



## Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2022

My dear brothers and sisters, I have been thinking about a lost sheep that drops to the ground and refuses to move. The shepherd who finds it must pick the beast up. There is no other way to get it back to the flock. It must be carried. Sheep are too big to carry under one's arm, so a fireman's carry (across the shoulders) is the only way to do it. Since in Jesus' world, a lost sheep was probably in a rocky desert, a shepherd staggering along with one on his shoulders would have risked sprained ankles or worse. With the above in mind, I hope this week's message finds you well and peaceful. Now, let us reflect a bit on today's gospel.

### **As a shepherd, how would you handle a lost sheep?**

If I were a shepherd and one of my sheep wandered off, I would say, "Tough luck," and leave it at that. Of course, the sheep would have some right to complain: "You say I don't understand when I am being helped, but you are no better. God does all sorts of things in your life, sends you all sorts of people, teachings and opportunities, and you complain or ignore them! You would rather sit down in your stupidity, your errors, and your laziness than get up and follow the Lord, even though he is leading you to safety,"

Let's leave the sheep (they are getting embarrassing) and turn to money. That's something we all appreciate. The lost coin to which Jesus refers is not merely loose change dropped by the woman while unpacking the groceries. A woman wore her wealth as a headdress, the coins strung around her brow. The woman in the story has only ten coins, each worth about one day's wage. With only that much of an emergency fund, she is poor. To lose even a single coin is a disaster. So, she gets to work. Her broom would be her major help, hoping she might hear a welcome "clink" as the broom hit the coin and knocked it against something.

My dear brothers and sisters, in both stories, of course, the searcher is God our Father and Mother. God is the shepherd who will not leave the sheep to die in its stupidity. He searches us out and then does the real work of saving us from ourselves, saving us for our real home with the flock of God.

Always remember that God is the woman who looks for the lost coin. ( Jesus has no trouble speaking of God as a woman, and the early church had no trouble passing on the tradition that he did so, something that might shock many today.) God will do all in her power to bring us back to her. We can lose ourselves in all the dark places of the world and of our hearts, but she will be persistent.

And finally, God is the loving father who embraces his wayward sons and daughters, and welcomes them home to a feast.

My dear brothers and sisters, always remember that God is the shepherd who will never abandon me when I stray. God the housewife or a mother who will search me out wherever I may get lost Here God is merciful not to "Humankind," but to lost, bewildered, stupid, unlovable me!

As I wish you and your families God's merciful love and protection, may the intercession of our Blessed mother Mary follow you, both now and forever, Amen.

Yours Affectionately,  
Father Nicholas Nwanzi.