

JESUS CHRIST IS OUR GOOD SHEPHERD.

Jesus used His people's cultural practices to make His teachings more understandable. Most of Jesus' people were farmers. Jesus used some farming processes to explain divine realities. When Jesus called Simon Peter and some other Apostles where they were fishing, they left their fishing materials and followed Him (Matthew 4:18-22). These Apostles used their fishing skills with the help of the Holy Spirit to win souls for God. In the Gospel reading last weekend (John 21:1-19), Jesus told Simon Peter and the Church to feed His sheep, feed His lambs and tend His lambs or shepherd His flock. WE, FOLLOWERS OF JESUS, ARE THE SHEEP AND THE LAMBS WHICH JESUS TOLD SIMON PETER AND THE CHURCH TO TEND AND FEED OR SHEPHERD. Jesus asked Simon Peter and the Church to take care of our spiritual lives as shepherds do for their animals. In today's Gospel reading (John 10:27-30), Jesus points out that He is **the Good Shepherd who knows His sheep, that He gives His sheep eternal life and that His sheep will not perish, that no one can take them out of His hands** (John 10:27-29). GOD KNOWS EACH OF US, IN AND OUT. HE KNOWS OUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES. NONE OF US CAN HIDE FROM GOD (Hebrews 4:13-15). Jesus has given us eternal life through His paschal mystery and by gifting us with the Sacraments we have today. It is now left to us to take possession of eternal life by having faith in Jesus, obeying Jesus' commands and teachings, and making use of the Sacraments we have. In a movie I watched, an airplane with which an American president was traveling was hijacked by terrorists. When it was broadcast on television, most Americans were concerned, some said prayers for the safety of the president. All the Armed Forces tried to rescue the president and some of them died in the process. At last, they were able to defeat the terrorists but due to the damage done to the airplane, there was not much time before the airplane would blow up and it was impossible for the airplane to land without causing more damage. At that point in time, the president was geared with a parachute and one of the members of the rescue team told the president that ALL AMERICANS HAVE TRIED TO RESCUE HIM, THE ONLY OPTION LEFT WAS FOR HIM TO RESCUE OR SAVE HIMSELF BY JUMPING WITH THE PARACHUTE. **JESUS HAS DONE EVERYTHING REQUIRED FOR OUR SALVATION. THE BALL IS NOW IN OUR COURT. FOR US TO BE SAVED, WE NEED TO LISTEN TO JESUS AND OBEY HIM.** Jesus is a good shepherd who looks after His sheep and died for the salvation of His flock. A good shepherd never abandons his lost sheep, he looks for them till he finds them and rejoices whenever he finds them. GOD NEVER ABANDONS US WHEN WE SIN OR GO ASTRAY, RATHER, HE LOOKS FOR A MEANS TO BRING US BACK TO HIMSELF. God makes us feel remorse or guilty as we read the scriptures, listen to the homily, read the lives of the saints or think about our lives like the prodigal son to seek His forgiveness and mercy. In the Gospel reading today, Jesus made it clear that **HIS SHEEP HEAR HIS VOICE**. In the world now a lot of voices speak to us: the voice of our individual opinions or principles, the voice of our societal opinions, the voice of our cultures, the voice of the evil one, and so forth. Sometimes, we relegate the voice of Jesus speaking to us in the Gospels to listen to other voices. SOMETIMES, SOME PEOPLE JUDGE OTHERS IN THE LIGHT OF WHAT THEY HEARD FROM OTHER VOICES. If we continue to listen to the voice of Christ in the Gospels, our notions on many things will continue to change. In my native culture, it is a sin for women to wear pants, slacks or trousers in the Church based on what is written in the book of Deuteronomy 22:5. If I listen only to the voice of my culture, I will judge or condemn most women in the Church now, **but I listen to the voice of Jesus Christ in the Gospels who commands us not to judge or condemn**. I do not see anything wrong with

women wearing pants, slacks or trousers to the Church because it is your culture. The truth is, God wants us, males, and females, to dress modestly all the time. God did not want us to pry into people's private lives or cultures looking for what to condemn them with based on our personal opinions or principles. AS CHRISTIANS, JESUS' TEACHINGS AND COMMANDS SHOULD SHAPE OUR CULTURES. Also, Jesus points out that **HIS SHEEP FOLLOW HIM**. After listening to the voice of Jesus Christ, the next is to do what He taught us to do. MAY GOD HELP US TO ALWAYS LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF OUR GOOD SHEPHERD, JESUS CHRIST, AND DO WHAT HE WANTS US TO DO, AMEN.