



and bless us as your heritage; be our shepherd, and carry us forever. (Cf. Ps 28:6-9)

Open your heart through faith and hope to Your God the Almighty, the eternal Shepherd. He, Your God, is looking for you, leaving the 99 sheep to find you.

Let Him carry you: *“Here is your God!” See, the Lord God comes with might; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.*

The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who hope on the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:10-11, 26-31).

Your Shepherd wants to give you life, His life, which is eternal life, through knowing Him and the Father. (cf. Jn 17:3) Let Him! Listen to his voice in the silence of your heart, in the hidden place of your soul. He is Love. Listen!

III. I LIFT UP MY EYES TO THE LORD (Psalm 121):



I lift up my eyes to the mountains; from where shall come my help? My help shall come from the Lord who made heaven and earth.

May he never allow you to stumble! Let him sleep not, your guard. No, he sleeps not nor slumbers, Israel's guard.

The Lord is your guard and your shade; at your right side he stands. By day the sun shall not smite you nor the moon in the night.

The Lord will guard you from evil, he will guard your soul. The Lord will guard your going and coming both now and forever.

Fr. Armando Marsal, DCJM.

'I CAME TO BRING FIRE'

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, MAY 3rd

“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.’” (John 10:1-10)

I. HIS SHEEP HEAR HIS VOICE:

Petition: My Lord, You are my Good and Loving Shepherd. When I am with you everything is easy; your yoke of love is sweet and the burden of life becomes light. I want to follow you, because you alone guide me to fresh and green pastures where you give me repose; lead me to restful waters and revive my drooping spirit.

“O come, let us adore and prostrate before the Lord, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. O that today you would listen to his voice! Do not harden your hearts.” (Ps 95:6-8)
O my beloved, *“if you would but listen to me! There shall be no strange god among you; you shall not bow down to a foreign god. I am the Lord your God, who brought you up out of the land of slavery. Open your mouth wide and I will fill it. But my people did not listen to my voice; Israel would not submit to me. So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels. O that my people would listen to me, that Israel would walk in my ways! Then I would quickly subdue their enemies, and turn my hand against their foes. I would feed you with the finest of the wheat, and with*





honey from the rock I would satisfy you.” (Ps 80:8-16)

O Good Shepherd, O Guardian of my life and my soul;

You, Kind Shepherd, with your divine love woke me up out of the deep drowsiness and sluggishness in which my selfishness and sinfulness had driven me down.

O Shepherd, who died out of love for my love; turn your loving eyes on my faith because I confess you as my Lord and Owner. More than any other thing I want to follow you. I give you my word to follow your sweet call, and the path your feet have trod which bring Good News to my heart. Hear me, O Crucified Shepherd who died out of love for my love. O my God and Savior, do not depart from me because of the wickedness of my sins; You who are the good friend of those who come to You with a contrite and humble heart.

Wait for me, my Good Shepherd, and listen to my cares. But how can I ask you to wait for me? Because even as you let others nail your feet to the wood of the cross, you waited graciously and mercifully for the poor call of my love. There is an external Divine Providence through which God rules all events of human history concretely and immediately, both the little and the great. Nothing escapes his Divine Providence, *“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted.”* (Mt 10:29-30) But there is also a personal Divine Providence in which God counts our cooperation, our fiat, *“We know that all things work together for good for those who love God.”* (Rm 8:28) *“For to this you have been called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.”* (1 Peter 2:21,24-25)

God made a promise in the Old Testament, that He would come to be our Good Shepherd. *“I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak. I will feed them with justice.”* (Ez 34:15-16) But at the same time He promised that “David”, figure of the Messiah, the Christ, would be our Shepherd *“I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd.”* (Ez 34:23) Describing the Holy Spirit through the prophet Ezekiel, and the amazing gifts and blessings of David’s Shepherding: *“And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken. I will make with*

them a covenant of peace and banish wild animals from the land, so that they may live in the wild and sleep in the woods securely. I will make them and the region around my hill a blessing; and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. They shall be secure on their soil; and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I break the bars of their yoke, and save them from the hands of those who enslaved them. They shall live in safety, and no one shall make them afraid. I will provide for them a splendid vegetation so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger. They shall know that I, the Lord their God, am with them, and that they are my people, says the Lord God. You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture and I am your God, says the Lord God.” (Ez 34:24-31) All of His Shepherdhood is done so that we might know He is our God; that the Almighty takes care of us; He guards and protects us, guides us. *“I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.”* (Jn 10:14)

II. I CAME THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE LIFE IN ABUNDANCE:

Petition: O Lord, you are my God, only in you does my happiness reside. You, the living and true God, are Life itself, and you want to share your life with us. All revelation is made for giving your life to us *“these things are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.”* Grant me faith so I may have life in the Son of God, in Jesus.

O my Lord I want you to be my shepherd, that I may not lack for anything. I desire for You to guide me in green pastures and beside still waters, so I may lie down beside my Friend and God and drink from your side the living water. You my God restore my soul and quench my thirst. Lead me in your Divine Will, so I come closer each day to You, who are infinite Goodness. In my life I know that even though I walk through the darkest valley, the valley of death and suffering, I fear not; for you are with me, your rod and your staff give me courage and comfort my soul. **With you my gentle and kind Shepherd, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for all eternity.**

You my Lord and my God *are my strength and my shield; in You my heart trusts; so I am helped, and my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to You. You Lord are the strength of your people; You are the saving refuge of us who are anointed. O save us your people*

