

Reflections

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The Good Shepherd

The foundation of every religion constitutes the image, the idea it forms of its God. Each man has in his heart a personal idea about God – especially we who are Christians. Our Christian life, our vital and profound faith depend decisively on the image of God we have.

We long for a pastor. It is a very well known image of God and alive since the earliest days of Christianity. We find it frequently in the catacombs. But also today, we all know these images of the Good Shepherd amidst his flock or with the lamb on his shoulders. It seems that to all Christians from all ages, this person of the Good Shepherd impressed them profoundly.

Where does this hidden longing come from, this fondness between us and the Good Shepherd? I believe it is because his face promises us love and surrender, protection and security. Because we often feel alone, abandoned, isolated and because we often feel like lost sheep, the weight of our weaknesses, our sufferings, and our limitations cause us grief and mortify us.

We want to be with Jesus, our Pastor who watches over us, leads us and looks for us. He knows each one of us by name. He calls us, and if necessary, risks his life by defending us from the enemy.

Pastor: solitude and incomprehension

The life of Jesus was a great sacrifice for his mission: a sacrifice of solitude and incomprehension by others. Not even his Mother understood him when we recall the episode when he was twelve years old: “Did you not know that I must be about my Father’s business?” (LK 2, 49)

Also, the conduct of the apostles when dealing with Him indicates that they did not understand Him or his mission. Thus, one day, Jesus says to them: “I have been with you for so long and you still do not know me.” And the people understand him less than his disciples do.

So, in the end, Jesus remains alone with his mission. And the culmination of his solitude is realized in his sacrifice on the cross. He is truly the Good Shepherd “who risks his life for his sheep;” he surrenders it for love of his own. Only the greatest sacrifice suffices to manifest his infinite love.

This is one of the laws of the Kingdom of God: If you want to be loved, love! If you want to be loved by others, then you have to show them your love, sacrificing yourself for them. And God employs this law in a singularly beautiful and profoundly efficacious way. He wants our love and, therefore, He loves us with a tangible and overflowing love.

To feel loved.....the beginning of sanctity

All the saints began to climb the heights of sanctity when they felt they were the object of the eternal and infinite love of God. When I believe and feel I am loved by God, then the response to love is awakened in me. While we are convinced that there is someone who loves us, our love is secure. No matter what happens, the profound conviction must never abandon us: He loves me.

And if we ask ourselves why we are so little on fire for God and for what is divine, then we know the answer: we do not feel nor do we understand that abundant love of God. We live as if Jesus would not have died for us on the cross.

We must accompany our priests and religious prayerfully so they may be true pastors of souls, filled with unselfish love, authentic reflections of Jesus Christ, our Good and Eternal Shepherd.

Questions for reflection

1. Do I feel loved by God?
2. Do I pray for priests?

If you wish to subscribe, comment on the text or give your testimony, write to: pn.reflexiones@gmail.com

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