

Sermon On Pastors

Focus	Augustine's teaching	
<i>The milk of the flock gives sustenance</i>	<i>Whatever temporal support and sustenance God's people give to those who are placed over them to shepherd them... the Lord had established that they who preach the Gospel should live from the Gospel... Those shepherds who do not need the milk of the flock... are more merciful; or rather, they carry out a more abundant ministry of mercy. However, he (Paul) wanted the sheep to be fruitful, not sterile and unable to give milk.</i>	3-4
<i>Support & payment</i>	<i>For the light to be kept alive it must receive fuel which is to be provided out of charity. Only let not the Gospel be for sale, with preachers demanding a price for it and making their living from it. If they sell it like that, they are selling for a pittance something that is of great value. Let them receive support in their need from the people, but payment for their stewardship from the Lord. No, it is not right for the people to give payment to those who serve them out of love of the Gospel. Payment is to be expected only from the one who also grants salvation.</i>	4-5
<i>The wool of the flock gives honor & praise</i>	<i>Clothing can well be taken to mean honor, since it covers nakedness. For every man without exception is weak. And who is any man placed over you except someone just like yourself. Your pastor is in the flesh, he is mortal... simply a man. But it is true that you make him something more by giving him honor; it is as if you were covering what is weak.</i>	6-7
<i>Do not neglect the sheep</i>	<i>The Apostle... still comes to the sheep that is ill, to the one that is diseased, to cut the wound and not to spare the diseased part. He did not neglect his sheep. He did not seek what was his but what was Christ's.</i>	
<i>Wicked shepherds</i>	<i>Wicked shepherds neglect the sheep that are ill and weak, those that go astray and are lost, and do not spare the strong and healthy – killing them by their wicked lives and bad example – not pasturing them.</i>	9
<i>Neglect</i>	<i>Wicked shepherds neglect to strengthen what was weak, to heal what was sick, and to bind up what was injured or broken. They did not call back the straying sheep, nor seek out the lost, destroying the strong. They are weak – their heart is weak – incautious and unprepared, they may give in to temptation.</i>	10-11
<i>Strengthen the sheep</i>	<i>My son, come to the service of God, stand fast in fear and in righteousness, and prepare your soul for temptation. Do not hope for the prosperity of the world, and do not be corrupted by prosperity.</i>	
<i>Build the believer on rock</i>	<i>Expect the temptations of the world, but the Lord will deliver you from them all if your heart has not abandoned him. For it was to strengthen your heart that he came to suffer and die, came to be spit upon and crowned with thorns, came to be accused of shameful things, yes, came to be fastened to the wood of the cross. All these things he did for you.</i>	

St. Thomas à Becket Parish – Spirituality Notes – St. Augustine

<i>Fear of giving offense</i>	<i>Fail to prepare the sheep for the temptations that threaten, but even promise the sheep worldly happiness. The disciple, precisely because he is a Christian, is destined to suffer more in this world. “All who desire to live a holy life in Christ will suffer persecution.”</i>	
<i>God adopts us as sons. Strengthen the weak, encourage the fearful, bind up the lame.</i>	<i>God chastises his children as He did Jesus. One who is weak must neither be deceived with false hope nor broken by fear, or he may fail when temptations come. Say to him, “Prepare your soul for temptation. God is faithful. He does not allow you to be tempted beyond your strength.” Promise him God’s mercy. Some seek the glorious death of the martyrs. Others hear of the temptations to come, and when they do arrive, they become broken and lame. Offer the bandage of consolation; bind up what has been broken. “Do not be afraid. God in whom you have believed does not abandon you in temptations. God is faithful. He does not allow you to be tempted beyond your strength. God rebukes but also encourages, he brings fear and he brings consolation, he strikes and he heals. Do not reject him.”</i>	11-12
<i>Heal the sick, bind up the broken</i>	<i>It is to be feared that when temptation comes, it may break the weak. The sick person, however, is already ill by reason of some illicit desire or other, and this is keeping him from entering God’s path and submitting to Christ’s yoke.</i>	13
<i>The weak may desire good</i>	<i>Some may desire to live a good life and be ready to do good, but are not capable of bearing sufferings or endure evil. Weak men are those who appear to be zealous in doing good works but are unwilling or unable to endure the sufferings that threaten.</i>	
<i>The sick do not</i>	<i>Lovers of the world, kept from good works by some evil desire, lie sick and listless, and it is this sickness that deprives them of any strength to accomplish good works. Reveal what is hidden and lower this paralytic to the feet of Jesus, the physician concealed within and hidden in the Scripture. There is at hand a consolation that will bind the broken: “God is faithful, with the temptation He will provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”</i>	
<i>Recall the straying, seek the lost</i>	<i>The straying sheep are insolent, “I wish to stray. Do not call me back. I want to be lost. Do not seek me.” Listen to the Apostle, “Preach the word; insist upon it, welcome and unwelcome.” Dare to say, “You wish to stray, you wish to be lost; but I do not want this. For the one I fear does not wish this. Shall I fear you rather than Him?” I shall recall the straying; I shall seek the lost, whether they wish it or not. I fear that in neglecting the straying and the lost, I shall also kill what is strong; who may then also take delight in straying and being lost.</i>	14-15
<i>They stray all over the world</i>	<i>Those who stray strive after the goods of this world evident on this earth and are scattered all over in pursuit of them. They do not want to die, to have their lives buried in Christ. Pride has given birth to them all. Pride gives birth to division. They are lost sheep, sterile branches cut off from the vine.</i>	18-19

St. Thomas à Becket Parish – Spirituality Notes – St. Augustine

<i>Our catholic mother is a shepherd, a vine</i>	<i>Our mother the Church, a shepherd, seeks the straying sheep everywhere, strengthens the weak, heals the sick, and binds up the injured. They may not know one another, but she knows them all. She calls the strays back, because “God has the power to graft them on again” – those branches cut off from the vine and lying there. The wicked shepherds are dead, and God provides good shepherds to tend his flock.</i>	
<i>Speak God’s word of warning to the sinner</i>	<i>The sinner who fails to heed God’s word of warning dies in his sin. He could have found the Lord, but he was heedless of the sword of judgment and it overtook him and killed him. All must hear the words of Scripture and heed them, but shepherd must speak this word out loud, to give the sinner every opportunity to take the word to heart and discover the Lord.</i>	20-21
<i>Feed them in good pastures</i>	<i>Pasture the sheep and feed them on the mountains of the divine Scriptures in safety and savor every word, lest you wander in the mist and get lost. Bring the healthy sheep to feed on the Scriptures. They will find rest in the knowledge that God’s word is true, and they are not deceived. They will rest in the glory of God and in good pleasures. Help them see their help is not in the mountains themselves, in the word itself, but in the one who speaks the word to us – the Lord. He feeds us with judgment. Our life is filled with rash judgments, for we can know nothing for certain of ourselves. The Lord assigns to each what is owed to him and feeds his sheep with judgment, giving some things to one group, other things to another, and to each his due. For He knows what He is doing. With judgment He feeds those whom He, being judged himself, redeemed.</i>	24-25, 27
<i>Though many, there is one shepherd</i>	<i>If there are good sheep there are also good shepherds; good sheep give rise to good shepherds. But all good shepherds are one in the one good shepherd; they form a unity. If only they feed the sheep, Christ is feeding the sheep. The friends of the bridegroom do not speak with their own voice, but they take great joy in listening to the bridegroom’s voice. When He entrusted his sheep to Peter as one person to another, Christ chose to make Peter one with himself – He the head, and Peter the body. As bridegroom and bride, Christ and the Church were to be two in one flesh. “Peter, do you love me?” “I love you.” He receives an assurance of love in order to establish unity. Christ is the one shepherd who is one with the other shepherds, and in whom they themselves are one. They should be shepherds for Christ, shepherds in Christ, not shepherds for themselves, apart from Christ. All shepherds should therefore speak with the one voice of the one shepherd, so that the sheep may hear and follow the one shepherd. All should speak with one voice in Christ, not with different voices. The sheep should hear this voice, a voice purified from all schism, freed from all heresy, and so follow their shepherd, wh says: “My sheep hear my voice and follow me.”</i>	29-30