



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

REGINA CAELI

Saint Peter's Square

Sunday, 7 May 2017

Multimedia

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!*

In the Gospel for this Sunday (cf. Jn 10:1-10), known as “Good Shepherd Sunday”, Jesus presents to us two images which complete each other. The image of the *shepherd* and the image of the *door* of the sheepfold. The flock, which is all of us, has a sheepfold as its home, which serves as a refuge, where the sheep live and rest after the toils of the journey. And the sheepfold has an enclosure with a door, where there is a gatekeeper. Different people approach the flock: there is one who enters the enclosure by the door and one who “climbs in by another way” (cf. v. 1). The first is the shepherd, the second a stranger who does not love the sheep and wants to enter for other reasons. Jesus identifies with the first and shows a familiar relationship with the sheep, expressed by his voice, by which he calls them and which they recognize and follow (cf. v. 3). He calls them, to lead them out to grassy pastures where they find good food.

The second image by which Jesus presents himself is that of the “door of the sheep” (v. 7). In fact, he says: “I am the door; if any one enters by me, he will be saved” (v. 9); that is, they “will have life and will have it abundantly” (v. 10). Christ, the Good Shepherd, became the door of mankind’s salvation, because he offered his life for his sheep.

Jesus, *Good Shepherd* and *door* of the sheep, is a leader whose authority is expressed in service, a leader who, in order to command, gives his life and does not ask others to sacrifice theirs. One can trust in a leader like this, as the sheep who heed their shepherd’s voice because they know that with him one goes to good and abundant pastures. A signal, a call suffices, and they follow;

they obey; they begin to walk, guided by the voice of the One whom they feel as a friendly presence, strong and mild at once, who calls, protects, consoles and soothes.

This is how Christ is for us. There is a dimension of the Christian experience, that perhaps we leave somewhat in the shadows: the spiritual and affective dimension. Feeling connected to the Lord by a special bond, as sheep to their shepherd. At times we rationalize faith too much and we run the risk of losing the perception of the timbre of that voice, of the voice of Jesus the Good Shepherd, which motivates and fascinates. This is what happened to the two disciples of Emmaus, whose hearts burned as the Risen One spoke along the way. It is the wondrous experience of feeling loved by Jesus. Ask yourselves the question: “Do I feel loved by Jesus? Do I feel loved by Jesus?”. To him we are never strangers, but friends and brothers. Yet it is not always easy to discern the Good Shepherd’s voice. Be careful. There is always the risk of being distracted by the din of so many other voices. Today we are invited not to let ourselves be distracted by the false wisdom of this world, but to follow Jesus, the Risen One, as the one sure guide who gives meaning to our life.

On this World Day of Prayer for Vocations — in particular for priestly vocations, so that the Lord may send us good pastors — let us invoke the Virgin Mary: May she accompany the 10 new priests whom I have just ordained.

I asked four of them from the Diocese of Rome to come forward and join me in giving the blessing. May Our Lady offer her help in support of those who are called by Him, that they may be ready and generous in following his voice.

After the Regina Caeli:

Dear brothers and sisters,

yesterday, in Gerona, Spain, Antonio Arribas Hortigüela and six companions, religious of the Congregation of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, were beatified. These faithful and heroic disciples of Jesus were killed in hatred of the faith in a time of religious persecution. May their martyrdom, accepted out of love of God and out of faithfulness to their vocation, bring about in the Church the desire to bear stalwart witness to the Gospel of charity.

Tomorrow we will address our “Supplication to Our Lady of the Rosary of Pompeii”. In this month of May we pray the Rosary particularly for peace. Please, let us pray the Rosary for peace, as asked by the Virgin of Fatima where, in a few days, I will be making a pilgrimage for the occasion of the centenary of the first apparition.

I wish everyone a happy Sunday. Please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch.

Arrivederci!

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