

Sunday 4th (A) of Easter

Gospel text (Jn 10,1-10): Jesus said, «Truly, I say to you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate, but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a robber. But the shepherd of the sheep enters by the gate. The keeper opens the gate to him and the sheep hear his voice; he calls each of his sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them and the sheep follow him for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, rather they will run away from him because they don't recognize a stranger's voice».

Jesus used this comparison, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So Jesus said, «Truly, I say to you, I am the gate of the sheep. All who came were thieves and robbers, and the sheep did not hear them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved; he will go in and out freely and find food. The thief comes to steal and kill and destroy, but I have come that they may have life, life in all its fullness».

«I am the gate of the sheep»

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Today, in this Gospel, Jesus uses two images when referring to himself: He is the shepherd and He is the gate. Jesus is the good shepherd and He knows his own sheep. «He calls each of his sheep by name» (Jn 10:3). For Jesus we are not just numbers; He has a personal kinship with each one of us. The Gospel is not only doctrine: it is Jesus' personal attachment to us.

And not only He does know us personally. He also personally loves us. “To know”,

in St. John's Gospel, does not simply mean an act of our intellect, but and act of adherence to the known person. And Jesus bears each one of us in his Heart. We must also know him like that. To know Jesus does not only mean an act of faith, but also of charity, of love. «Ask yourselves whether you belong to his flock, whether you know him —St. Gregory the Great tells us, while commenting this text— I assure you that it is not by faith that you will come to know him, but by love». And love is proven by deeds.

Jesus is also the gate. The sole gate. «Whoever enters through me will be saved» (Jn 10:9). And a little further, He insists: «No one comes to the Father except through me» (Jn 14:6). Today, a misinterpreted ecumenism causes some to believe Jesus is but one of many saviors: Jesus, Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed..., it does not matter! But no! Whoever is saved, is saved through Jesus Christ, even if he did not know it in this life. He who tries hard to do well, will enter through Jesus, whether he is or he is not aware of it. But, because of the gift of our faith, we do know it. Let us be grateful for it. Let us try hard to enter through that gate, which, though narrow, He keeps it wide open. We bear witness that all our hopes are placed on Him.