

“It is in my power to lay down my life”

About a month ago on Good Friday we focused on Jesus' death. As we have heard, Jesus in this parable of the Good Shepherd foretells his fate. He reveals his future through this parable and he is conscious of the value of his sacrifice. He helps us through the image of the Good Shepherd to understand that his death is not a victory of his enemies, but it is his own sacrifice for us; that is the deepest sign of his love, his self attendance.

The ideal shepherd offers the best of his life for each one of his own sheep. Normally a shepherd does not want to give his life for his animals, but tries to do his best to take care of them. Feeds them, cut their hair, gives them water, keeps sicknesses and danger away from them: he does his best what he can do for his flock. In Jesus person, an absolutely good shepherd appears in front of our eyes. Of course he does not want to die to save animals, but he wants to die for his people, to save us, human beings from danger, sicknesses caused by sin. Offering his life – is the only way he can save humans from their sins, that keeps them away from God. He takes care people by healing, by teaching them, but finally he has to accept his vocation. His death is the ultimate expression of his love towards people (towards us!). He cannot do anything else. Normally death is the ultimate sign of weakness, but His death is the sign of his strength. It does not happen

because his enemies were stronger than him, but it was his free attendance. He has the power to lay down his life – it is his free will. Through Jesus' weakness, through his humanity and through his offer, the heavenly Father' strength is revealed. But this strength is revealed especially in the moments when Jesus is really weak on the cross. Before he died, he had to suffer a lot. Because of this, he has been given the power to take his life up again. In this way he foretells his resurrection, too. This is the ultimate sign of God's love, this is what we celebrate on Easter Sunday.

Through Jesus' weakness on the cross, God revealed his deepest love towards humanity. Whenever we feel ourselves very weak, we can understand how God wants to show us his strength.

That is why, through Jesus' teaching, I say to you, dear brother and sisters: Do not be afraid of your weaknesses, your difficulties, your troubles; but be opened and wait for the sign of God! Do not want to be strong alone, in a human way, but look how God wants to show his strength even through your weaknesses and troubles. Brother Roger the founder of Taizé Community wrote: *"My wounds are the door through which God comes to visit me"*. He heard this prayer from a leper in Mother Theresa's hospital. In these words the sick man celebrated God's goodness. He deeply understood the gentle love of God.

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