

## SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Gospel: John 10: 11-16

How teachers should act toward their pupils

### 33.1 First Point

In today's Gospel Jesus Christ compares those who have charge of souls to a good shepherd who has great care for the sheep.<sup>235</sup> One quality he must possess, according to our Savior, is to know each one of them<sup>236</sup> individually. This should also be one of the main concerns of those who instruct others: to be able to understand their pupils and to discern the right way to guide them.

They must show more mildness toward some, more firmness toward others. There are those who call for much patience, those who need to be stimulated and spurred on, some who need to be reproved and punished to correct them of their faults, others who must be constantly watched over to prevent them from being lost or going astray.

This guidance requires understanding and discernment of spirits, qualities you should frequently and earnestly ask of God, for they are most necessary for you in the guidance of those placed in your care.

### 33.2 Second Point

It is also necessary, says Jesus Christ, that the sheep know their shepherd<sup>237</sup> in order to be able to follow them. Two qualities are needed by those who lead others and should be particularly evident in them.

The first is, a high level of virtue in order to be models for others who would not fail to go astray following their guides, if the guides themselves did not walk in the right way.

The second is, a great tenderness must be shown by them for those entrusted to their care. They must be very alert to whatever can harm or wound their sheep. This is what leads the sheep to love their shepherds and to delight in their company, for there they find their rest and comfort.

Do you wish your disciples to do what is right? Do it yourself. You will persuade them much more readily through your example of wise and prudent behavior than through all the words you could speak to them. Do you want them to keep silence? Keep it yourself. You will make them prudent and self-controlled only in so far as you act that way yourself.

### 33.3 Third Point

The members of the flock of Jesus Christ are also obliged to hear their shepherd's voice.<sup>238</sup> It is, then, your duty to teach the children entrusted to you; this is your duty everyday. They must understand what you say, so you must give them instructions adapted to their capacity, otherwise what you say would be of little use. For this purpose, you must prepare yourself and train yourself, so that your questions and your answers in the catechism lessons are understood well, so that you explain the text clearly and use words which will be easily understood.

In your exhortations explain simply to your pupils their faults and show them how to correct them. Make known to them the virtues they should practice and help them see how easy this is. You should inspire them with a very great horror for sin and avoidance of bad companions. In a word, speak to them of everything that can lead them to piety. This is how your disciples should hear the voice of their teacher.

235 Jn 10:11  
236 Jn 10:14

237 Jn 10:14  
238 Jn 10:16