

Jesus said, 'My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. '

John 10;27

JESUS IS THE "GOOD SHEPHERD."

This is the image he uses so often to describe his relationship to his flock.

We believe that the Bishop of Rome, successor to Saint Peter exercises that role in our day. He is meant to be a unifier of the flock.

But there are two possible images of a shepherd. Some shepherds might feel lonely and angry with their plight, and might become scolds with their straying and often dumb sheep. Their pastoral (notice the similarity between pasture and pastoral) care would be that of a frowning, scolding task master of the sheep.

But that is not the image of the Good Shepherd which Jesus presents to us. The Good Shepherd is gentle, smiling, patient. The good shepherd goes out searching for the lost sheep.

This is what Pope Francis does in his newly released document AMORIS LAETITIA.

Some pertinent quotes:

"The divorced who have entered a new union should be made to feel a part of the church."

"it can no longer simply be said that those living in an "irregular situation" are living in a state of mortal sin, and are deprived of sanctifying grace"

Even those in "an objective situation of sin" can be more pleasing to God "by trying to improve."

"Every person, regardless of sexual orientation should be respected in his or her dignity and treated with consideration."

He also decentralizes moral decision making rather than the Vatican handing down strictures from on high: "Each country or region ...can seek solutions better suited to its culture and local needs."

Of young love, he writes: "Young love needs to keep dancing toward the future with immense hope."

The whole tone of his document is more about tolerance and mercy than about judgment.

Today's Second Reading

"For the Lamb who is in the center of the throne will shepherd them, and lead them to springs of life giving water."

The Book of Revelation

And so we pray:

Lead us O God to well springs of living water.

Heal the sheep who are wounded

(Mention friends wh^o seem wounded...)

Find the sheep who are lost"

{Mention the lost.....)

Shelter us all under the wings of your care.

Amen