



29. December 2020

**Fifth Christmas Meditation
“The Shepherds”**

The shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem receive the message of the angels with joy and hurry to the new-born child! They are simple people who, in their simplicity of heart, understand the importance of this message and are surely overwhelmed by the holiness of the events in the Grotto of Bethlehem!

“And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are by no means the least among the leaders of Judah, for from you will come a leader who will shepherd my people Israel.” (Mt 2:6).

Simple people who understand with their hearts, who do not need complicated trains of thought to see the truth; people who remember the Word: You only see well with your heart!

God often seeks such people to entrust them important messages, sometimes even children! The simplicity of the heart prevents from a complexity, not infrequently brought about by one's own ego, which would affect the message!

They are shepherds who are at the very beginning of the birth of the Lord and give witness! Shepherds who have the task of feeding the flock entrusted to them!

What an eloquent message, because the Shepherd of humanity, the Good Shepherd, comes and calls the shepherds from the field to give them the gift of his presence among men!

The shepherds of Bethlehem are therefore among the first recipients of the Good News! This is what it says in the antiphon of the Church's Liturgy of the Hours (Lauds) for the solemnity of the Nativity of Christ:

“The angel said to the shepherds: ‘I bring you news of great joy: today the Saviour of the world has been born to you. Alleluia.’” (cf. Lk 2:10-11)

They are therefore bearers of the joy of heaven!

They are the recipients and then become the messengers of joy!

Not the powerful of this earth, not the religious leaders first learn of the birth of the Son of God! No, simple people!

Now it begins to run through the whole story, the story of the proclamation of the Good News. Now the recipients of the message are called to become shepherds for others!

The model is the Good Shepherd himself! He gives his life for his sheep! (*cf. Jn 10:11*). In the image of the shepherd and his flock, we are shown something of the wisdom of God, because God himself comes to this earth to lead his own to good pasture, to free them from the chains of sin and of the devil!

The pastoral service entrusted to those who have received and followed the joyful message is now to hurry to worship God and become servants of this message!

The Shepherd of humanity has come and people must know this!

“Rejoice, the Saviour is born! Do you know it already? Do you already know that God himself has come into this world and wants to lead all people to his home? There, with Him, you will find good pasture, with Him you will have protection from the powers of evil, with Him you will always have the security of love. Do you know that already?”

The message is old and yet always new! Some have not yet heard it, some have forgotten it, some don't understand it properly, some don't care, some are lost!

What does the Shepherd do?

He is looking for them all!