

## **“Guided by Jesús”**

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The experience of the Christian faith is a path that as believers we travel throughout our lives; The first experiences that we have from family, school and church, forever mark our relationship with God, the conception that we form of who He is and, consequently, the way of relating to other people and with the world that surrounds us. , particularly with the nature of which we are a part.

The religious experience determines many of our attitudes, values and behaviors; For this reason, we must be very careful with the image of God that we show to all those with whom we interact and even to those who observe us from afar even without directly interacting with us, particularly children and young people, who are building their experience with Jesus and expect from their elders a true testimony that serves as a guide to reach that personal encounter with the Lord of Life.

Surely, through a word of encouragement or a gesture of love from us, many have found hope in moments of difficulty, they have seen the loving face of God and their lives have perhaps been transformed for an instant; Therefore, maintaining that hope and strengthening that faith is a task that as Christians committed to Jesus and his project we cannot abandon.

Life is much more than a second of euphoria in which our feelings and emotions are exalted by a particular and specific religious experience; Along the way we encounter many setbacks, we go through situations of poverty, illness or sadness due to the loss of people we love, we suffer abandonment, rejection, natural disasters and many other circumstances that attack our faith like enraged beasts. How can we resist all these evils? Where will we get the strength necessary for our faith to stand firm?

Jesus shows us that loving face of God. He is the Good Shepherd who invites us to imitate him and reproduce his presence in the world permanently with our lives; In the words of the Apostle Peter, He presents himself to us as an example so that we can follow in his footsteps.

For its part, the Gospel of Saint John parallels the Good Shepherd against the thief and bandit. The first knows his sheep by his name, personally and individually; for that Good Shepherd, the flock is more than a hungry and needy mass, it is a community, a family where each and every one is aware of their role and is willing to give their best in favor of others; This herd is a family, a community.

That community of faith listens to the voice of its main Shepherd who is Jesus. Each one expresses, from the role he plays, those attitudes of care and generosity typical of the role model that is Christ himself. The community that imitates Jesus the Good Shepherd and listens to his voice expresses its experience of faith in peace, harmony and love; it is a Community of Disciples who walk together guided by Jesus who goes ahead leading it.

However, reaching this state of maturity in faith requires great effort and commitment. The evangelist tells us that the disciples did not understand the simile that Jesus presents to them despite the fact that he addresses a pastoral community, familiar with the figure and functioning of the flock. In this case, the Shepherd's voice is clear, but the ears and understanding of the flock are not open and willing enough; However, Jesus does not lose patience, does not abandon his commitment, does not give up in the attempt and is willing to patiently explain, guide and teach.

He is the Good Shepherd and whoever is united with Him finds salvation and life in abundance. The sheep that come to the flock, family-community of Jesus, are no longer alone, they are rescued, saved from loneliness and exile, they find strength to move forward, reject the impostor and the bandit who wants to use them for their personal benefit, and they overcome adversity together, even though they walk through valleys of

shadows -as the psalmist says-; they advance without fear and find, after the effort and in unity, green pastures and calm waters.

Once this community is formed and strengthened, the biggest challenge that is presented to it is to remain faithful to the Gospel. Human beings are deeply emotional, when we open ourselves to listening to Jesus, our hearts ignite with joy and we feel ready for anything, however, over time we fall into a routine, lose enthusiasm and begin to see obstacles in the smallest details, living with the brothers becomes complicated, devoting time to the church, the family-community of faith, becomes more and more difficult and we enter a process of spiritual cooling that on many occasions leads to the abandonment of the flock and the sheep are exposed to the ferocious claws of the bandit who takes advantage of their weakness and loneliness.

In order to defeat those ghosts that threaten the community of Jesus, all Christians, we must be attentive to the permanent practice of the tools that the Lord himself has given us and that constitute the source from which the first Christian communities that maintained themselves were fed. firm in the most difficult times of persecution: the Eucharist, teaching, prayer, sharing, are those sources of life that have nourished Christians of all times.

This is the family-community that will be appreciated and respected by all, as happened in the early church and, as the Acts of the Apostles tells us, a community that grows in number, but above all in love, a community that brings together the called by God so that we may be participants in the new life in Christ.