

Christ is Our Shepherd

Fr Louis Fowóyò

A member of a royal house is addressed with magnificence, majesty and gaiety. Such a person is accorded with nobility and highly respected.

- A noble person waits to do the bidden of the royalties. He/she listens to the voice of the King and answers to that voice with joy. He/she expects that that voice brings in some soothing joy and balm of gladness.
- The response to the Psalm today gives the response of a noble one who hears the voice of the long-awaited King.
- “I have waited, waited for the Lord, and He stooped toward me and heard my cry. And He put a new song into my mouth, a hymn to our God.” And the answer is: “Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.”
- As noble children of God, we should always be ready to do the will of God. It is only in doing His will that we find fulfillment and peace.
- “In the written scroll it is prescribed for me, to do your will, O my God, is my delight, and your law is within my heart!”
- Doing the will of God is very liberating. The glory of God shines through us if we do His will.

1st Reading: Isaiah 49: 3,5-6; is a confirmation of the glory of God shining in the one that does the will of God.

- “The Lord said to me: You are my servant, Israel, through whom I show my glory.”
- The word ISRAEL, refers both to a people (as at the time of writing, the nation of Israel but now all the people of God because of our redemption through Jesus Christ), and to individuals who experienced the gift of redemption in the Lord.
- A personal encounter with the Lord, makes us His people. A revered and hallowed one of the Lord. By our union with the Lord, we are consecrated, we are blessed.
- Our sanctification in the Lord has enabled us to be glorious in the sight of the Lord.
- “I am made glorious in the sight of the Lord, and my God is now my strength.”
- We are acknowledged by God, to work for Him, to serve Him and to serve our neighbors. “I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.”
- Our God, is proud of us and also interested in using us for His glory by our serving others and bringing them to God.
- When we have known who we are serving, when we have experienced the joy that comes from knowing God, then we will say with delight: “Here I am, Lord, I come to do your will.”

2nd Reading: 1Corinthians 1:1-3; St Paul brings the peace of Jesus to the people of Corinth. But he had to first let them know by what power he was writing to them.

- He wrote to them in the power of an apostle of Jesus even though, he was not chosen directly by Jesus, but by his present calling and revelation, he is now an apostle.

- “Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God that is in Corinth...”
- His introduction seems as if the people still doubt his conversion because they knew him as one who persecuted the church. However, for Paul, his apostle’s credential is not by popular election of the people, but by an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God.
- The name of Sosthenes was important to mention, because Sosthenes witnessed to Paul by his own suffering as a Christian. This we read in Acts 18:12. Sosthenes became a trusted and dependable person to Paul.

Gospel: John 1:29-34; echo the salvation that we received because Jesus was obedient to the will of the Father. He obeyed the Father until the point of death.

- John the Baptist, introduced Jesus to the world. He is the forerunner of the Lord and he has come into the world just for that.
- “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He is the one of whom I said, ‘A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because He existed before me.’”
- This is the Jesus that Isaiah refers to as the suffering Servant of God. He is the Messiah of the world who has come to take away the sin of the world. He will do this by obeying the Father till the end even when it means dying on the cross.
- It is this death that makes Him victorious.
- We are called to look up to the Lamb of God for our salvation. We are to be grateful for this wonderful act of love that is coming from God Himself. We are to imitate Him by doing the will of God.
- He suffered for us. If God grant us the grace to suffer with Him, let us remember that He has suffered before us. He will not abandon us in time of our need. Ours is to surrender ourselves to God and, like we read in the Psalm today: “Here I am, Lord, I come to do your will.”