

To lead with Justice and Love



“...His heart was moved
with pity for them...”

I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS

FIRST READING (Jer 23:1-6)

Bad shepherds

^{1a} Woe to the **shepherds** who destroy and scatter the flock of my pasture—oracle of the LORD. ²Therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, against the **shepherds** who **shepherd** my people: You have scattered my sheep and driven them away. You have not cared for them, but I will take care to punish your evil deeds.^b

Good shepherds

³I myself will gather the remnant of my flock from all the lands to which I have banished them and bring them back to their folds; there they shall be fruitful and multiply.^c ⁴I will raise up **shepherds** for them who will **shepherd** them so that they need no longer fear or be terrified; none shall be missing—oracle of the LORD.^d

Righteous shoot of David

⁵See, days are coming—oracle of the LORD—/when I will raise up a/ righteous branch for David;/As king he shall reign and govern wisely,/he shall do what is just and right in the land.^{e6} /In his days Judah shall be saved,/Israel shall dwell in security./This is the name to be given him:/“The LORD our justice.”^f

THE FOCUS: The Leadership of Shepherds

COMMENTARY

- The text is found towards middle part of the book of Jeremiah. It belongs to Part

III of the book entitled “Oracles in the last years of Jerusalem” (21:1—33:26)

- Jeremiah prophesied under King Zedekiah when he was tempted to revolt against the Babylonians. He prophesied under other kings like Josiah and Jehoiachin.
- All he saw from the kings, except Josiah who implemented some religious reforms, were violations of the law (idolatry).
- Through their kings, the Jews became idolatrous when they tried to play games (make alliances and concessions) with the pagan nations, supposedly for their protection, but in the process, monotheism was compromised.

3 sections:

- Vv.1-2 tell of the punishment of the bad shepherds (leaders) for their evil deeds.
- Vv.3-4 tell of the promise of Yahweh to gather the remnant and raise good shepherds for them.
- Vv.5-6 foretells of a great leader from the lineage of David.

Further commentary/observations

- What the bad shepherds do:
 - They mislead and scatter the flock (God’s people).
 - They drive them away.
 - They do not take care of the flock.
- What the good shepherds (God included) do:

- They bring flock to the meadow (*They feed them*).
- They make the flock increase and multiply (*prolific and productive*).
- Under their reign (*shoot of David included*), people do not live in fear, but in security.
- The leader from David will govern wisely, righteously and justly.

REFLECTIONS

The shepherd who does not take care of his flock is condemned. He is a useless shepherd. God is going to send a shepherd who will never, never, abandon his flock.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 23:3-6)
THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD; THERE IS NOTHING I SHALL WANT.

SECOND READING (Eph 2:13-18)

^{13k}But now in **Christ Jesus** you who once were far off have become near by the blood of **Christ**.

^{14*} For **he** is our **peace**, **he** who made both one and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through his flesh, ^{15m}abolishing the law with its commandments and legal claims, that **he** might create in **himself** one new person* in place of the two, thus establishing **peace**, ¹⁶ⁿand might reconcile both with God, in one body, through the cross, putting that enmity to death by it. ^{17o}**He** came and preached **peace** to you who were far off and **peace** to those who were near, ^{18p}for **through him** we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

THE FOCUS: Jesus is Peacemaker

REFLECTIONS

God sends Jesus who by his death has reconciled us with God even with our sinfulness thus brought about peace in our midst and in the daily living of Christians even in a world full of troubles and turmoils.

GOSPEL READING (Mk 6:30-34)

^{30m}The apostles* gathered together with Jesus and reported all they had done and taught. ^{31*} He said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.” **People were coming and going in great numbers, and they had no opportunity even to eat.** ^{32o}So they went off in the boat by themselves to a deserted place. ³³**People saw them leaving and many came to know about it. They hastened there on foot from all the towns and arrived at the place before them.** ³⁴When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

THE FOCUS: The People

COMMENTARY

- Our text belongs to Part I of Mark’s gospel which develops who Jesus is.
- Jesus shows concern to two groups:
- **One group** is his apostles, **the other** is the people.
- After their mission, the apostles must have been tired, so Jesus invites them to withdraw somewhere (to rest and eat).

- The people are always coming to listen to his teachings. They hunger for the word of God.
- Jesus shows pity not only to his apostles, but also to the people following them.
- Mark presents Jesus as compassionate. Seldom, Mark presents Jesus as having feelings.
- Jesus' pity is translated into teachings.
- Jesus is a busy teacher who pities his followers by responding to their needs (*rest and food and more word of God*).

REFLECTIONS

The people thirst for God's word, for God's healing touch yet they do not feel the presence of God in other leaders but Jesus. Jesus will never abandon them. He has compassion for them.

II. TYING THE THREE READINGS TOGETHER TO DEVELOP YOUR HOMILY/SHARING

There is a need for true shepherds. And the true shepherd comes from God (First Reading). Jesus is one who is a true shepherd sent by God because he has compassion for the needy (Gospel Reading). And the writer of the Pauline epistle further corroborates what kind of a shepherd Jesus is: He died for his sheep. Not just feeding them with bread, but giving them eternal life. In fact, it is through his death that we are reconciled with the God, establishing peace in all levels of our relationships (Second Reading).

Suggestion for your homily/sharing.

Begin with our search for new leaders as

the campaigns of politicians are subtly working into almost all institutions of our society.

But what kind of leadership do they project? What kind of leadership they actually practice? Manipulative, Profit-centered, Infrastructure oriented, dynasty-promoting or nepotistic, divide and rule *strat*, no respect for human rights, etc.

Contrast these with at least three qualities of leaders you glean from the Readings: not destroying and scattering the flock of pasture, the one who breaks down the wall of enmity and has compassion for the suffering masses.

We therefore are in search of leaders who pattern their values with those of Christ. And it is not just the task of the leaders to form themselves as good leaders; even we, followers, have to make way, create venues where true Christian leaders can be developed or formed. Our church must be active in the formation of leaders.

III. OUR CONTEXT

1. Enumerate the qualities of at least three politicians who are vying for positions this coming elections. What is each one's outstanding quality? What is each one's abhorring quality?

2. Take a look at the power struggle of mandated organizations in our parish.

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