

GOSPEL

John 10:1-10

Jesus said: 'I tell you most solemnly, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate, but gets in some other way is a thief and a brigand. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock; the gatekeeper lets him in, the sheep hear his voice, one by one he calls his own sheep and leads them out. When he has brought out his flock, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know his voice. They never follow a stranger but run away from him: they do not recognise the voice of strangers.'

Jesus told them this parable but they failed to understand what he meant by telling it to them.

So Jesus spoke to them again:

'I tell you most solemnly,
I am the gate of the sheepfold.
All others who have come
are thieves and brigands;
but the sheep took no notice of them.
I am the gate.
Anyone who enters through me will be safe:
he will go freely in and out
and be sure of finding pasture.
The thief comes
only to steal and kill and destroy.
I have come
so that they may have life
and have it to the full.'

REFLECTION OF POPE LEO XIV

26 April 2026

Brothers and sisters, good afternoon and happy Sunday!

As we continue our journey through the Easter season, today's Gospel presents us with Jesus' comparison of himself to a shepherd and also to the gate of the sheepfold (cf. Jn 10:1–10).

Jesus draws a contrast between the shepherd and the thief. Indeed, he says that "anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit" (v. 1). He goes on to make this even clearer: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (v. 10). The difference is clear: the shepherd has a special bond with his sheep and can

therefore enter by the gate of the sheepfold. On the other hand, if someone has to climb over the fence to get in, then he is certainly a thief who wants to steal the sheep.

Jesus is telling us that he is bound to us by a relationship of friendship, for he knows us, calls us by name, guides us, and — just as the shepherd does with his sheep — searches for us when we are lost and binds up our wounds when we are sick (cf. Ezek 34:16). Jesus does not come as a thief to take away our life and our freedom, but to lead us along the paths of righteousness. He does not come to ensnare or deceive our conscience, but to illuminate it with the light of his wisdom. He does not come to taint our earthly joys, but to open them to a fuller and more lasting happiness. Those who entrust themselves to him have nothing to fear, for he does not deprive us of life, but comes to give it to us in abundance (cf. v. 10).

Brothers and sisters, we are invited to reflect on, and especially to be vigilant over, the gate to our heart and our life, because whoever enters may either increase our joy, or steal it from us like a thief. "Thieves" can take many forms. They could be: people who, regardless of appearances, suppress our freedom or fail to respect our dignity; beliefs and biases that prevent us from viewing others and life with serenity; mistaken ideas that can lead us to make negative choices; or superficial and consumeristic lifestyles that leave us empty on the inside and push us to live constantly beyond ourselves. And let us not forget those "thieves" who, by pillaging the earth's resources, waging blood-thirsty wars, or fueling evil in any form, do nothing but rob each of us of the possibility of a future marked by peace and serenity.

We must ask ourselves: Who do we want to guide us in life? Which "thieves" have tried to break into our fold? Have they succeeded, or have we managed to ward them off?

Today, the Gospel invites us to trust in the Lord. He does not come to take anything from us. On the contrary, he is the Good Shepherd who increases life and offers it to us in abundance.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/Homily?



Head: Jesus contrasts the shepherd who gives life with the thief who destroys; what does this reveal about how we discern who or what is truly leading us?



Heart: Pope Leo XIV invites us to be vigilant over the “gate” of our hearts; what influences, voices, or habits most shape your inner life — and where might they be leading you?



Hands: Jesus says he comes to give life in abundance; what is one concrete way you can choose his voice this week, especially where other “voices” compete for your attention?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. “Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray”)
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others’ prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the ‘Glory Be’.