



4. May 2020

“The Good Shepherd”

Jn 10,11-18

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd 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 as soon as he sees a wolf coming, and runs away, and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep; he runs away 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 I must lead these too. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock, 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 I have power to lay it down, so I have power to take it up again; and this is the command I have received from my Father.

Yesterday we looked more at the "Multitude of the Lamb" to see what qualities can be discerned so that they remain faithful even in all tribulation and persecution.

As much as we human beings have to cooperate with the grace of God, it is always the lesser part. For what would the sheep be without the good shepherd? They would fall victim to the wolves because they are inferior to them and do not defend themselves with the same means as those who attack them. Sheep do not disguise themselves!

But they have the good shepherd who does not turn away from them and under whose protection they are always. This is because the multitude of the Lamb (the ones who are mine!) belong to God in love. They have entrusted their lives entirely to God because they know the heart of their Lord. They belong to God - not in the sense of an earthly possession that one has at one's disposal - but in their entire trust and willingness to do the will of God and above all because the loving God makes them worthy of his love.

Surrender to God is the response that the grace of God brings about in us, because through the Holy Spirit we open us more and more to the love of God. It makes us

understand this love and penetrates us. Who can resist this love when it knocks at our door and makes itself more and more understood to us?

Our shepherd, and every good shepherd who follows him, gives his life for his sheep. We are more important to him than his own life. When we are attacked, "the apple of his eye" is attacked, his heart, his love! He opposes the wolf and drives it away and would rather let himself be killed than give up the protection of the sheep.

The Lord recognizes the wolf, who wants to tear us apart and scatter us and then kill us, and every good shepherd should also recognize the wolf.

But the wolves sometimes disguise themselves as sheep or in the worst case even as shepherds. There the special gift of the "discernment of spirits" is needed to distinguish light from twilight and darkness.

Let us remember the time of Jesus: how clearly the Lord rebuked scribes and Pharisees, calling them "blind leaders of the blind" (*cf. Matt 15,14*). They were the leaders of the people and closed the kingdom of heaven to the people!

"Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut up the kingdom of Heaven in people's faces, neither going in yourselves nor allowing others to go who want to." (Matt 23,13)

So also today we urgently need the good shepherd, Jesus himself, who protects his own from confusion and from the wolves.

In these times of pandemic a clear direction is asked.

God has allowed this pandemic to happen in order to call the world and the Church to conversion. It is a rebuke and thus a directive from God to return or to search the right path of life.

Therefore, one can only lend an ear to those voices that clearly point out this connection and call for the appropriate steps. Everything else spreads only mist, which can be used by the "wolves" to continue to work unrecognized and to disperse the flock.

In the world one must stop acting against God's commandment in general, especially to stop the killing of innocent children.

The Church must fulfil her mission to proclaim Jesus as the only Saviour of the world to all peoples without relativism and to lead people to true worship of God without any idolatry and repent if she has failed to do so.

If she does not do this, she loses her God-given mission and transforms into an inner-worldly institution, which then easily becomes the plaything of anti-Christian powers. The key to the Kingdom of Heaven is lost to her!

Let us not be misled - by anyone! The Word of God is clear, and so is the traditional teaching of the Church.

The other sheep whom the Lord wants to lead and who listen to his voice are still waiting for the lightful proclamation of the gospel. This must be crystal-clear water from the throne of the Lamb (*cf. Rev 22,1*) that people are led to those pastures where the Good Shepherd nourishes and protects them.

Better a small flock which "follows the Lamb wherever he goes" (*Rev 14,4*), than a huge church which becomes involved with the world and loses her spiritual strength.