak. But it is not so. Jesus is with us always, stronger than any power of evil. In every storm, he comes to us and repeats: "I am here with you: do not be afraid." This is why we can get up again after every fall, not allowing ourselves to be stopped by any tempest. Rather we go forward always with courage and trust. And it is thanks to him that, as [Pope Francis](#) said, so many "men and women... who honor our people, who honor our Church... are strong in carrying forward their lives, their family, their work, their faith" (*Catechesis*, 14 May 2014, 2).

Jesus draws near to us. He does not immediately calm the storm, but comes to us in the midst of the danger, and invites us, in our joys and sorrows, to remain together with him, like the disciples, in the same boat. He invites us not to distance ourselves from those who suffer, but to draw near to them, to embrace them. No one must be left alone to confront life's adversities. For this reason, every community has the obligation to create and sustain structures of solidarity and mutual aid in which, when faced with crises — be they social, political, medical or economic — everyone can give and receive assistance according to their own capacity and needs. The words of Jesus, "it is I," remind us that in a society founded on respect for human dignity, everyone's contribution is valued as important and unique, regardless of the *status* or position that each one has in the eyes of the world.

The exhortation "do not be afraid," then, takes on a broader meaning, even at a social and political level, as an encouragement to confront problems and challenges — particularly those associated with poverty and justice — together, with a sense of civic and civil responsibility. Faith does not separate the spiritual from the social. Indeed, it gives Christians the strength to interact with the world, responding to the needs of others, especially the weakest. The isolated efforts of individuals are not enough for the salvation of a community: instead, what is needed is a communal commitment, which integrates the spiritual and moral dimensions of the Gospel in the heart of local institutions and structures, making them instruments for the common good, and not places of conflict, self-interest or sterile struggles.

Today's first reading (cf. *Acts* 6:1-7) speaks about this. In this passage, we see how the Church confronts its first crisis concerning growth. The rapid increase in the number of disciples (v. 1) brings new challenges for the community in the exercise of charity, which the Apostles are no longer able to carry out by themselves. Some are overlooked in the distribution of food, and for this reason the grumbling grows and a sense of injustice threatens unity. Daily service to the poor was an essential practice in the early Church, meant to support the weakest, particularly widows and orphans. However, it was necessary to balance this service with the other compelling needs to preach and teach. A solution was not simple.