

Born on May 12, 1925 ... in St. Louis, Missouri ... to Italian-Catholic immigrant parents ... Lawrence Peter “Yogi” Berra learned the rudiments of baseball by playing in American Legion leagues. At the age of 17, he was passed over by the Cardinals and signed with the Yankees in 1942. Yogi Berra was an All-Star for 15 seasons, is one of only four players to have been named MVP three times, and one of only seven managers to have lead both American and National League teams to the World Series.

As a player, coach, or manager Yogi Berra appeared in 21 World Series ... including 13 World Series championships.

Still living, and aged 89, Berra is perhaps best remembered for what are called “Yogi-isms” ... twists on words that are usually mixed metaphors ... or confused cliches ... that were his version of advice and counsel.

Things like: “It ain’t over ’til it’s over!” or “It’s deja vu all over again!” are reminiscent of his words of wisdom for his team.

A true metaphor is a figure of speech that identifies something as being the same as an unrelated thing for rhetorical effect ... and are used to make a point or to get across a complicated idea by comparing or contrasting one thing to another.

Today is the Fourth Sunday of Easter – often referred to as “Good Shepherd Sunday.”

Our readings call forth several different biblical metaphors.

In the First Reading from the Acts of the Apostles Saint Peter paraphrases Psalm 118 and says:

[Jesus] is the stone rejected by ... the builders,
[and that He] has become the cornerstone.

St. John, in his first Letter – which we heard as our Second Reading – calls us “the children of God.”

And in the Gospel, taken from the 10th chapter of St. John, Jesus refers to Himself as “the good shepherd.”

Which of course, begs the question: What does this all mean?

Is Jesus a stone? Or a shepherd? Or maybe a stone shepherd?
Are we sheep? Are we children? Or maybe we're lambs ... baby sheep?
All of these metaphors and allegories can be confusing at times – especially if they are taken too literally. Although perhaps we have heard them so often that we may take them for granted – and they may have no effect on our thinking at all.

In essence, the gist of all of these metaphors is to get across that we are all completely dependent on God's grace for everything. We, too, are reliant on God's mercy poured out on us in the saving mystery of the Cross of Christ Jesus our Lord. And that we need to seek daily to conform our will to God's Holy Will.

Just as a child is dependent on its parents for food, and shelter, and education. Or a sheep depends on its shepherd for protection and guidance ... we are all dependent on God ... for everything.

This doesn't sit too well with us as modern adults. We like to consider ourselves independent ... and entirely self-sufficient. Yet if we consider the truth of things, we realize that God is indeed in charge. And we are indeed reliant on His generosity ... and we should seek to follow His Will instead of our own will-ful-ness.

And so, whatever the metaphor may be ... whether it is confusing or whether it clarifies ... the bottom-line is that every good thing comes from God ... and we have the choice to live our lives in union with God's Will ... or to reject His grace in our lives ... living our own way – but also having to deal with the eternal consequences of rejecting God.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ ... let us pray that we may always live and abide in God's Holy Will ... may we always be united to His Son Jesus Christ ... following him like sheep follow their shepherd ... and that by our union through, with, and in Christ ... we may be filled with the Holy Spirit ... and know and live in our lives ... the grace, and the mercy, and the love of God ... every day ... in all that we say ... and in all that we do.