

Dear Brothers and Sisters



“I AM the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep”

The term “I AM” relating to God appears over 300 times in the Bible, first in the book of Genesis, when God addresses Abraham: “I AM your shield” and last in the Book of Revelation: “I AM the shoot from the root of David.”

When God spoke to Moses from the burning bush, he revealed his name as “I AM.” Asked by Moses ‘What is your name?’ God replied from the burning bush ‘I AM he who is, this is what you are to say to the Israelites, "I AM has sent me to you." (Exodus 3;14)

In the garden of Gethsemane Jesus identifies himself as I AM:

“Jesus came forward and said, 'Who are you looking for?' They answered, 'Jesus the Nazarene.' He said, 'I AM he.' Now Judas the traitor was standing among them. When Jesus said to them, 'I AM he,' they moved back and fell on the ground. (John 18, 4-6)

In Hebrew I AM is pronounced 'Yahweh' - meaning I AM who am, you will know me by the deeds I perform.

God is Being, He is. He is the first cause of everything. But we cannot experience God as I AM if we say of ourselves, I AM.

If our own “I” is the most important thing in our life, the center of our existence, then God ceases to Be. If my own person is the I AM, then God can no longer be who He Is. God is reduced in one’s own sight, His name is forgotten, He becomes unknown.

The only reason we can say of ourselves “I am” is because God is the I AM.

Ask someone to describe who they are, and they would answer: I am a Grandma, or I am a lawyer, or I am in College, or I am a resident of Woodcliff Lake. These things are true, but they are only true because God Is. He is the “I AM” which allows each one of us to say I am ... a Grandma, a lawyer, in school, or a resident of...

God has revealed who He is in the person of Jesus Christ, who says to us in the Liturgy today “I AM the Good Shepherd.” If today, our own I cease to be the center of everything, we will experience who God is, we will know his name. This name, this I AM, will be experienced as one who leads us to verdant pastures, who guards our going out and coming in, as one in whom we find rest. May each of us today experience him as the Shepherd of our lives.

**Happy Easter, Fr. Sean**