

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

April 21, 2024

Gospel: (John 10:11-18)

Jesus said: *"I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep...I am the good shepherd, I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd."*

Reflection:

The good shepherd is concerned about, cares for, and protects the sheep even to the point of laying down his life for the sheep. The good shepherd fulfills the obligation of relationship. The relationship between shepherd and sheep ("I know mine and mine know me") is likened to the relationship between the Father and the Son. This relationship requires of us disciples the same mission—to lay down our lives, too. Shepherding is serious business. It means that we cannot run away, but we must lay down our lives for the sake of others. It calls us to commit ourselves to good deeds, such as caring for the sick, feeding the hungry, clothing the poor, forgiving those who wrong us, loving others as God has loved us. These good deeds are the very "stuff" of our everyday living and loving, in our families and in our service to the poor.

Vincenian Meditation:

The Manual of the Society states: To those served, Vincentians are expected to give the same deep and serious thought that they give to their own blood family. Sharing does not consist merely in the distribution of material goods; it also implies that our personal resources and potential of mind and heart, of time and influence, are placed at the service of others. Sharing means taking part in the joys and sorrows, in the worries and the hopes of others. It equally involves a readiness, on the part of the members and the Society, to accept help, suggestions, advice, encouragement and collaboration. Sharing means being willing to be disturbed. It is a sign of the true spirit of charity to be ready to share ideas and to accept giving in on some of our own. We are all poor in one way or another. That is perhaps what draws us all closer to one another and to Him who consented to share our humanity. (US Manual, P.49)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

How are we "Good Shepherds" to each other and to the poor?

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, give us the grace to be "Good Shepherds,"

-strengthen us to be hope for others.

For those who live in loneliness,

-may they know the healing bond of friendship.

For those whose labor is burdensome and whose wages are inadequate,

-may they receive employment worthy of their dignity.

For the sick and the dying,

-may they know Christ's healing through all Vincentians.

Amen

