
We Are The People Of His Pasture And The Sheep Of His Hand

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
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I walked to church last Sunday morning. But I was not in Atlanta. My wife, Boog, and I were in the delightful city of San Antonio, where I had preached and prayed at a beautiful wedding. I did not know my way around San Antonio, but we set out searching for the church.

What a glorious walk we had, shepherding each other. Boog and I rarely enjoy an opportunity to attend church together. Usually on Sunday mornings, she and I are working separately. I am in the Cathedral nave, shepherding prayers and words and worship towards the kingdom of God. Boog is in the Education wing, shepherding families and children and visitors toward the kingdom of God. We both love what we do, but we rarely enjoy the moments together.

We were headed to beautiful St. Mark's Episcopal Church, the first Episcopal church of San Antonio. We walked down a tough street, among the homeless and the dirty. One man offered us some old yellow roses. An old woman guided two young children through the intersection. It is a good thing to walk the early morning city streets together. Some sort of marathon race was being run, and we had to wait patiently, patiently and pleasantly, for the gallant runners to pass before us.

At church, what fun it was to sit together! At church, we can sing beside one another. I take the bass part, Boog takes the alto part, and it is downright fun. We pray. We listen. We smile when the preacher tells a joke or makes an excellent point. Attending church with the person you love is one of the most satisfying events in the world. Enjoy it!

Well, in San Antonio, we had worshipped and we were walking back to the hotel. The marathon was finishing up, and stragglers and exhausted humans were strolling down the street. The homeless had waked up a bit.

We walked and watched. Most of the streets in San Antonio seem to be one-way streets for traffic, which is another reason it is good to walk. As we waited at one intersection, we noticed a car make a left-hand turn in front of us. Suddenly one of the homeless men shouted something, but I couldn't make it out. Then the second car also made the same left-hand turn. The homeless man shouted again, "Wrong way."

Another homeless guy got up and started moving out into the street. A third car in the procession then made the same left-hand turn. "Wrong way, wrong way, wrong way," the homeless guy kept shouting.

In the end, four cars made the same mistake, following each other like sheep walking off the cliff. Every one of them made a turn going the wrong way on a one-way street. Each was lost and just following the misguided driver in front of them.

It was the homeless guys who were able to notice the mistake. It was the homeless guys who got up off the park wall and started trying to direct traffic the right way. It was the homeless guys who really knew the city. It was the homeless guys who were shepherding the lost sheep.

In the lessons for this Sunday, the Lord God says, "I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out" (Ezekiel 34.11).

Then, Jesus essentially identifies himself with the poor when he says, "just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Matthew 25.40). We all need God to be our shepherd. I hope that's why all of us go to church. But it's wonderful when the Shepherd turns up in the people and places we least expect.

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