

The Good Shepherd calls his own sheep by name

Homily, 3rd May 2020

John 10,1-10

father G. Papparone o.p.

Today the Liturgy of the Word offers two extremely important instructions to our attention, two focuses that I would like to leave to your personal meditation to celebrate the Lord's day.

1. The first one comes from the second reading, it is a passage from the first Letter of Saint Peter Apostle:

He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

For you had gone astray like sheep, but you have now returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

The heart of the Christian message is Jesus' crucifixion, his death on the cross, through which we receive the possibility to walk into a new life.

The text tells us that our sins have been cancelled; the weight, the debt have been cancelled. The *karma* of our sin has been cancelled and nailed to the cross.

So that we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

Leaving for justice means to search holiness; the justice in the Bible is not meant as our common concept of social, administrative or criminal justice, coded by the law.

It refers to what **makes us fair in front of God, what makes us holy in front of Him.**

This is possible because our soul has been healed and in our heart there is a new beginning of salvation.

Feeding and taking care of this new beginning of a new life, we progressively become righteous, that is welcome to God.

If we don't act in this way, we do not live the Christian faith!

If we think of using Jesus as someone who can compensate our weaknesses and anxieties, or as a sort of crutch, we may receive some help, but we'll never fulfill the Christian life.

We'll probably live another religion, a different faith which we will build by ourselves and which generically refers to the Lord's goodness.

Hence, if we want to be true Christian believers, we must commit every day to grow in holiness.

2. The second focus is on this commitment which is based on and becomes possible through a declaration made by Jesus in the Gospel of St. John: **Jesus, the shepherd.**

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The beautiful declaration which we should constantly recall is: *the good shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.*

When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them and the sheep follow him.

You can easily understand that it is not a question of concepts or rules, or ideologies, or visions of reality we are asked to accept...

We are talking about following a person who walks ahead of us.

This process of daily sanctification is possible if we live joint to Jesus who calls us by name and if we are brave enough to follow him and go wherever he wants to lead us.

Indeed, we know that the place he wants to lead us is *Paradise, Heaven*, is our holiness, the purification of our hearts, the freedom from all evil.

Let us follow our shepherd, then, if we have recognized his voice!

If we don't follow him is because we haven't listened to his voice, and if we haven't listened to his voice that calls us by name, we are not Christians, but only apprentices!

Today is the fourth Sunday of the Easter Time, I wish you all that you can recall when Jesus called you by name.

Certainly, some time ago, he called you; you may have forgotten...

Do remember, run through your life again, try to remember when Jesus called you by name and when you have decided to follow him.

Let us renew our desire to walk behind him who walks with us in the impervious paths of the world, giving us peace, safety, joy, freedom, confidence, hope, mercy.

May the Lord Jesus Christ be praised.