



## **Lectio Divina. Fourth Sunday of Easter. Year B**

*Province of Medellín (Colombia), Sr. Angela María Vélez Restrepo op, 25 April 2021.-  
The good shepherd gives his life.*

### **INVOCATION TO THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Come Holy Spirit, give us your light.

Instill in us the wisdom that comes from tasting the Word, hearing it, feeling it, living it.  
Give us the grace to meet you in this time of life and hope, of light and Resurrection with  
the Good Shepherd.

The One who watches over me and protects me, guides me and shows me ways...

He who leads me to green pastures so that there in the peace of silence I may hear his  
voice and follow him.

That I may feel that I belong to him, that I am an essential part of his flock.

Give me the grace to feel part of his fold, a sheep who follows,  
always behind the Good Shepherd.

### **GOSPEL**

#### **John 10: 11-18.**

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep, unlike the  
hireling who is neither a true shepherd nor the owner of the sheep. When he sees the wolf  
coming, he abandons them and flees. And the wolf seizes them and scatters them.

The hireling behaves like this because he works only for his wages and has no concern  
for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and they know me, just as my  
Father knows me and I know him, and I lay down my life for the sheep. But I have other  
sheep that are not in this fold; I must draw them also, so that they will listen to my voice.  
Then there will be one flock under one shepherd.

The father loves me, because I lay down my life to take it again. No one has the power to  
take it from me; it is I who give it of my own free will. I have the power to give it of my

own free will. I have the power to give it and to take it back. This is the mission I have to fulfil at my Father's command.

## READING THE TEXT IN CONTEXT

Israel has known the figure of the Shepherd King since the time of David (10th century BC) and values him highly. Psalm 71 (messianic psalm) alludes to this figure, which calls for righteousness and justice for the King, heir to the crown, and also points out his mission: "to have mercy on the poor, to help the lowly, to rescue them from oppression and violence".

Later, Ezekiel, at the time of the exile at the end of the 6th century, lashes out at the authorities of Israel. They were largely to blame for the "Great Tragedy," because they did not care for the sheep in their charge and promises a Shepherd King: "Here I am, I myself will tend my flock and watch over it" (Ez 34:11).

Reading the text with dynamism, it asks us to pay special attention to the verbs that identify the I AM: The Good Shepherd.

- Knows his sheep as they know him
- He goes in front of them
- He cares for them and defends them against enemies and vouches for them
- Search for those that are not in its fold
- He guides them, to make a single flock
- Gives his life for the sheep

The verbs speak for themselves; the life of the Shepherd is the life of his sheep. His flock is his reason to be, his mission.

## MEDITATION

The Good Shepherd knows each of his sheep in depth and each sheep knows the voice of its Shepherd, because he speaks with them frequently, he is not indifferent to their passing, he makes them feel part of his flock, he is responsible for their life, he knows them and knows that he is known by them.

This knowledge is rooted in the glances, in the words spoken, in the permanent approach, in the care of all their movements. There is a communion of love, of belonging, of accompaniment between Shepherd and Sheep.

The Good Shepherd is endowed with multiple attitudes: kind, patient, helpful, trustworthy, someone who perseveres in his mission because he carries them in his heart, who loves because he has known how to penetrate life by offering his own life... He holds

nothing back because he is capable of giving everything... He does not distance himself because he knows no barriers... He is not indifferent to what may happen because he knows how to value the existence of each one of his sheep.

How important is the daily encounter with the Good Shepherd, with the One who knows our history, our difficulties and uncertainties, our fears and insecurities, our way of being and existing...

He does not know about exclusion because he always includes us, make us his own, shows us the way, lifts us from our falls, leads us to the pastures of his presence, where nourishment transforms, rest restores our hope, and his Word lets us feel that he will always give us life, and life in abundance.

How important it is to look at the Shepherd, to know him, to follow him, to listen to him and to love him in order to learn from him the mission of shepherding, of the missionary pilgrimage of every day, of the encounter between sheep of the same fold and even of openness to the encounter with those who belong to other folds...

How important it is to look at ourselves as sheep and to recognize ourselves as such. To learn from a listening that guides and orients, that attracts and convinces... That listening that penetrates our being because he knows them and instructs them on the way... Sheep capable of inhabiting the same sheepfold because we feel loved by the same Shepherd, the One who gives life, his own life, so that we are all capable of communicating it to others.

While we are the sheep of Jesus the Good Shepherd, we are also by sheer grace shepherds of the portion of His flock that He has entrusted to us.

In the meeting of the Risen One with Peter on the sea of Galilee, before entrusting him with the shepherding of the nascent church, he asks him three times: *“Do you love me?”* because shepherding is a matter of loving and loving more than others. We have the life, the time, to try to identify ourselves with the feelings of the One Shepherd and to answer to Him for our shepherding. Only the authentic shepherd dares to say: *“no one takes my life, I give it”*. Otherwise, God forbid, we could appear as mere hirelings, mercenaries.

May He give us the grace to “give life” in our missionary pilgrimage...

## PRAYER

Good Shepherd,  
Here we are in your fold, as a pilgrim Church,  
we have heard your voice, we have recognized you,  
we feel your protection, your care, your love for each one of us.  
Here we are, ready to follow you and learn from You.

You give yourself unconditionally, you love us with your Life and you give it away by making us feel important to You.

We want to listen to you always, because our deafness can lead us astray.

We want to follow you, because our gaze is fixed on your steadfast steps, in your life-giving and welcoming Word.

Good Shepherd, we want to be your sheep,  
to stay in your green meadows,  
where your life penetrates our life  
and give us the assurance that come what may,  
you will always be by our side, telling us,  
“Do not be afraid, I am with you...”.

## CONTEMPLATION

Giving one's life by offering one's life. The Good Shepherd gives himself because he loves those to whom he gives himself. His heart does not exclude, everyone has a special place for Him.

The Good Shepherd perseveres in his mission, is faithful to his own, knows and motivates the communion that makes visible the flock he leads.

The invitation is to ask ourselves: how do we give our lives in the daily life of our mission?... How to sharpen our ear so that, listening to the Good Shepherd, it becomes ready and joyful obedience.

## LECTIO MARY

In the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Good Shepherd, we find the best model for interiorizing this Sunday's Reading. She accepted God's message, she pondered it in her heart, she made it come alive in her womb. Each Lectio is a small Annunciation, a continuous Yes to God's will. May our life imitate the attentive listening of Our Lady, and with her may we remain on the way of the Master, the Good Shepherd.