

April 22, 2018

4th Sunday of Easter

There is nothing more important in life than to know we are loved!

Acts 4:8-12

Psalms 118:1,8-9,21-23,26,29

1John 3:1-2

John 10:11-18

Peter filled with the Holy Spirit tells the people the cripple was restored to good health in the name of Jesus, the one they crucified, the one whom God raised from the dead. There is power in Jesus' name and now this man stands before them perfectly sound. The human race can find healing and salvation in no other name.

The Psalmist gives thanks to the Lord who is good and whose kindness lasts forever. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in other men or even in those in power for only the Lord answers prayers. The reading in Acts notes as does this psalm that, "the stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone."

John explains that the Father lets us be called children of God because of the great love he has bestowed upon us. The world does not recognize us for the simple reason that it never recognized the Son. When we see him as he is we shall become like him. It is this hope that reminds us to live in a deep abiding faith until we are with him.

Jesus is the good shepherd, the protector of the faithful, known by them, as he knows them. This is similar to the Father knowing the Son, and the Son knowing the Father. There are others who hear and recognize the voice of the Son. No one takes the life of the Son who alone has the power to lay it down in obedience to the Father's will. The Father loves the Son for this sacrifice that brings salvation to humanity.

The Father speaks to the Son

And the Son speaks to us.

The Holy Spirit tells us the risen Christ is in our midst.

The readings give us a comparison of leaders to shepherds, a traditional image of the Old Testament. Shepherds would often keep their sheep in common pens but when they were called to go they would recognize the voice of their shepherd and follow accordingly. And Jesus says, "So too shall they hear my voice," and follow. There are many misleading voices in our world but true guidance and protection only comes from the voice that belongs to the One who laid down his life for us.

It is also said that the shepherd would temporarily disable the dominant sheep who was followed by the others and then carry him on his back until he was healed. Once set back upon the ground it would follow him with the rest behind.



"The Lord tells us three things about the true shepherd: he gives his own life for his sheep; he knows them and they know him; he is at the service of unity.

I must learn to abandon myself; to keep myself available for whatever he, the Lord, needs of me at a given moment, even if other things seem more appealing and more important to me; it means giving life, not taking it. It is in this very way that we experience freedom: freedom for ourselves, the vastness of being. In this very way by being useful, in being a person whom the world needs, our life becomes important and beautiful. Only those who give up their own life find it. Let us entrust ourselves to Jesus, the True Shepherd." (Pope Benedict XVI)

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