

## A Short Story – Shepherd Smells

Written on request for deacon newsletter *Deacon Dispatch*.

By Anonymous

“Ah, a Shepherd who smells of his sheep”, Father said without a hint of sarcasm.

Never the less, I was stunned, our society doesn't see shepherds or much less deacons for that matter as they go about their three fold ministry of Charity, Word, and Liturgy.

I had just returned to the center after COVID-19 health check on two cases. Visits included UVC light treatment for the home, supplies, vital sign measurements of all in the household. So I guess a bit of lugging and tugging and sweating. Dripping wet actually on a mid-June day.

The strength of the visit was in the prayer. It was in the holding of the hand and the reassurance they are not alone and we'll work at keeping them alive. I have done many hospice visits but have never seen such raw terror in the eyes of a patient who has never seen a deacon much less a doctor. You don't have to speak English to know in the early days of COVID we were clueless. We were all terrified. But the strength was in the prayers. Prayer before, prayer during and prayer after the visit.

I would remind myself before each patient encounter that God is both transcendent and immanent at all times and in all places. Right here, right now, He attends with the natural. Right here, right now, He attends with all that is beyond comprehension. Let us pray.