



Boston Catholic Journal

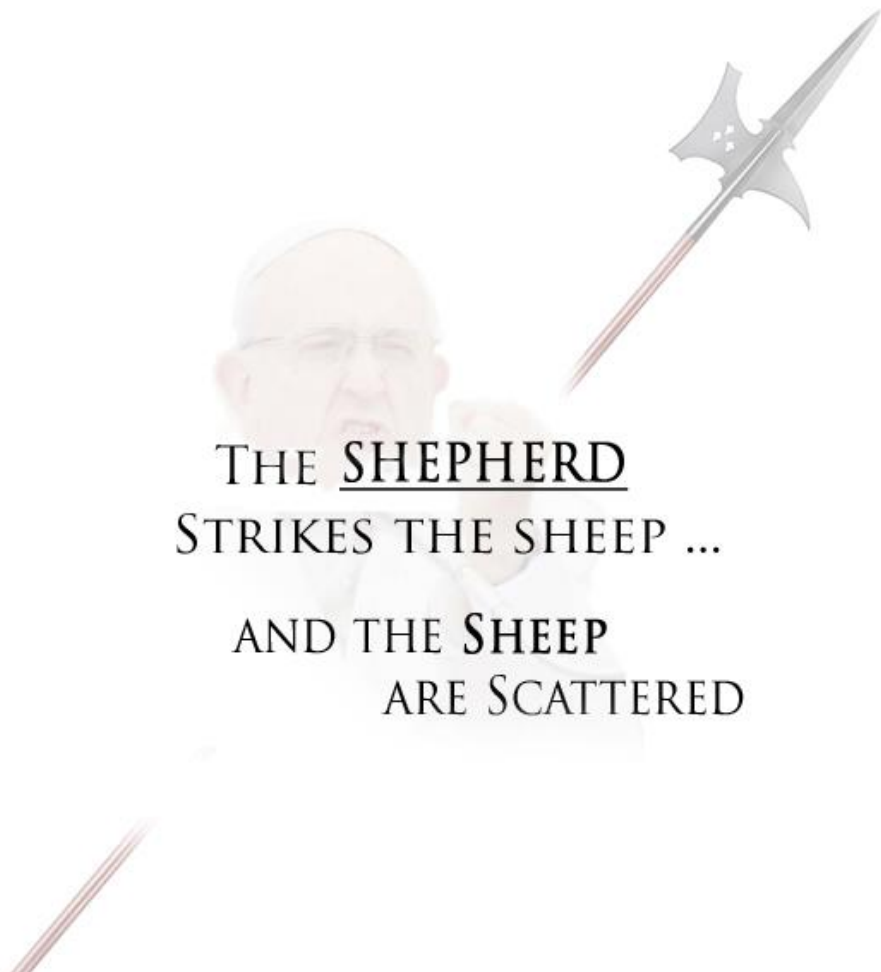


NIHIL NISI JESUM

DEDICATED TO MARY MOTHER OF GOD

www.boston-catholic-journal.com
editor@boston-catholic-journal.com

“It is written: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.” (Saint Matthew 26.31)



THE SHEPHERD
STRIKES THE SHEEP ...
AND THE SHEEP
ARE SCATTERED

“I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.”¹

We have often heard this. It pertains to the imminent Passion of Jesus Christ on the very night before He was betrayed into the hands of sinful men. He, the Good Shepherd, would be struck (in fact, repeatedly ...) and the Apostles, the Disciples, and the Faithful would be scattered — they would abandon Him, flee for their lives, and their unity in Him would be broken. Their Shepherd, in Whose fold they were one flock, had been struck! What the will become of the sheep? How much anxiety rends them!

But now, in some incomprehensible and ghastly apocalyptic narrative unfolding before our very eyes, the shepherd himself strikes the sheep — and they are scattered! Unfaithful to his trust and careless of the sheep entrusted to him, the shepherd not only abandons them to the wolves who have prowled the fences for 500 years ... but he himself strikes them so that they are *forced* to leave the sheepfold; with his staff he strikes the necks and the backs of the defenseless sheep — not even sparing the Little Lambs — who cry out in their pain as they flee, seeking a fold where they will find pasture and protection. They are confused and frightened, **and no other shepherd seems to have the courage to gather the lost and the scattered** — not one other shepherd! Homeless and shelterless they are prey to wolves — wolves even more remorseless than the wolves who drove them from the sheepfold.

In the gathering darkness they huddle and tremble, lacerated by a betrayal too appalling to grasp. Behold a vignette of the Holy Catholic Church of this day, under the tyranny of Francis who turns out the faithful to welcome those whose gods are idols and earth. What a terrible pronouncement mutters on the horizon!

Let us not fear. We know Whom we follow even when the hireling has fled. We know the voice of the Good Shepherd — and will not follow another.

He will not abandon us.

Let nothing obscure the glory of God — let *nothing* come between us and the vision of unapproachable glory in the face of Christ Jesus. All that is on the earth and of the earth — will pass away as it came: like breath on wintery glass, and its pretension will come to nothing. The seat of power that evil men have taken to themselves, the desecration of sacred places and sacred things, the betrayal of innocence to things corrupt and vile, **the scattering of the sheep who are struck by the shepherd and driven from pasture** ... all this is known unto God ... and our littleness and powerlessness before it. For a time we must bend before this infamous wind, but we will not bow ... nor break, nor lose faith. Those that now ruthlessly tower like the cedars of Lebanon, in a time will no longer find their place among us ... nor we among them.

We will not, then, be troubled by recreant men. We are called to glory. What is the fecklessness of man before so great a calling? **Let us not be troubled by those who have lost God and trampled His Vineyard. We know the voice of the Shepherd and will not follow another.** It may seem that we are bound, hand and foot, like lambs delivered to those who would make a sacrifice of us to false gods, and we are anxious. Let it not be so. Christ goes before us, and we go with Christ to the Father. We need not fear. Has He not told us that none may take us from His Father's hand?

Away, then, usurpers and liars! We have more pressing concerns than your feeble quest for petty power. We must to God! And we will let no one and nothing persuade us — or drive us away — from that pledge of glory to which we are called in Christ!

¹ Saint Matthew 26.31

Geoffrey K. Mondello
Editor
Boston Catholic Journal



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