



16th SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME ***YEAR B – July 22, 2018***

On this 16th Sunday in Ordinary time, the prophet Jeremiah has some strong words for anyone who is called to be a shepherd of God's people. And in different ways, that's all of us.

He says woe to you shepherds who mislead and scatter the flock of my pasture. He then promises to send a shepherd who will not mislead his people and he does. The name of that shepherd is Jesus.

In the gospel, we hear how the people of Mark's time were like sheep without a shepherd and he describes Jesus as the Good Shepherd who taught them and us what we need to know. Even though all those things were taught more than 2000 years ago, it's amazing how those things are still unknown to many and if known, are disregarded by many even in our own time.

A friend of mine sent me a prayer a couple of years ago that is attributed to Billy Graham. Whether he is the author or not, I don't know but the message in the prayer is a timely one for all of us.

'Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask your forgiveness and to seek your direction and your guidance. We are like sheep without a shepherd. We know Your Word says, 'Woe to those who call evil good,' but that is exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values. We have ignored the teaching of your son:

- * We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery.
- * We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare.
- * We have killed our unborn and called it choice.
- * We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable.
- * We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem.
- * We have abused power and called it politics and religion.
- * We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it redistribution of wealth
- * We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of speech.
- * We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment.
- * We are like sheep without a shepherd and we need your Son Jesus more than ever in our time, to guide us here on earth and lead us to our eternal home in heaven." Amen"

You will recall that I have often said from our pulpit that Jesus is the candle and we are the mirrors that reflect him. If we allow that, we can literally become Jesus for others. We can become good shepherds for people in our time.

Every now and again we need to polish our mirrors when the image of Jesus is dulled by dirt and grime (sin). It's not our job to verbally ram religion down the throats of other people. It's our job to live our religion - and only if we must - use words.

Ghandi once said, "The problem with Christianity is Christians" I think he's right. We can be one of those problems or we can be a good shepherd like Jesus. We badly need good shepherds in our time, and you are called - we are called - to be one of them. Say YES!



Can people see Jesus in You?