**WEDNESDAY MAY 04 – THIRD WEEK OF EASTER [C]**

**Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me.**

**What is the will of the Father regarding the sheep given to Christ Jesus? Here is how this will is revealed by Jesus when He speaks about the Good Shepherd and of sheep:** **"Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate but climbs over elsewhere is a thief and a robber. But whoever enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice, as he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice. But they will not follow a stranger; they will run away from him, because they do not recognize the voice of strangers." Although Jesus used this figure of speech, they did not realize what he was trying to tell them. So Jesus said again, "Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came [before me] are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly. 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. This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. 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." (Jn 10, 1-18)**

**Jesus was sent by the Father to give life to his sheep. His sheep can live in serenity, in peace. The Shepherd watches over them and he will not let the wolf to approach them. First the wolf will have to maul the Shepherd, but since the wolf has no power over the Shepherd, neither over the sheep might it ever have any power. However, it is just that a second truth receives clarity. The Father gives a sheep to Jesus. Jesus will keep this sheep, that is not his, but of the Father, with all his love that is endless. But this love is not enough so that the sheep is kept and protected. It is necessary that also the sheep let itself be kept and protected, always following Christ Jesus. If it turns away from Christ either with the mind or with the heart, Jesus might do nothing for it. The sheep has chosen the way of perdition. Thus Jesus says this truth to his Father:** “**I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for the ones you have given me, because they are yours, and everything of mine is yours and everything of yours is mine, and I have been glorified in them. And now I will no longer be in the world, but they are in the world, while I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one just as we are. When I was with them I protected them in your name that you gave me, and I guarded them, and none of them was lost except the son of destruction, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you. I speak this in the world so that they may share my joy completely. I gave them your word, and the world hated them, because they do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world.” (Jn 17, 9-14) Sure, the Lord has revealed that He will always seek the lost sheep. But He has also revealed that He will not always be able to lead it back to the sheepfold. Judah is an example for everyone. No matter the Lord has manifested all his love, his heart by then handed over to Satan despised this love instead of accepting it. We know the fate he did. He despaired.**

**Let us read the text of Jn 6,35-40**

**Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst. But I told you that although you have seen (me), you do not believe. Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me. And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it (on) the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him (on) the last day."**

**We have a certainty. On behalf of the Lord no sheep given to Him by the Father will be lost. He will keep it at the cost of his life. The sheep can get lost, though. When will it be lost? When it turns away from his Shepherd either with the mind or with the heart. It means that there is a personal responsibility everyone must bear responsibility. Here is the warning of the Apostle Peter:** “**Be sober and vigilant. Your opponent the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for (someone) to devour. Resist him, steadfast in faith, knowing that your fellow believers throughout the world undergo the same sufferings.” May the Mother of God keep us in her heart. We will be certain that Satan will never tear us away from it. Amen.**