

Fourth Sunday of Easter (A)

Gospel text (Jn 10:1-10): Jesus said: "Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate but climbs over elsewhere is a thief and a robber. But whoever enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep... I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

John 10: the Good Shepherd gives "life "in abundance"

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)

(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, we enter in the figure of the "Good Shepherd", an image of long biblical tradition which Jesus purifies and brings to its full meaning. The thief regards the sheep as part of his property, which he exploits for himself. On the contrary, the real shepherd does not take life, but gives it. This is Jesus' great promise: "to give life in abundance".

Jesus Christ promises that He will take the sheep to the "pastures", to the springs of life. Here resound the words of Psalm 23: "In green pastures he makes me lie down; to still waters he leads me." But what does man live on? Man lives on truth and on being loved by the truth. He needs God, the God who draws close to him and points him toward the path of life. Whoever gives him all this, gives him "life in abundance".

—Jesus, being the incarnate Word of God Himself, is not just the "Shepherd", but also the food, the true "pasture"; He gives life by giving Himself.

Jesus Christ, the only Savior, is the "gate" and bears in his Heart each one

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Today, Jesus uses two images when referring to Himself: He is the "shepherd" and He is the "gate". Jesus Christ knows His sheep by name: He calls them forth, one by one. For Jesus we are not just numbers; He has a personal kinship with each one of us. He also personally loves us.

In the Gospel, "To know", does not simply mean an act of our intellect, but an act of allegiance to the person known. Therefore, Jesus bears in His Heart each one of us. Jesus is also the "gate". The only gate. No one comes to the Father except through Him. Some believe that Jesus is one of many saviors: Jesus, Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed... But no! Only Jesus is God! Whoever is saved is saved through Jesus Christ, even if he did not know it in this life.

—Jesus, because of the gift of our faith, I know You are God. I am grateful for having known You. Let me try hard to enter through that "gate" which leads to the Father, which, though narrow, You keep wide open.