

JULY 18, 2021
Sunday of the 16th Week in Ordinary Time
Mark 6: 30-34

“A GOOD SHEPHERD FOR OTHERS.”

“Once, a man went to see a friend who was a professor at a great university. However, as they sat chatting in the professor’s office, they were continually interrupted by students who came knocking at the door, seeking the professor’s advice about something or the other. Each time the professor rose from his chair, went to the door, and dealt with the student’s request. Eventually the visitor asked the professor, “How do you manage to get your work done with so many interruptions?” “At first I used to resent the interruptions to my work. But one day it suddenly dawned on me that the interruptions were my work,” the professor replied. — He has recognized that his “work” included being available to his students first, followed by the rest: scholarship, teaching, grading papers, and committee work for the Department and University. And it was by no coincidence that he was the happiest and most fulfilled professor on the campus. He was a true shepherd caring for the sheep entrusted to his care.”¹

My sisters and brothers, we are all shepherds in our own way: teachers to students, parents to their children, owners and bosses to their employees, leaders to their constituents and so on. We are all responsible, accountable and answerable to them. In our First Reading, Jeremiah was the voice of God persuading kings and people to be faithful to God despite of many hardships and political maneuvering that time. He was straightforward and honest about what is right and not, and advised the king to put alliance with God not to pagan king and nations. By this, he suffered criticism from the powerful in the court of the king but he stayed strong, fearless, bold, and brave man. Jeremiah through God’s command warned the shepherds who have responsibilities to

¹ <http://frtonyshomilies.com>

take care of the sheep, not to destroy and neglect them. “Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. The days are surely coming when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.”² Jeremiah reminded all those who have responsibilities that as shepherds, they need to take care of the people, guide and lead them to the righteous Branch, and entrusted the nation to God not to anybody.

In our Second Reading, St. Paul further asserted Jeremiah’s prophecy of unity in one Godhead, one Savior and gathered together those dispersed into one People of God. Paul said: “Now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.”³ For St. Paul, Christ brought reconciliation, put together Jews and Gentiles once ancient enemies and now accepted Christ as the Messiah, became brothers and sisters in Christ. Jesus is the New Man who brought all people together through His blood.

In our gospel reading, St. Mark describes Jesus as the Good Shepherd compassionately listening to the exhausted, tired and hungry apostles, who need rest physically and spiritually. Jesus was eager to hear from them their experiences, after they returned joyfully from their first preaching mission. But not only His apostles, He too needs rest from the crowds who were constantly pushing in, asking care, attention and healing. Rest is also necessary after days work.

My sisters and brothers, our readings pointed that responsibilities are given to us to continue the mission of Jesus. We are all prophets and missionaries of the gospel. Our

² Jeremiah 23: 1-2, 5 Holy Bible NRSVCE Canadian Bible Society

³ Ephesians 2: 13-14 Holy Bible NRSVCE Canadian Bible Society

mission and that “of the Church should be based on the Gospel of compassion we seek to live and share, from the authority of our commitment to forgiveness and reconciliation; and that leadership, inspired by the wisdom of God, means not dictating and ruling over others but inspiring, providing for and selflessly caring for those whom we are called to lead.”⁴ We, ministers in the Church, in our own families and in society as a whole, are called to bring people together, lead and express our selfless love, care and concern. We must joyfully continue our mission and at the end, the Lord will reward us with rest in His kingdom.

“The young pastor was teaching the 23rd psalm to the Sunday school children. He told them that they were sheep who needed guidance. Then the priest asked, “If you are the sheep then who is the shepherd?” (Obviously meaning himself). A silence of a few seconds followed. Then a young boy said, “Jesus. Jesus is the Shepherd.” The young priest, obviously caught by surprise, said to the boy, “Well then, who am I?” The boy frowned thoughtfully and then said, “I guess you must be a sheep dog.”⁵ Jesus is asking and reminding us today be responsible and caring shepherds to those people entrusted to us because they are like sheep without a shepherd. Let us be good examples and guide for our church members, as husbands and wives, as parents to our children and friends to our neighbors.

Let this be our prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, help me to imitate You, my Good Shepherd and lead others by my good example and lifestyle. May I be a channel of reconciliation, forgiveness and unity in the Church, in my community, in my family and in my country. May I take this mission You entrusted to me, bringing You to my sisters and brothers with humility, love and willingness. Amen.”

⁴ <http://frtonyshomilies.com>

⁵ *ibid*