

Nearly 60 years ago I was sent by Bishop Scully to St. Mary's Parish in Granville, NY. It is a small town in the northeast of our diocese on the Vermont State line. I used to visit the small hospital in the town, the Emma Laing Stevens hospital. One day I met Mrs. Samson a nurse as I entered the hospital. She wanted me to meet the Rev. Duke King, the oldest and a beloved minister who was pastor of a nearby Church in Ruppert, VT. She wanted the oldest and youngest clergy persons in the area to meet one another. It was a real treat for me. He was a gentle warm person. He asked me about my family. Then he said something I'll never forget; "it takes a mother's heart to make a priest." I was deeply touched. I'll never forget his words. He was right about my dear mother.

My sister Elizabeth had a fall two and a half months ago. She fractured her pelvic bone in two places and had some other complications. She is receiving wonderful care at the Albany County Nursing Home, Shaker Place, where several of our parishioners are employed, and some of our parishioners including, Jimmie Crawford are living.

My sister has had to give up her apartment and her 3 sons don't live in our area. On a number of occasions, she has asked me, "Where will I go when I leave here." She is lonely and frightened.

As I read this Gospel, I thought of her over and over again. She is a very good Catholic woman, but the trauma of her husband's death and the loss of her home have deeply affected her.

I try to reassure my sister that I'll be there for her all the way but most of all that Jesus will be there for her every step of the way. Jesus promises us, "I have come that you may have life and have it abundantly," "I lay down my life for my sheep." These words of Jesus are so beautiful but if you are in an underground bunker in the Ukrainian City of Mariupol you have to stretch to believe the Good Shepherd is holding you.

If your granddaughter is on drugs and you are so afraid for her it is a challenge to believe our Good Shepherd is with her. If you are in a Nursing Home with no place to go it is difficult.

Jesus is reassuring us, "I have come that you may have abundant life. I am the Good Shepherd; I will lay down my life for you.

Jesus our Good Shepherd feeds us every Sunday with His precious Body and Blood. We are strong in His strength.