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Message from the Spiritual Advisor: Image of the Good Shepherd

Dino Lorenzetti

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Message from the Spiritual Advisor



Image of the Good Shepherd

Skilled craftsmen universally have captured the scriptural image of Christ, the Good Shepherd, in their works of art. They portray the loving, compassionate Lord Jesus with His rod and staff, surrounded by docile sheep awaiting His next move. This theme of Psalm 23 is applied to both bishops and priests in their evangelical apostolate. Could a modern physician be cited as a shepherd also?

In our highly technological society, agricultural scenes of sheep and shepherds are hardly compatible with busy cities, speedy ambulances and ultra-modern hospitals. Therefore, one can readily ask, is the metaphor of shepherd and sheep relevant today?

The physician's responsibility to leave those who are healthy and care for the sick, abandoned, confused, diseased and unprotected is indisputable. His authority to insure ways to bring about recovery and his uplifting of those in the depths of despair to the green pastures of hope certainly entitle him to be seen as the Christ-like Good Shepherd. His willingness to take time out and, with confidence, bring his patients close to him is surely in keeping with Him Who lifts His sheep, lost and afraid, on to His shoulders as a loving sign of His genuine concern for them.

The gospels (John 10:11-18) speak of two characteristics which define a good shepherd. One is that he know his sheep, and the other that he be willing to die for them. Knowing your patients and giving of your time (your life) for them certainly qualifies you for this honor which permits you to "dwell in the house of the Lord for years to come."

Your stethoscope is your rod and staff. Present before you is the "lamb"; helpless on his bed. However, you are not afraid to walk "in the shadow

of death" as the Lord is with you, "to give you courage". People, like sheep, need to be guided, to be given leadership, direction and hope. They will follow the loving, concerned shepherd whom they can trust.

The psalm concludes with comforting words from its author, King David, who prophesied in the name of the Lord that, "Your goodness and kindness shall follow Me all the days of My life".

As you shepherd your patients, your "flock", your goodness and kindness follow the Lord. It is true you will become humble and exhausted, but it is also true that in the mystery of ministering, your servant status becomes regal.

—Msgr. Dino J. Lorenzetti

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