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Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd

St. Thomas Aquinas

Priest and Doctor of the Church



This excerpt from St. Thomas Aquinas' Exposition on John's Gospel (Cap 10, lect. 3) is used in the Roman Catholic Divine Office of Readings, Monday of the 21st week in Ordinary Time.

I am the Good Shepherd. Surely it is fitting that Christ should be a shepherd, for just as a flock is guided and fed by a shepherd so the faithful are fed by Christ with spiritual food and with his own body and blood. The Apostle said: You were once like sheep without a shepherd, but now you have returned to the guardian and ruler of your souls. The prophet has said: As a shepherd he pastures his flock.

Christ said that the shepherd enters through the gate and that he is himself the gate as well as the shepherd. Then it is necessary that he enter through himself. By so doing, he reveals himself, and through himself he knows the Father. But we enter through him because through him we find happiness.

Take heed: no one else is the gate but Christ. Others reflect his light, but no one else is the true light. John the Baptist was not the light, but he bore witness to the light. It is said of Christ, however: He was the true light that enlightens every man. For this reason no one says that he is the gate; this title is Christ's own. However, he has made others shepherds and given that office to his members; for Peter was a shepherd, and so were the other apostles and all good bishops after them. Scripture says: I shall give you shepherds according to my own heart. Although the bishops of the Church, who are her sons, are all shepherds, nevertheless Christ refers only to one person in saying: I am the Good Shepherd, because he wants to emphasise the virtue of charity. Thus, no one can be a good shepherd unless he is one with Christ in charity. Through this we become members of the true shepherd.

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The duty of a good shepherd is charity; therefore Christ said: The good shepherd gives his life for his sheep. Know the difference between a good and a bad shepherd: the good shepherd cares for the welfare of his flock, but the bad shepherd cares only for his own welfare.

The Good Shepherd does not demand that shepherds lay down their lives for a real flock of sheep. But every spiritual shepherd must endure the loss of his bodily life for the salvation of the flock, since the spiritual good of the flock is more important than the bodily life of the shepherd, when danger threatens the salvation of the flock. This is why the Lord says: The good shepherd lays down his life, that is, his physical life, for his sheep; this he does because of his authority and love. Both, in fact, are required: that they should be ruled by him, and that he should love them. The first without the second is not enough.

Christ stands out for us as the example of this teaching: If Christ laid down his life for us, so we also ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

The Passion - The Meaning of the Movie

by: Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio



As we ponder Mel Gibson's The Passion of The Christ movie and the events it depicts, we can't help but ask why it had to happen this way? Why did Jesus have to pass through such horrible torture to redeem us? Could not forgiveness and salvation have been obtained in some other way? Why does the Devil figure so prominently in the movie? And why does Mary play such an important role? This talk, The Passion - The Meaning of the Movie, is a perfect complement to Mel Gibson's The Passion of The Christ film and [The Guide to the Passion](#), will help you get the most out of the movie and the most out of the season. 45 minutes, followed by questions and answers.

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