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. The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice, as the shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice. But they will not follow a stranger; they will run away from him, because they do not recognize the voice of strangers." Although Jesus used this figure of speech, the Pharisees did not realize what he was trying to tell them.

So Jesus said again, "Amen, amen, I say to you, 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."

"I am the gate for the sheep"

Fr. Pere SUÑER i Puig SJ
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Today, in the Gospel, Jesus uses two images referring to Himself: He is the shepherd. And He is the gate. Jesus is the good shepherd who knows the sheep. "He calls his own sheep by name" (Jn 10:3). For Jesus, each one of us is not a number; He has personal contact with each one of us. The Gospel is not just a doctrine: it is the personal attachment of Jesus to us.

And not only does He know us personally, but He also loves us personally. "To know," in the Gospel of St. John, does not simply mean an act of understanding, but an act of adherence to the person known. Jesus, therefore, carries each one of us in His Heart. We too must know Him in this way. To know Jesus does not only involve an act of faith, but also of charity, of love. St. Gregory the Great, commenting on this text, tells us: "Ask yourselves whether you belong to his flock, whether you know him. I assure you that it is not by faith that you will come to know him, but by love." And love is shown through deeds.

Jesus is also the gate, the only gate. "Whoever enters through me will be saved" (Jn 10:9). And a little further on, He emphasizes: "No one comes to the Father except through me" (Jn 14:6). Today, a misunderstood ecumenism makes some think that Jesus is one of many saviors: Jesus, Buddha, Confucius..., Mohammed, it doesn't matter! No! Whoever is saved will be saved by Jesus Christ, even if he does not know it in this life. Whoever strives to do good, whether he knows it or not, goes through Jesus. We, by the gift of faith, do know it. Let us be grateful for it. Let us strive to go through this gate, which, although narrow, He opens wide for us. And let us bear witness that all our hope is placed in Him.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “He enters by the door, who enters by Christ, who imitates the suffering of Christ, who is acquainted with the humility of Christ, who being God, became man for us.” (Saint Augustine)

- “Jesus promises that he will show the sheep where to find “pasture”—something they can live on. But what does all this mean? 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.” (Benedict XVI)

- “The Church is, accordingly, a sheepfold, the sole and necessary gateway to which is Christ (Jn10:1-10). It is also the flock of which God himself foretold that he would be the shepherd (Cf. Isa 40:11), and whose sheep, even though governed by human shepherds, are unfailingly nourished and led by Christ himself, the Good Shepherd and Prince of Shepherds, who gave his life for his sheep.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 754)