

4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter
Acts 2:14, 36-41
1Peter 2:20-25
John 10:1-10

### A. Text/Context

- One of the most beautiful images of Jesus in Catholic devotions is Jesus as the Good Shepherd
- Probably you have already seen pictures of Jesus holding a meek lamb in his arms
- The time when Jesus still walks in the dusty streets of Palestine performing his public ministry is known as the pastoral age where the wealth or riches of an individual is measured according to their number of livestock
- How many heads of sheep, how many heads of goats, cattle or horses would signify how rich or how poor you are at that time
- Owning a livestock will determine your social standing in society and related to this of course is that the most common occupation is to take care of the sheep as a shepherd
- The shepherd secures his flock in a sheepfold or a surrounding wall with a gate where the shepherd passes through
- And Jesus said in the gospel that whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate is a thief and a robber
- He uses this metaphor of the sheepfold and gate to attack the Pharisees who are misleading the people through false holiness, or covert charity
- The gate here means the door, the path, the way and it is a Messianic symbol of Jesus as the way
- In the OT the word shepherd means God taking care of his people and also the political leaders or the spiritual leaders

- And if they are not doing their job well they are called as the bad shepherds as the prophet Ezekiel puts it
- Jesus is the gate for the sheep, Jesus is the shepherd and we are the sheep or the flock

### B. Human Situation

- Now in our lives as Christians how do we relate ourselves to Jesus as the good shepherd or a good leader?
- This is the leader who works and who serves for the good of others not the other way around. It is not the leader who wanted to be served by others
- Now as a Christian, how does a good leader serve?
- Just like a good shepherd, the sheep recognize his voice and calls each by name and they will follow him
- And one of the requirements of a good leader is that he has many followers because he is listened to by his subjects
- And the reason he is listened to is because he also heard the voices of the people
- A good leader consults the people what are their needs what are the problems they carry and will offer solutions to the problem
- In short, a good leadership is a leadership of consultation
- A good leader is compared to a mother who investigates every faint cry of her infant who does not know how to talk yet
- Indeed this kind of shepherd is the one who passes the gate because he knows the needs of the flock because he listens to his flock. Jesus is the model of this kind of shepherd
- Of course, there are lots of temptations when you are serving and especially when you are in the position of power and authority
- When a leader now gives in to the temptation of the glitters of gold the temptation to become more powerful these

will then be used so to satisfy all the things that money can buy

- And the needs of the people, the service to the masses is now forgotten
- If this happens, there will be trouble. And this is what happened to all the authoritarian regimes of the world
- They fall because they already have the monopoly of power but no more popular support
- And they not only fall, they fall hard with a big bang, fallen, dejected and devastated
- The former Idi Amin of Angola, Noriega of Panama, Duvalier of Haiti and even our very own experience of dictatorship
- Besides, the philosophy of the people also changes
- In this age of individual freedom and liberty, dictatorship has already gone out of style. We cannot just dictate to anybody what we want
- A good leader today must present an intelligent platform and needs to be very convincing that the good is for all

### C. Challenge

- We are all challenged to become good leaders at least in the exercise of the different positions that we have in our chosen fields of profession
- Parents who have become unworthy models for their own children
- Still, you are the father or the mother and you exert authority so your children will still follow you because they are afraid
- So, you see the motivations are now different they follow you because they are afraid they get punished
- We are sending wrong signals to our children. How can we be a good leader if we are like that?
- The challenge for all of us in leadership by modeling. We are the model ourselves

- And being the model ourselves we follow the supermodel which is Jesus himself. The people must see in us that we do what we preach
- In the 1<sup>st</sup> reading in the Acts of the Apostles, Peter preached to the people that this Jesus whom they crucified is the Lord and the Christ who is the Messiah
- And the people know what Jesus did when he was still alive, he has been a good shepherd healing the sick exorcising demons feeding the hungry
- The disciples followed the example of Jesus. And so what happened?
- On that day, there was a mass conversion. Three thousand people became Christians on that day alone
- The challenge for all of us is to become good shepherds by becoming good leaders
- And not all of us become leaders, so that we also want to become good followers as well
- As a good leader our faithful followers will also become good leaders someday because of our example
- As a good leader God will multiply our good works and it will flourish. Even if we are already finished with our term of office, the legacy of a good leadership remains
- By then we have already performed our role as a good shepherd and our followers will always remember us for what we did