

THE GLORY OF EASTER: BE A GOOD SHEPHERD!

ACTS 4:8-12; PS. 118; JOHN 6:11-18

The fourth Sunday of Easter is called “the Good Shepherd Sunday” which we read from the Gospel of John Chapter 10. We can hear Jesus himself speaking to us saying:

“I am the Good Shepherd. I know my sheep and they know me. They hear my voice and they follow. The Good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep”.

According to the Church's history, the early Christians had a special love for the image of Jesus as the Good shepherd. They usually put it everywhere: in their churches, homes, graves, catacombs, statues and mirrors because this image reminded the persecuted Christians that God is always with them. He loves, guides and cares for them especially in times of

trials and persecution. This is the image of God's providence who envelopes our lives.

Good shepherd image in the Old Testament

First of all God is the Shepherd who guides Israel (Genesis 48:15). The famous Psalm 23, Isaiah 40:11, along with Psalm 78:52 -53, and Psalm 80:1, portrays God as the provider, caregiver, the protector and deliverer against slavery, darkness, evil and death. Then, the Prophet Micah invites God to shepherd his people (Micah 7:14) as he is the Good shepherd. So all human rulers ought to become shepherds of the people modeled after their God, the Good shepherd.

Many prominent figures in the Old Testament were shepherds



We can recall Jacob shepherding the flock of his father Isaac, then he became patriarch; Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethrow at Mount Sinai. David was tending the flock of his father Jesse, and David became the great king of Israel. Amos was the shepherd of Tekoa and even the judges were called to shepherd the people. All these shepherds of Israel pointed at one unique shepherd, Jesus Christ – The True Shepherd who is alluded by Ezekiel in 34.

“I myself will be the Shepherd of my people and also David, my servant”.

This is fulfilled by Jesus in John 10: “I’m the Good Shepherd”. Jesus is the true King, the True Leader, The True God made man, who enlightens, takes care, directs, feeds and leads the whole humanity to heaven.

Bad shepherd or hireling

During the history of the Old Testament, we discover that there were also bad shepherds, these include sinful kings and bad and corrupt leaders who were doing a terrible job at shepherding. The prophets such as Jeremiah (23; 25), Isaiah (56:9-12), Zachariah 11, Amos and Ezekiel 34 will often chastise them and call the

entire universe to repentance. We all as Bishops, priests, parents, teachers, nurses, businessmen or women, students, politicians, civil servants, can become either good shepherds or hireling shepherds today depending on how we take up the responsibilities that are ours before God and before men. We can truly become good shepherds by imitation of Christ in words and deeds.

Remember, **“The closer we are to the Shepherd, the safer we are from the wolves”**
(Catholic Link quote).

Fr. Georges R. BIDZOGO sac

“PEACEFULLY DO AT EACH MOMENT WHAT AT THAT MOMENT OUGHT TO BE DONE. IF WE DO WHAT EACH MOMENT REQUIRES, WE WILL EVENTUALLY COMPLETE GOD’S PLAN, WHATEVER IT IS. WE CAN TRUST GOD TO TAKE CARE OF THE MASTER PLAN WHEN WE TAKE CARE OF THE DETAILS.”

SAINT KATHARINE DREXEL

