

“The Good Shepherd”

Last week we heard the account on two Sacraments of love of God from the Gospel of Luke. This week our Gospel gives us a continuation on the theme of ‘the love of God and His compassion’ for us by Jesus pointing out what it means to be a good shepherd.

How is Jesus the Good Shepherd? Jesus used this simile of the Good Shepherd to let us know that every living person on the face of the earth is privy to a compassionate and loving God if we so desire. By giving His life for us sinners who have turned away from God because we want to obey our own evil desire, Jesus as the Good Shepherd has purchased for us the reward of eternal life if we do not refuse His great gift of love.

Jesus as the Good Shepherd, declared that He has come to call sinners to repentance because not it is not the healthy who are in need of a doctor, but the sick. He said He has come to look for the sheep that was lost and that He was sent to the house of Israel. But today in our Gospel, He tells us the gates of heaven is open to all by telling us that He has other sheep that must be in His fold. Who are this other sheep but we the Gentiles! Our Lord’s desire is for there to be one flock and unity of belief among His flock.

This one flock was what existed in the early Church. In Luke’s account in the Acts of the Apostles chap. 4:32-33, we are told that Christians were of one heart and one mind, meaning, they believed the same thing and they were focused on one thing. Because of their belief, God blessed them abundantly with His grace. It is also in the prayer Jesus prayed for us in John 17 that we should be one as you, **“Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me.”**

God is always in search of us because He first loved us despite our sinfulness. He tells us that nobody has been to heaven and comeback to tell us about paradise. Jesus is the only one who knows what unfathomable banquet His Father has prepared for us in His house.

He is the only one who knows the unimaginable things that awaits us in heaven and He tells us not to miss out on what has being prepared for us because of our hearts of stone. All He wants of us, is to love Him back. He wants us to forgive others so He could forgive us. He wants us to know that we are all children of God who are welcomed in our Father’s house.

He wants us to admit when we have strayed and we have come to realize that the road we have been following is the wrong path. He calls us by His grace through the Sacrament of Reconciliation to return to His fold. He wants us to admit and accept with humility that He knows better than we do, the way that would lead us to eternal life.

He wants us to know that after we have strayed and He finds us, He will not wear us out by driving us with the rod, but through His Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist, He will compassionately put us on His shoulder and restore us back to His flock.

Jesus’ compassion for us was capped by His dying for sinners and not for the self-righteous. His condescending went as far as taking up our flesh so He could show us how much He loves us. It

is like to perfect the pot, the potter became clay Himself; meaning, to make us perfect, Jesus became one of us in the flesh so He could suffer and die for us on the cross.

Jesus Christ is our Shepherd and He wants us to follow Him. Sometimes we are reluctant to do so. We want to carve out our own path because we are not sure about where He is leading us. When this happens, we ask, why is He doing this to me? I have been faithful to Him. Why is He treating me this way? We forget that to get to greener pastures, sometimes the Shepherd would have to lead His flock through the desert.

But the Good Shepherd tells us, do not be afraid, have faith in Me. Put your trust in me and I will give you rest. To have faith in Him, we have to pray to Him for His gift of faith.

As we come to receive Him in the Eucharist, let us ask Him for His gift of faith.