

Friday's Gospel: The Sacred Heart of Jesus (Year C)

Gospel for Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi, feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (C), and commentary.

Gospel (*Lk 15:3-7*)

Jesus told them this parable:

“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when

he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”

Commentary

Today the Church celebrates the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Sacred Heart is a symbol of divine love. The heart of Jesus is an expression of his complete self-giving and love for all men and women. Saint John tells us the “having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end” (*Jn 13:1*).

In 1675, Jesus told Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque that he wanted the

Feast of the Sacred Heart to be celebrated on the Friday after the octave of *Corpus Christi*. In 1856, the feast of the Sacred Heart became a universal feast. Saint John Paul II, who had great devotion to the Sacred Heart, said: “This feast reminds us of the mystery of God’s love for the people of all times.”

To know what the Heart of Jesus is like, the Church presents us today with the parable of the Good Shepherd. Jesus is the shepherd who appears anonymously in the story of the lost sheep. His flock is very large: the hundred sheep in this parable symbolize all humanity. But no matter how numerous his flock is, he isn’t willing to lose even one of his sheep. If only one is missing, he knows that his flock is incomplete. And he will go looking for it in the mountains and ravines, and won’t stop until he finds it.

When we refer to a person's heart we think of their affections and sentiments, their way of loving. Saint Josemaría said: "When Scared Scripture refers to the heart, it does not refer to some fleeting sentiment of joy or tears. By heart it means the whole person who, as we see in Jesus himself, directs both soul and body to what is seen as good: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (*Christ Is Passing By*, no. 164).

This last phrase can be an encouragement for us to be surprised again by God's Love: *where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*. We can state without fear of being wrong that *we are God's treasure*.

"We have known and believed in the love that God has for us" (1 Jn 4:16). The apostle John uses two verbs here: *know* and *believe*. They are two clues that can help us take full

advantage of today's Solemnity, so valued by the popular piety of the Church. Saint John knows that he is transmitting something sublime, impossible to put into words. But still he tries to do his best. Hence he stresses so frequently in his letters, in every possible way, that God is Love: "He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth—that you also may believe" (*Jn* 19:35).

The deepest need of our own heart is to come to know the Sacred Heart of Jesus and believe in his Love. Let us go to the intercession of our Lady, whose heart beat in unison with Christ's Heart, asking that we may never cease to be amazed by this mystery: that we are the treasure of the Heart of God.

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