

**Second Sunday After Easter
30 April 2017**

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.”

Jn. 10:11

Today’s meditation is taken from Fr. Gabriel of St. Magdalene, OCD’s book, *Divine Intimacy* (#154): “The liturgy today sums up in the gentle figure of the Good Shepherd all that Jesus has done for our souls. The shepherd is everything to his flock; their life, their sustenance, and their care is entirely in his hands, and if the shepherd is good, they will have nothing to fear under his protection, and they will want for nothing. Jesus is pre-eminently the Good Shepherd: He not only loves, feeds, and guards His sheep, but He also gives them life at the cost of His own. In the mystery of the Incarnation, the Son of God comes to earth in search of men who, like stray sheep, have wandered away from the sheepfold and have become lost in the dark valley of sin. He comes as a most loving Shepherd who, in order to take better care of His flock, is not afraid to share their lot. Today’s Epistle (I Pt. 2:21-25) shows Him to us as He takes our sins upon Himself that He may heal us by His Passion: *‘Who His own self bore our sins in His Body upon the tree that we, being dead to sin, should live to justice; by whose stripes you were healed. For you were as sheep going astray; but you are now converted to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.’* I Pt. 2:24-5 In today’s Gospel (Jn. 10:11-16), Jesus said, *‘I am the Good Shepherd, and I give my life for my sheep.’* (cf. Jn. 10:11) In the *Office for Paschal-time*, the Church chants many times: *‘The Good Shepherd is risen, He who gave His life for His sheep and who died for His flock.’* What could be a better synthesis of the whole work of the Redemption? It seems still more wonderful when we hear Jesus declare: *‘I am come that they may have life and may have it more abundantly.’* Jn. 10:10 In truth, He could well repeat to each one of us: *‘What more could I have done for you that I have not done?’* (cf. Is. 5:4) Oh, would that our generosity in giving ourselves to Him had no limits, after the pattern of His own liberality in giving Himself to us! Fr. Gabriel, *Divine Intimacy*, p.462

***‘I know Mine, and Mine know Me,’ Jn.
10:14***

Again, Jesus said: *“I am the good shepherd I know Mine, and Mine know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father.”* Jn. 10: 14-15) Although there is no question here of equality, but merely that of a simple comparison, it is nevertheless very consoling and glorious for us to see how Jesus likes to compare His relations with us to those He has with His Father. At the Last Supper also, He said: *‘As the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you,’* Jn, 15:9 and again: *‘...as Thou Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us.’* Jn. 17:21 This shows that between us, the sheep, and Jesus, our Shepherd, there is not only a relation of acquaintance, but also one of love, and better still, of communion of life, similar to that which exists between the Son and the Father. It is by means of the grace, faith, and charity, which the Good Shepherd acquires for us by His death, that we arrive at such intimacy with our God—so deep that it makes us share in His own divine life.” Fr. Gabriel, p. 462.

“Loving Knowledge”

“A close relationship of loving knowledge is here established between the Good Shepherd and His sheep—one so intimate that the Shepherd knows His sheep one by one and can call them by name; and they recognize His voice and follow Him with docility. Each soul can say: Jesus knows me and loves me, not in a general abstract way but in the concrete aspect of my needs, of my desires, and of my life; for Him to know me and to love me is to do me good, to encompass me more and more with His grace, and to sanctify me. Precisely because He loves me, Jesus calls me by name: He calls me when in prayer He opens to me new horizons of the spiritual life, or when He enables me to know my faults and weaknesses better; He calls me when He reprimands me or purifies me by aridity, as well as when He consoles and encourages me by filling me with new fervour; He calls me when He makes me feel the need of greater generosity, and when He asks me for sacrifices or gives me joys, and still more, when He awakens in me a deeper love for Him. Hearing His call, my attitude should be that of a loving little sheep who recognizes the voice of its Shepherd and follows Him always.” Fr. Gabriel, p. 462-3

Colloquy: Loving Affections

“O good Lord Jesus Christ, my sweet Shepherd, what return shall I make to You for

all that You have given me? What shall I give You in exchange for Your gift of Yourself to me? Even if I could give myself to You a thousand times, it would still be nothing, since I am nothing in comparison with You. You, so great, have loved me so much and so gratuitously, I who am so small, so wicked and ungrateful. I know, O Lord, that Your love tends toward the immense, the infinite, because You are immense and infinite..Please tell me, O Lord, how I ought to love You.”

“My Love, Oh Lord, is not gratuitous, it is owed to you... Although I cannot love You as much as I should, You accept my weak love. I can love You more when You condescend to increase my virtue, but I can never give You what You deserve. Give me then, Your most ardent love by which, with your grace, I shall love You, please You, serve You, and fulfil Your commands. May I never be separated from You, either in time or in eternity, but abide, united to You in love, forever and ever.” (Ven. R. Jourdain) Fr. Gabriel, p. 464-5

“The Lord is my Shepherd...”

“*O Lord, You are my Shepherd, I shall not want; You make me lie down in green pastures, You lead me to the water of refreshment, You convert my soul and lead me on the paths of justice. Even though I walk in the ravines, in the dark valleys, I shall fear no evil, for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff are my comfort. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil, my cup runs over....*”(cf. Ps. 22) “O Lord, my Good Shepherd, what more could You have done for me that You have not done? What could You have given to me that You have not given? You willed to be my food and drink. What more delightful and salutary, nourishing and strengthening pasture could You have found than you own Body and Blood?” Fr. Gabriel, p. 463

The Good Shepherd Continues in His Church

Dom Prosper Gueranger in his book, *The Liturgical Year Vol. 7* tells us how the work of the Good Shepherd is continued in the Catholic Church: “The Word, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, is come down from heaven, that he may ‘gather together in one the children of God that were dispersed’ Jn. 11:52), and the time

is at hand when there ‘*shall be but one fold and one shepherd.*’ Jn. 10:16. O Jesus! Our divine Shepherd! We bless thee, we give thee thanks. It is by thee that the Church thou are now founding subsists and lives through every age, congregating and saving all that put themselves under her guidance. Her authority, her strength, her unity, all come from thee, her infinitely powerful and merciful shepherd! We likewise bless and thank thee that thou hast secured this authority, this strength, this unity by giving us Peter as thy Vicar, Peter our shepherd in and by thee. Peter to whom all, both sheep and lambs, owe obedience, Peter in whom thou, our divine Head wilt be for ever visible, even to the end of the world!” Gueranger p. 134 How blessed we are to have the work of the Good Shepherd continue in the Catholic Church today where Pope Francis, the successor of St. Peter, the Vicar of Christ, governs and sanctifies all members of the Holy Catholic Church.

“*Chastity and Eternal Life*” by Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J. (Servant of God)

“The clearest teaching of our faith on the necessity of chastity for attaining eternal life is in Christ's sermon on the mount. He is telling his followers that the Old Testament prohibition of adultery is not enough. If we wish to reach heaven we must not only control our bodies, we must master even our minds.

Christian Chastity, therefore, requires that we avoid anything that would be a source of irresistible temptation to lust, says our Lord:

‘If your right eye should cause you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part of you than to have your whole body thrown into hell. And if your right hand should cause you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part of you than to have your whole body go to hell.’ (Matthew 5:29-30). In order to gain eternal life, therefore, we must practice chastity, including custody of the eyes and modesty of our sense of touch.”