

IV Easter 4-22-18

There are many words to describe Aaron Feis: Selfless. Giving. Loyal. Resilient. But when it came to his everyday life at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, the word “shepherd” might fit best.

Coach Feis had an all encompassing presence that both athletes and non-athletes knew and loved, a presence that extended beyond the school walls. In a piece written for ESPN.com, not one friend or former player interviewed expressed surprise that Coach Feis ran toward the gunfire and took a bullet for the students at **his** school, an alumnus, a security guard & coach. They wanted everybody to know: This is who Aaron Feis was – every minute, every day.

He was a loving father, husband & coach – more than a coach, especially to kids at risk. He spent countless hours on his own to make up highlight DVD’s of players and say to a college coach: Here’s a DVD of a player who needs help. If he doesn’t fit at your school, Coach, could you please talk to your other colleagues and help him find a home?” Feis helped get 50-70 players into college who otherwise might have fallen through the cracks.

Brower County Sheriff Scott Israel said of his friend. “Before you even heard how he died, you knew he died putting himself in harm’s way to save others. That’s who he was. He died running **toward** danger while others were correctly running away **from** danger. Kids would do more for Big Feis because they never wanted to let him down.” And Feis never let them down.

Christ, the Good Shepherd walks among us still in the lives of people like Coach Feis, whose love and compassion enable them to “lay down their lives” for the students, the patients, the soldiers, and the mentally and physically changed entrusted to their care.

As we also celebrate Earth Day, we are reminded that this world, this universe is one. We are called to shepherd and tend to this earth, which is created one. There are no borders in God’s plan for the earth, our mother. We have created the borders that exist. Until we work to see the planet as God created it for the good of all humanity, new divisions and hatreds will continue to divide us.

On this Good Shepherd Sunday, let us give thanks for the courage and love of those who have laid down their lives for others. Let us seek to tend to the one earth on which we live. Let us lay down our lives for the sake of justice and mercy for all members of one fold, especially those most in need.

God is the Good Shepherd...all the time. Let us be the same with and for each other. Sometimes the Good Shepherd wears football cleats.