

## 4th Sunday of Easter

Acts 4:8-12

1 Jn 3:1-2

Jn 10 11-18

One of the meaningful comments on the life and legacy of Pope John Paul II was made by the evangelist Billy Graham. In a TV interview he said, “He lived like his master—the Good Shepherd, and he died like a good shepherd.” In the Gospel of today, Jesus claims that He is the Good Shepherd and explains what He does for His sheep. The Jews had a lovely legend to explain why God chose Moses to be the leader of His people. When Moses was feeding the sheep of his father-in-law, he saw a young sheep running away from the flock. It ran down to the river to drink some water. Moses followed it and, after it had drunk water, carried it back on his shoulders. God saw this and said, “Because you have proved yourself great in caring for the sheep, you shall lead My flock, Israel.”

When we hear the words “Good Shepherd,” we immediately think of someone who loves and cares. Good shepherds do not think of themselves. They take care of the sheep—no matter how dangerous and how difficult it is. Such a caring attitude, however, goes against the prevailing attitudes of the day. We live in a world where the name of the game is to look after one’s own interests. If not, no one else will. Who gets the most attention in our schools? The smart ones! What about the slow and the weak? They are forgotten. We have today talks and plans to get rid of the old, senile, and the terminally ill. Why? It is because they are too expensive and need a lot of care. Very few people want to give that care. We have legalized getting rid of life in the womb—the unborn, the defenseless. Why? Because the mother thinks the child is going to be a burden. It is going to restrict her freedom. She has to take care of the baby; she does not want to care for the baby. There are cases where spouses have walked away from their marriage because the partner was diagnosed with a terminal illness and needed care the rest of his or her life. All these happen because we are not willing to care.

Today we need good shepherds in every walk of life. In our homes, we need a father and a mother who really care about their children. In schools, we need teachers who care for their students and take personal interest in their well-being. In our hospitals, we need doctors and nurses

who care about their patients and do all that they can to promote life. In our churches, we need pastors and shepherds who really care about their flocks. It is said that every pastor ought to have six weeks of vacation every year, because if he is really a good shepherd, he deserves it; and if he is not a good shepherd, his congregation deserves it.

In public life, we need politicians who truly care about the welfare of the people rather than enact policies that are detrimental to conscience, religious freedom, family life, and the life of the aged and unborn.

We are asked to pray specially for vocations to the priesthood and religious life—that the Lord will send us good shepherds. As Christians, we all have a fundamental vocation to be loving and caring. All of us have a responsibility to foster vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Vocations come from good families. Today we are facing a crisis in vocations because the family is in crisis. Children need the good examples of a father and a mother. Parents should pray for their children, and bring them up in an ambience of prayer and faith. Instead of complaining and whining, let us pray for the priests we have, so that they may carry on with fidelity Christ's ministry of caring, teaching, feeding, counseling, forgiving, healing, encouraging, and reconciling. Let us be good shepherds in all walks of our lives.