**The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep**

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER APRIL 25 (Jn 10, 11-18)**

How is it given the life for sheep? We know that Jesus physically gave his life. A holocaust of love was made really, truly on the cross for the salvation of every man. Saint Paul shows how he gives his life for the sheep: doing everything to everyone to save someone. He renounced everything, even the rights that come to him from the Gospel, in order to make Jesus the Lord credible: *"Do you not know that those who perform the temple services eat (what) belongs to the temple, and those who minister at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? In the same way, the Lord ordered that those who preach the gospel should live by the gospel. I have not used any of these rights, however, nor do I write this that it be done so in my case. I would rather die. Certainly no one is going to nullify my boast. If I preach the gospel, this is no reason for me to boast, for an obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not preach it! if I do so willingly, I have a recompense, but if unwillingly, then I have been entrusted with a stewardship. What then is my recompense? That, when I preach, I offer the gospel free of charge so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.*

*Although I am free in regard to all, I have made myself a slave to all so as to win over as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew to win over Jews; to those under the law I became like one under the law - though I myself am not under the law - to win over those under the law. To those outside the law I became like one outside the law - though I am not outside God's law but within the law of Christ - to win over those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak. I have become all things to all, to save at least some. All this I do for the sake of the gospel, so that I too may have a share in it. Do you not know that the runners in the stadium all run in the race, but only one wins the prize? Run so as to win. Every athlete exercises discipline in every way. They do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one. Thus I do not run aimlessly; I do not fight as if I were shadowboxing. No, I drive my body and train it, for fear that, after having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified. "(1 Cor 9: 13-27).*The Apostle Peter instead gives a universal rule. Every priest the can to her: *"So I exhort the presbyters among you, as a fellow presbyter and witness to the sufferings of Christ and one who has a share in the glory to be revealed. Tend the flock of God in your midst, (overseeing) not by constraint but willingly, as God would have it, not for shameful profit but eagerly. Do not lord it over those assigned to you, but be examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd is revealed, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. "(1Pt 5, 1-4).* However, it must always be remembered that personal modalities are suggested by the Holy Spirit.

*I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. A hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters them. This is because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd . No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. This command I have received from my Father . "*

Jesus does not give his life by his decision. He gives it out of obedience to his Father. Everything in our life must be obedience. If it is not obedience, it does not save, it does not redeem, it does not produce any fruit of eternal life. He is saved by obeying the Holy Spirit.

Mother of the Redemption, Angels, Saints, make us always obey the Spirit of God.