

4 Easter B 2021 SML  
JN 10:11-18

Philosophers, scientists, and university professors often lay claim to the superiority of their thinking. Therefore, it is not surprising, that since both Our Lord and the Pharisees were teachers, there should be disputes between them concerning their doctrines. But Jesus, as always, refused to put Himself on the level with human teachers since He claimed uniquely to be a Divine Teacher. And He went still further. He came to sacrifice Himself for His sheep, rather than just be a Master over students.

In His teaching on the Good Shepherd:

- ✓ He called Himself the Door affording the sole admission to the Father;
- ✓ He called Himself the gatekeeper of the door;
- ✓ He called Himself also the Shepherd or Guardian of the sheep, as the One Who Leads them.

On the other hand, Our Lord compared the Pharisees, who were leaders in their own right:

- ✓ to those who entered not by the door, and therefore sought to prey on the flock;
- ✓ to mercenaries who would run when the wolves came;

✓ and finally to wolves who would devour the sheep.

In the previous chapter to today's Gospel, a dispute arose after Our Blessed Lord had restored sight to a man blind from birth. The Pharisees began making an investigation of the miracle. There was no denying the fact that the blind man could now see; but the Pharisees were so determined this should not be considered a miracle, they went to his parents, who testified the boy had been born blind. They had already made up their minds that no amount of evidence would ever change their opinion, for:

the Jewish leaders had already agreed that anyone who acknowledged Jesus as Messiah should be banned from the synagogue. (JN 9:22)

The man born blind thus was the first of a long line on whom the doors of the synagogue were shut.

They had closed the door of the synagogue on the man born blind. The Pharisees imagined that they had thus cut him off from all communication with God. But Our Lord told the crowd that though the door of the synagogue was shut, another door opened, in the words of Our Lord, the sheepgate:

I am the sheepgate, I am the door; anyone who comes into the fold through Me shall be safe. He shall go in and out and shall find pasture. (JN 10:9)

He did not say:

- ✓ that there are many doors,
- ✓ nor that it made little difference through which other door one chooses to seek the higher life;
- ✓ nor did He say that He was “a” door.

Jesus said He is “The” Door.

- ✓ There was only one door in the ark through which Noah and his family entered to be saved from the flood
- ✓ there was only one door in the Tabernacle or Holy of Holies.

He did not say His teaching or His example was the door, but that He personally was the door to the fulness of life with God. He stands alone and shares no honors with His colleagues, not even with Moses, and much less any other man who claimed something he was not. One thing was for sure. The others were not leaders.

No one comes to the Father except through me. [JN 14: 6]  
In today’s Gospel, after telling the Pharisees that they were really not teachers, but blind leaders, strangers, and hirelings,

Our Lord set Himself in contrast to them not only as the Unique Teacher but as something infinitely more. He was not merely teaching ideas or laws, He was giving life. He was giving His Life.

I have come that men may have life, and may have it to the full. (JN 10:10)

More than a few years ago, I attended series of seminars for pastors entitled “Good Leaders, Good Shepherds.” Stated simply, good leaders make good shepherds. Good shepherds make good leaders. So the terms leader and shepherd can be used interchangeably.

As a pastor, as a shepherd, as a leader, there has been a recurring theme in confession among many of the sheep here at St. Mary of the Lakes. And that theme is the ill feelings they are having with our politicians, who are our leaders [, as recently as this/yesterday afternoon’s confessions]. Whenever there is something societal that’s being confessed, for every one who confesses something, there’s at least 10 more feeling the same way. My advice for those who want to talk about it is not to give these politicians your inner peace, but to take them

to the foot of the Cross, leave them there, and pray for their conversion.

Our leaders today, any leader today, myself included, especially those leaders who are so very front and center, would be wise to compare themselves and their motives to the motives of Jesus the Good Shepherd. Those who “say” they are devout and practicing Catholics would do well to humbly submit to the teachings of Jesus, rather than rewrite eternal law and natural law. Devout Catholics would not shout out the clarion call to the sheep to pass through the door at the border unless they have a plan to take care of them. It leaves the rest of us who do want to follow Jesus the Good Shepherd scrambling to come up with answers to the crisis that should have been figured out before the sheep came to the border in the first place. But then again, those calling the sheep to the border were never shepherds to begin with. They’re playing foot loose and fancy free with migrant lives. We need to pray for their conversion.

Earlier in the homily I referred to the chapter previous to today’s Gospel. To close this homily, I would like to return to the previous chapter again, to the words of Our Blessed Lord

as the chapter ends as He speaks to the Jewish leaders that I mentioned earlier in the homily. Since Jesus did not describe them as good shepherds, they could not be considered good leaders:

The Jewish leaders said, “Surely we are not also blind, are we? Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you are saying, ‘We see, we know it all, we’re right’ so your sin remains.”