

Good afternoon and welcome to the First Saturday Mass and Devotions sponsored by the World Apostolate of Fatima and hosted here at Holy Family Church – the most beautiful church in mid-Michigan.

The elements of the First Saturday devotion, as put forward by Sister Lucia after a vision of Our Lady and the Child Jesus in December 1925 are, first and foremost to all of these things with the intention of making reparation for offenses committed against Our Lady's Immaculate Heart. To go to confession – and you've had that opportunity for an hour; to receive Holy Communion worthily; to pray five decades of the Rosary; and to keep Our Lady company for 15 minutes while meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary.

The reason that we are asked to do five First Saturdays is to address the five ways in which people have offended or blasphemed the Immaculate Heart of Mary: (1) offenses against the Immaculate Conception, (2) against Her Perpetual Virginity, (3) against Her Divine Maternity, (4) indifference, contempt, and hatred against our Immaculate Mother, (5) insults directed against Sacred Images of Our Lady.

All of our devotions tied to the five First Saturdays are to be done in a spirit of making reparation for these offenses.

In today's Gospel, we hear that Jesus had pity on the crowd, because "*they were like sheep without a shepherd.*"

The solution for us, in a world turned upside-down ... a world with unwilling or disinterested shepherds is to realize that what we recited in the Psalm is the solution. Namely that "*[the] Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.*"

In a sense, if we turn that around – and we find ourselves 'wanting' for this or for that ... dissatisfied with our conditions or situation in life. Then perhaps we are following the wrong shepherd.

If the people in the first century were without a shepherd – and Jesus was in their midst – then we who have Him in our midst – Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity in the Most Blessed Sacrament – need to realize that we aren't relying enough on Jesus ... that we are following the wrong

shepherd, or no shepherd, or a shepherd of our own choosing ... but that we need to put our trust in Jesus Christ and follow Him.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us pray for a transformation of heart ... that we may hear the voice of the Good Shepherd ... who feeds us with Himself ... and with an abiding sense of trust in Him ... follow Jesus, the Good Shepherd ... in everything we say, and everything we do.

And may the Immaculate Heart of Mary triumph in our hearts, our homes, our families, and in the world.