

Celebrating Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019...

Wednesday, 16 October 2019

John 10:1-10

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In today's Gospel, we see one of the familiar pictures depicted in the New Testament; namely The Picture of the good Shepherd.

The Good Shepherd enters through the main gate and each sheep knows him. The thieves enter through the back door and they come to steal, destroy and kill the sheep. But the Good Shepherd comes so that they may have life and have it in abundance.

In this scheme of thought what is a missionary supposed to do or find himself. The missionary's role is to be the gate keeper who sits and waits for the arrival of the Good Shepherd and when he comes opens the gate for him. As he waits for the arrival of the Good Shepherd it is his duty to prepare the sheep to welcome the Good Shepherd by narrating to them the unconditional love that bloomed at Mount Calvary for them.

Being the gate keeper, as he waits for the Good Shepherd to come he is not allowed to sit idle. During the waiting period, it is also the duty of the gate keeper to keep the sheep healthy and not allowing them to go astray.

Another important duty of the gate keeper is to be on the guard and should not allow false shepherds to enter the sheep fold. He should not cause anybody or anything to enter the sheep fold and take the sheep away from the Good Shepherd.

The false shepherds could also be coming from within the gate keeper himself: namely his ego, his importance or sometimes as the waiting becomes long, there would be a temptation to project oneself as the real Door. This is equal to usurping the place of God: the sin of Lucifer. Thus the missionary might forget that he is not the door but only a door keeper. He should never feel that he is important. He should learn this from one of the pioneer missionaries of the Gospel namely St. John the Baptist, who at the arrival of the real Door, stepped aside declaring: "Behold, the lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29) and he formally announced this is the real Door: "He who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie" (John 1:27). This should be the attitude of the missionary who is appointed by the Lord as the gate keeper. The gate keeper must always say: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

Published by

CMI General Department of Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry