

FIRST FRIDAY HOLY HALF HOUR FOR NOVEMBER 2018

“I know my sheep”

Greeting

Dear friends, throughout the Bible, God says that we are His sheep. And just like a human shepherd, Jesus knows each one of his sheep intimately. So intimately, that in the parable of the sheep and the goats, no one is given the chance to say a word to explain themselves. Each person is simply told which group he belongs to. Isn't that a sobering thought? During this Holy Hour, let us reflect deeply on what it means to be the sheep with Jesus as our Shepherd.

Hymn - I'll sing God's praises

Opening Prayer - from Psalm 23 *(the congregation may repeat each line after the leader)*

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

In verdant pastures he gives me repose;

beside restful waters he leads me;

he refreshes my soul.

A moment of prayerful silence - so that the Word of God may enter into us and enlighten us.

Scripture Reading : Gospel of Matthew 25: 31-40 *(to be read from the Bible only)*

Reflection *(pause for silence after each aspect)*

- Good works in a Christian's life are the direct overflow of the relationship that exists between the saved and their Savior, the sheep and their Shepherd. When you know how much Jesus loves you and how He died for you on the cross, you are literally overflowing with His love. You can't help but love other people like He loves you. But if you ignore and reject the love that Jesus offers, you will never see other people the way He sees them. You will never be able to serve them unselfishly and completely.
- The sheep are asked to take their place on the right hand of the throne because all through their lives unthinkingly, unconsciously, born of love for Jesus Christ, they have been responding to the pleas and the needs of those about them.
- Jesus is not choosing between the obviously bad and the obviously good. The division is not between those who believe and those who oppose the gospel. Rather it is the separation of the real Christians from the hypocritical ones; of the true followers of Christ from the false.

The message of the Parable of the Sheep and Goats is that good works will result from our relationship to the Shepherd. Followers of Christ will love others and will treat them with kindness, serving them as if they were serving Christ Himself. While “goats” can indeed perform acts of kindness and charity, their hearts are not right with God, and their actions are not for the right purpose – to honor and worship God. The help which wins the approval of God is that which is given for nothing but the sake of helping.” – William Barclay (1907-1978), Biblical scholar and theologian.

Personal reflection (*pause after each*)

1. Am I the kind of person who will help only if I am given praise and thanks and publicity?
2. Do I see Christ spontaneously in my brothers and sisters, especially the “least of them”?
3. Is Jesus Christ truly indwelling in me? Am I capable of responding instantaneously with unselfish love to the needs of others?

What can I do towards personal transformation?

- Work towards being a sheep instead of a goat.
- When you have the opportunity to help someone in need, do it.
- Stretch yourself more and more when it comes to how you relate and give to the poor in terms of your time and service.

Hymn – Our hearts were made for you Lord / Whatsoever you do

Intercessory Prayer

Leader: Heavenly Father, giver of all good things, we pray for the good of the church and the concerns of those in need. Our response is: Lord graciously hear us.

1. For the clergy, religious and the laity, and for the people of God in every place, that we may become more and more ‘sheep that belong to the Shepherd’(*pause*)....we pray to the Lord. (R)
2. For the grace of listening: that our hearts may be open to the Word of God as it comes to us and that our lives may be transformed by it.(*pause*)....we pray to the Lord. (R)
3. For the grace of charity: that we may love and serve those in need, regardless of their race, religion, tribe, or social class.....(*pause*)....we pray to the Lord. (R)
4. For the grace of insight: that we may see the work of God in our time and our place and recognize His presence in events large and small in our lives..(*pause*)....we pray to the Lord. (R)

5. For a heart of love: that we may be freed of greed, selfishness, and abuse of power so that we may share with others God's gifts of life, salvation, and wholeness
....(*pause*)....we pray to the Lord. (R)
6. For the gift of peace in our hearts, our families and our communities: that we may recognize the goodness that God has placed in each person (*pause*)....we pray to the Lord. (R)

Leader: Lord our God, we give you thanks and praise for all you have given us. Give us the grace to live the faith we profess. May we take greater care of ourselves and each other on this earthly journey, trusting in Jesus, our Good Shepherd. We make this prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Benediction follows.

Benediction hymn - Let us bow in adoration

Concluding hymn - You shall go out with joy

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