

## **REFLECTION: Fr. Mark Ruiz, Parochial Vicar – May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020**

I am blessed to have had two important shepherds in my life: Monsignor Tony Valdivia and Sister Joan Clarke (Sister of Mercy, Burlingame, CA). Monsignor Tony Valdivia was pastor at my home parish for many years, and Sister Joan Clarke was my eighth grade teacher. Although different in their personalities and backgrounds, both Monsignor and Sister shared a great way of emulating the Good Shepherd. They led by example, never holding others to a standard they were not living themselves. They were giving and genuinely concerned for those entrusted to their pastoral care. They were servants. They were loving shepherds.

In a popular image of the Good Shepherd, Jesus is often seen as going after that one stray sheep. Growing up, there were times when I felt that I was that sheep. These were difficult times for me. However, these were the times when both Monsignor and Sister reached out to me. As far as I was concerned, I was the only one who mattered to them. Interestingly enough, when sharing this with classmates many years later, they felt the exact same way!

On this fourth Sunday of Easter, may we pray in gratitude for the shepherds in our lives. May we also continue to nurture our relationship with Jesus, the Good Shepherd.