

Jesus the Good Shepherd: Perfect Example of living our vocation to its fullness

Every 4th Sunday of Easter is called the good shepherd Sunday and a Sunday set out, especially to pray for vocation. It is called the good shepherd Sunday because through the three cycles the Chapter 10 of St. John's gospel that describes Jesus as the good shepherd is read. Today, we pray in a special way for the vocation, which has also a good connection to Christ who lived out his vocation to its fullness. His vocation as a savior and redeemer was not in any way compromised. Hence, he uses the analogy of a good shepherd who puts in everything, even his life to give life and protection to his sheep.

Vocation is from the Latin word *vocare* meaning call. As children of God, He calls us in different ways throughout our Christian life. God who created us individually calls us individually. Our first response to God's call is the yes, which we said on our baptism through which we were all called to a life of holiness. As we grow up the different vocations, we choose priestly, religious, married, or single life are meant to help us to continue this response to God's call of holiness. It is left for us to accept this call and do our best to live out the best of our vocation. It is an ongoing process, which involves continuous response to God. Jesus remains a good example for us in the way he responded to his vocation to be our savior and redeemer. He kept on responding to this call throughout the thick and thin of his life. The fruit of his faithfulness is the resurrection we are celebrating this season. In the same way, the life of the apostles we read in the book of the Acts of the Apostles speaks volume of their responses to God's calls in different ways even in the face of all the threats as we read today in the first reading.

Our vocation is not something we reach through by ourselves alone but through our families and communities. The family which is the Domestic Church is the seedbed of nurturing and promoting different vocations in life. Jesus was born within a family and he lived out his vocation from his family into the community. All of us are products of a family. When we reflect on things happening in our life, we discover that our makes are from the influences of the families in which we were born and bred. The family in discussion is not only biological family but also the Christian family of God's children in which we see ourselves as brothers and sisters united together by our common baptism. Our biological and Christian family cannot be built without a healthy and loving relationship, which entails mutual understanding, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, and love. Let us pray that we recognize and appreciate the graces God has bestowed on us to live our vocation in its fullness especially using these graces to promote the love of God in our families-biological and Christian.

*"In this time, so many thoughts and worries lead us to fall into ourselves, "Let us pay attention to the voices that reach our hearts. Let us ask ourselves where they come from. Let us ask for the grace to recognize and follow the voice of the Good Shepherd, who brings us out of the confines of selfishness and leads us to the pastures of true freedom"
(Pope Francis Homily on the Good Shepherd Sunday, 2020)*