

# HOMILIES FROM THE HERMITAGE

## CORONA 21

### The Good Shepherd

This Sunday is known as ‘The Good Shepherd’ and this year at Mass on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday we have the whole of the passage from St. John Chapter 10 verses 1-18:22-30, which gives and develops the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. This is one of the most comforting Gospel passages, in which Jesus ensures that He will look after us at all times, regard what may. He uses a many of images to describe him as ‘good’ shepherd. The real shepherd gets in by the door: the sheep know him and he knows them. If one finds flocks of sheep all mixed up while the shepherd talk, the sheep know which shepherd which he/she should follow. They won’t follow strangers. ‘I am the door. Others have been robbers and brigands only to plunder the sheep. I come to give life and abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. Hired hands run away when the wolf comes and flees. I am the good shepherd: I know my own, and my own know me.’ Jesus than says that he and the sheep are like Jesus Himself and His Father and ‘I lay down my life for my sheep’. ‘And there are others not of the fold and they will come to me and there will be one fold and one shepherd.’ Jesus then once again declares that He will lay down His life for His sheep.

The image of the shepherd would be strong in an agrarian society and sheep were known to be vulnerable (and silly). There were plenty of plunderers about to steal and fleece them. Jesus gives a strong image of his care and love—well beyond the ordinary shepherds—he would die for his sheep. In addition the image of sheep follows the history of the Old Testament. David, the greatest of the Kings, was a boy shepherd and became the shepherd of the people. Ezekiel writes at great length about true and false shepherds. The Messiah would be a Son of David and therefore the perfect shepherd to care for the people This image was a strong indication to claim that He, a shepherd (like David), was a claim to be the Messiah. And a few verses later Jesus says, **‘I and the Father are one’**.

In this joyful celebration of Our Saviour we are reminded strongly of His love and care for us

**‘The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing that I need want’**

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