

GOSPEL

John 10:11-18

Jesus said:

‘I am the good shepherd:
the good shepherd is one who
lays down his life for his sheep.
The hired man, since he is not the shepherd
and the sheep do not belong to him,
abandons the sheep and runs away
as soon as he sees a wolf coming,
and then the wolf attacks
and scatters the sheep;
this is because he is only a hired man
and has no concern for the sheep.
I am the good shepherd;
I know my own
and my own know me,
just as the Father knows me
and I know the Father;
and I lay down my life for my sheep.
And there are other sheep I have
that are not of this fold,
and these I have to lead as well.
They too will listen to my voice,
and there will be only one flock
and one shepherd.
The Father loves me,
because I lay down my life
in order to take it up again.
No one takes it from me;
I lay it down of my own free will,
and as it is in my power to lay it down,
so it is in my power to take it up again;
and this is the command
I have been given by my Father.’

REFLECTION BY ST JOHN PAUL II

2 May 1982, Translated from Italian

1. Jesus said to the apostles: “Peace be with you! As the Father sent me, I also send you...Receive the Holy Spirit” (Jn 20:21).

These words Christ spoke on the evening of the first day after the Sabbath. They were the first that the apostles heard from the mouth of the Risen One.

In these words Christ manifested himself as the Good Shepherd and at the same time as the Prince of Shepherds.

He is the Good Shepherd, because he says: “Receive the Holy Spirit”, the invisible food and strengthening of souls.

He is the Prince of Shepherds, because he says: "I also send you...".

2. On today's Sunday the Church prays in particular for priestly vocations. Following the instructions of his Master, he prays to the Lord of the harvest to send workers for his harvest” (cf. Mt 9.38; Lk 10.2).

Returning to the cenacle on the day of the resurrection, the Church prays that the Good Shepherd sends and continues to send the new hosts of his disciples on this mission, which he himself received from the Father.

The Church prays:

– so that this invitation reaches many young hearts: “Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you forgive will be forgiven, and whose sins you will not forgive, they will remain unforgiven” (Jn 20,22-23);

– so that in the power of the Holy Spirit the servants of Christ and the administrators of the mysteries of God may be born among all the peoples and nations of the terrestrial globe.

3. I report the words of the prayer for Holy Thursday of the Year of the Lord 1982:

“This spousal love of the Redeemer, this saving love of the Spouse, makes all the "hierarchical and charismatic gifts" with which the Holy Spirit "provides for and directs" the Church fruitful.

Is it permissible, Lord, for us to doubt this love of yours?

Can anyone who allows himself to be guided by a living faith in the Founder of the Church doubt this love, to which the Church owes all its spiritual vitality?

It is perhaps legitimate to doubt

– that you can and wish to give your Church true

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"administrators of the mysteries of God", and, above all, true ministers of the Eucharist?

– that you can and wish to reawaken in the souls of men, especially young people, the charism of priestly service, as it has been welcomed and implemented in the tradition of the Church?

– that you can and wish to reawaken in these souls, together with the aspiration to the priesthood, the availability for the gift of celibacy for the Kingdom of Heaven, which in the past entire generations of priests of the Catholic Church have given and still give proof of?

4. Regina caeli, laetare! O Mother of the Risen One, allow us to rejoice in the ever new gifts of the Paschal mystery! Beg them for us from Eternal and Merciful Love!

When Christ says: "Receive the Holy Spirit", those called know how to accept this ineffable Gift.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/ Homily?



Head: What makes a priest a "good" shepherd? Do you experience your priest as a shepherd?



Heart: How can we love and care for our priests? Could we do this better?



Hands: What is one way that we could show our priest love and care this week?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/ describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. "Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray")
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others' prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the 'Glory Be'.