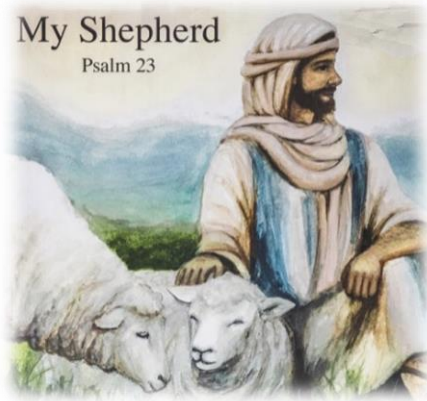


**The Reflection from Pastor Fr. John
Carlos, Holy Cross Church, Harrison, NJ,
July 18, 2021**

PSALM 23



This Sunday's Responsorial Psalm, gives us a way to understand what happens at every Sunday Mass.

Each Sunday, the Lord brings his sheep together. He invites those who were made part of his flock in the waters of baptism to step away from their daily hectic schedule. He encourages them to take time to be renewed in verdant, green pastures - the green pastures he provides during the celebration of Mass.

As the scripture readings are proclaimed and the homily is preached, the Lord gives us a message of

hope, consolation, and inspiration. He reveals the meaning of life and the depth of God's love and mercy. As the psalm puts it, "he restores my soul. He guides me along right paths."

The Lord then sets a table before us. Our focus shifts from the pulpit to the altar table. There the Lord nourishes his flock with his very life-giving Body and Blood. As the psalm proclaims, "You spread the table before me in the sight of my foes."

During the Mass, the Lord our shepherd also gives his flock the assurance of his presence not only in the liturgy but also in the difficulties of life. He remains with us. As the psalm tells us, "Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; for you are at my side with your rod and your staff that give me courage."

In the midst of our confused and troubled world, our shepherd leads us to green pastures; our shepherd refreshes our souls.

In your service, prayerfully.

Father John Carlos