

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Aug 3rd 2016

How to explain God's love? How to share with all the people the great love God is giving us absolutely free? How to make the people understand that our God is merciful and righteous, full of compassion and tenderness? How to proclaim that the God in whom we believe is inflamed in a deep desire to look after us with concern and affection? This is the principal preoccupation and the genuine objective of all the writers of the Bible. Within all the books of the Sacred Scripture these questions are present. The biblical authors were trying to use different images and metaphors for fulfilling this intention, different examples and parables for explaining the unending love of our God: A column of fire in the middle of the desert; a hen looking after its chicks; an overflowing well of running clean waters; the embrace of a lovely father; a big mustard tree protecting and giving shelter to the birds... But maybe amongst all of these parables and examples the nicest and most touching symbolic image is the Good Shepherd.

John the Evangelist gave us, in the tenth chapter of his Gospel, a beautiful description of the good shepherd's concern for his sheep. He knows his flock and he is concerned for each and every sheep. He pronounces their names with loving sweetness. He walks in front of the sheep to prevent them from facing any struggles. If one of the sheep is lost, the good shepherd does not rest until he finds it and then, rejoicing he puts it on his shoulders and brings it back. And these sheep are not a burden for him but the source of his gladness and joy. God is the Good Shepherd and we are the sheep of his flock. Therefore we are happy to proclaim and to sing without hesitation the antiphon of the responsorial psalm: "The Lord will guard us as a shepherd guards his flock". This was the conviction of the author of the Psalm 23; this was the certainty of the prophet Jeremiah (Jr 31:10); this was the basic foundation of John the Evangelist; this was the cornerstone of many saints such as Anthony Mary Claret and this should be, as well, our existential theme.

Fr. Manuel Ogalla, CMF