



# Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace

Cathedral of the Honolulu Diocese • Founded 1843 • National Historic Register

## **Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

July 21, 2024

Beloved Disciples of Christ,

Greetings of peace, love, and joy!

### ***“The Joy of Serving in the Vineyard of the Lord”***

In May 2019, I attended the episcopal ordination of my classmate. My colleagues and I were so filled with joy and pride that one of us was elevated to become a Chief Shepherd. We were only 23 years of priestly ministry at that time. Now, we are in our 29<sup>th</sup> year. As I went on my vacation recently, it always feels great to be connected and continue sharing our stories of ups and downs and the challenges we face today. As we wished to experience joy and zeal in our ministries, we kept encouraging and praying for one another. In this kind of life and mission we embraced, we know we are not alone when we share each other’s burdens and difficulties. We have each other’s support, and for the most part, our Good Shepherd is carrying us along the way.

Our Gospel last Sunday was about Jesus sending His apostles to preach and heal the sick. These disciples barely have anything to carry along their way. They trusted in the goodness of God and people that they would be taken care of. This Sunday, we hear the Gospel account that after they fulfilled their tasks, they returned to Jesus to report everything they had done and taught. Since then, people have started to flock around them in such large numbers that they do not even have the opportunity to be by themselves for food and rest. Jesus called His apostles to have a respite from their work and went to a deserted place.

When the people knew their whereabouts, they hastened to their place and met them. Jesus was moved as they were like sheep without a shepherd, and He immediately taught them many things. His heart opened up for them and tended to their needs.

Our ministry can often be like that. When given a chance to take a break from work, we get calls to tend to someone who is ill at home or in the hospital, even during the middle of the night or early morn, or to listen and help a penitent or to have a listening ear to someone who is concerned with work or family matters. When duty calls, we cannot just say no but make ourselves available when able.

Jesus presents to us what it means to be shepherds in our different ways. We all have varied situations in life, and we can exercise our “shepherding” through the example of Jesus. Our service to others not only brings them comfort and joy but also affects our lives as disciples of Christ. Like those He called, we would one day share the good things of the work done and maybe even the difficulties we experience. But know that there is always joy in “shepherding” or “serving” in the vineyard of the Lord amidst the challenges we encounter. Deep in our hearts, we have done something wonderful that gives us peace and joy.

Your friend in Jesus,

Fr. Pascual