

SERMON. EASTER 4. MAY 3, 2020.
John 10: 1 - 10.

Today's Gospel reading invites us to reflect upon Jesus, his leadership role as the Good Shepherd.

We evaluate our leaders, especially who can guarantee our safety and happiness. For many of us this means someone who will eliminate the hardships that we face and make life easier for us.

But it also means someone who will encourage and affirm us in our endeavours, someone who will tell us we are on the right path.

There is nothing wrong with this kind of thinking but these are only half of the responsibility of leaders.

Some would like the leader to challenge them to better themselves, and attain a greater degree of self-realization; someone who can show them how to live graciously with the burden of life and the disappointments all women and men must face in life.

They want a leader who will help them recognize and admit when they are in error and help them correct it. They require a leader who is honest about the complexities of life and are able to guide them in dealing with these complexities.

Authority is more than control and might. Authority is recognized because it cherishes, guards, and encourages the best in life; it provides rest and refreshment; it guides our steps; it nourishes us; it leads us to God.

This kind of leadership is patterned after the leadership style of Jesus. The gentle voice that comes with confidence of those who follow and is committed to the enhancement of the lives of others.

The Good Shepherd, the leadership style that Jesus is describing does not simply call his sheep. He knows them intimately, he calls them by name and they recognize him and respond to him appropriately.

In this passage Jesus is comparing himself and contrasting himself with the Pharisees. Jesus is the true shepherd, the true leader, he is the one that the sheep will follow.

The religious leaders of his day were not interested or invested in the welfare of the people as Jesus was. He judged them harshly and compared them to thieves and robbers.

Secondly those who go through Jesus will be safe.

The moral of the story is those who go through Jesus, the Good Shepherd must follow him in the dark valleys as well as the refreshing streams. They must be willing to ditch their own plans and self-interest.

It is comforting to know that we have a shepherd that loves us with such a devotion that he gave his life so that we may have life. Amen.