

(PRACTICING) CATHOLIC

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(PRACTICING) CATHOLIC - RECOGNIZE GOD IN YOUR ORDINARY MOMENTS

The Good Shepherd and the Wolf

I remember very clearly the first movie I watched during my pregnancy with my eldest child. In this film, there is a scene where a young boy is kidnapped and shoved into the back of a van guarded by vicious dogs. His mother persists in trying to free him, even as the dogs snap at her. Their bared teeth and full-throated snarls don't slow her efforts in the slightest.

It wasn't a great movie or even a particularly great scene, but I'll never forget this scene. I'll never forget those dogs.

I had just learned that I was a mother a few days ago. The life growing deep within seemed to me as frail as a whispered secret, but I loved it powerfully. I worried constantly if the baby was safe and healthy. I agonized over signs — real or imagined — that could tell me if the poppyseed-sized child was thriving or failing.

I understood, for the first time in my life, why a woman would charge a pack of attack dogs without hesitation — not because she should, but because she has to.

She could choose not to fight, certainly. She could walk away. But why would she? A future without her son is so much more painful than any physical wound. She may fear for her life, but she fears a life without her child so much more.

The Good Shepherd discourse reveals to us the motivation behind God's actions throughout all of salvation history. From Adam to Noah to Abraham, all the way down to the time of the Messiah and beyond, He keeps trying to get us back. He keeps braving the attack dogs, time after time. He never stops. He never grows weary. And it baffles us: *what's in it for Him?* we wonder, because we are quicker to give up on ourselves than He is. *Why does He keep trying?*

He could choose not to fight, sure. But why would He? He doesn't want a future without us.

"I will lay down my life for the sheep." — John 10:11