

3 May 2020 - Homily
John 10:1-10
By: Fr. Paul Magyar

This section from the gospel of John starts right after Jesus heals the blind man. This healing miracle is fresh in the minds of the disciples and the people. Jesus makes a reference to a "sheepgate" which the closest one to his location would be in Bethesda near the Pool of Siloam where Jesus healed the blind man. a "sheepgate" would have been guarded by an under-shepherd. A sheepfold is a large open land surrounded by a wall of railing. During the evening the various shepherds would lead their flocks and commit them to the sheepfold for the night to the care of the under-shepherd. In the morning the shepherds would knock on the "sheepgate" door. The under-shepherd would open the door and each shepherd calls his own sheep, who know his voice from the other shepherds and follow his voice and follow him to the pasture.

The greatest Israelite heroes were shepherds. Abraham, Jacob, Moses and David are the greatest. Shepherds are tough. In those ancient days there were lions prowling around in Israel. The shepherds had to fight off these lions with a sling shot and a stick. Few people today can pull that off !

The moral meaning of a shepherd is about full dedication and fulfilling one's responsibilities each and every day. Jesus is the full committed shepherd of his people. Jesus comments in the gospel of John against the careless shepherds of Israel. The pharisees claimed for themselves that they were the shepherds of Israel. They decided who is to be admitted and who cast out from the fold. However due to their pride and self-righteousness they forgot about the infinite love and mercy of God. The blind beggar by the Pool of Siloam was cast out from the fold of God. Jesus the good shepherd finds this lost sheep and cures him. Now it is clear to the people who the real shepherd is and what the flock of God really is.

At this time when Jesus is giving this teaching it is the Feast of Tabernacles. Historically at this time 70 oxen were sacrificed in the Temple for the 70 nations of the world. Soon following Jesus sends out the 70 disciples for a missionary journey.

Praying for all of you
Fr. Paul Magyar