

THE GOOD SHEPHERD
AND HIS LITTLE LAMBS
STUDY EDITION

THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND HIS
LITTLE LAMBS STUDY EDITION:
A FIRST COMMUNION STORY-PRIMER

STORY BY MRS. HERMANN BOSCH

SUPPLEMENT BY JANET P. MCKENZIE

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With much love,
this edition is dedicated to my grandchildren,
Althea, Grace, Norah, Ethan, and Katherine,
and all the other little lambs to come
with prayers that you may never stray
from the protective love of
our Good Shepherd.

PREFACE

The aim of this little book—to turn young souls to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament—appeals to me so powerfully, that I deem it a privilege to commend it most warmly to the public, particularly to those seeking a suitable gift for First Communicants.

Knowing that little learners are not able to derive knowledge from lengthy deductions following abstract premises, Mrs. Bosch has formed a living picture of every notion she wishes to impart. The language placed upon the lips of the four youthful characters (Philip, Rose, John, and Anna) is adapted to the understanding of the very youngest.

After reading or hearing *The Good Shepherd and His Little Lambs*, the little ones will surely and clearly understand the real life and love of our dear Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

A. Letellier, SSS
March 29, 1912
New York City, New York

INTRODUCTION

On August 8, 1910, Pope Pius X signed the Decree on First Communion (*Quam Singulari*), which lowered the age of first reception from twelve to seven years of age. This document followed his 1905 publication of *Sacred Tridentina* (Decree on Frequent and Daily Reception of Holy Communion). These two documents greatly contributed to not only more people receiving the Eucharist but also more frequently. Little wonder that Pope Pius X is often referred to as the “Pope of the Eucharist!”

It was perhaps in response to this lowering of the age for First Holy Communion that, in 1912, Mrs. Hermann Bosch wrote this engaging story to help young children prepare to receive our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. More than a story, *The Good Shepherd and His Little Lambs* is a First Communion primer that takes the basic tenets of the catechism and, through naturally-flowing conversations, relates them in the language of little ones to authentic Christian living. Mrs. Bosch believed that preparation for First Holy Communion should consist in an understanding not only of the catechism but also of Jesus’ great love for us. She explains, “We might learn the catechism all the way through beautifully, and at the end find ourselves still very stiff and clumsy about loving our Lord. When He comes to us, we don’t want to welcome Him into our souls only with answers out of the catechism, do we?”

It is in this spirit that the 2010 edition of this delightful book has been prepared. While the text ensures that little ones will better know and serve our Lord Jesus, the supplemental material provides a gentle review of pertinent basic doctrine, connections to Scripture, prayers to memorize, poems to read aloud, and additional prayers to enrich a little lamb's spiritual life. Remember, however, that the supplemental material is provided to enrich the text—not to take center stage. Depending on each child's previous level of preparation, knowledge base, and intensity of interest, you may opt to use all, some, or none of the supplemental material. Please attach no guilt to any of these choices.

This book is best used as a read aloud—an experience shared with adults and children. Its easy narration of the simple truths of the Catholic faith and God's great love for us help to instill an endearing (and enduring) love of our Lord under the title of the Good Shepherd. It is my fervent prayer that this book will prompt many spiritual conversations and inspire you and your children to love our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament ever more deeply.

Janet P. McKenzie
March 19, 2010
Feast of St. Joseph

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“FEED My LAMBS!”

THEY decided to have their talks in the back yard under the old elm trees—Auntie, who was big and knew a great many stories, and the four children, Rose and Anna, Philip and John.

Philip was nearly eight, and ever so much taller than his sister Rose and his cousin John, who were both seven. Anna was only six, and as she was as curly-headed and rosy-cheeked as a new doll, people would call her “the baby,” no matter how many times she reminded them that her name was Anna.

“You needn’t mind,” said Auntie, picking Anna up and settling her upon her knee. “You’re nearly as tall as your brother John, anyway.”

“And John’s seven,” said Anna, very much soothed.

“Besides,” said John, who was very fond and proud of his small sister, “I’m a boy, and boys have to be bigger than girls.”

Auntie smiled at the manly little chap, who never willfully hurt anything—people, or their feelings, or birds or cats.

“If Anna gets too comfortable, Auntie,” said Rose, watching Anna settling her head upon Auntie’s shoulder, “she falls asleep.”

“I don’t!” cried Anna, sitting up straight.

“Well, if she does, no harm is done. She’s our littlest lamb of all.”

“But I’m not a baby,” Anna declared, dropping back into cozy comfort. “I don’t mind being a little lamb.”

“No, not a baby,” Auntie agreed. “And the little lambs are exactly what we want to talk about this morning. See, there are some on the hill over there. Aren’t they pretty?”

A large flock of sheep moved lazily about upon the hill Auntie pointed out, and among them soft, little, white lambs frisked and played as all little lambs do on warm, sunny days.

“They’re so pretty,” said Rose. “One belongs to me. Father said so. And I put a blue ribbon around its neck, Auntie, and it knows me.”

“Of course it knows you. Like Jesus said He knew His sheep, and they know Him. He called Himself the Good Shepherd, our Good Shepherd, and it seems to me that, while we are getting ready for First Communion, there is no sweeter name we can give Him.”

All the children smiled. First Communion! This was May, and in two months more they were—all except Anna—to receive First Communion in the village church.

“And we’re the Good Shepherd’s little lambs,” said John.

“His very little ones,” said Auntie. “The littler we are, the more care and attention He must give us, you know.”

“Like,” said John gently, “we big children sit on the wooden seat, but Anna, because she’s the baby, has the best place on Auntie’s lap.”

“I’m glad I’m the littlest,” said Anna, for once not vexed at being the baby, “because it’s very comfy here,”

“FEED MY LAMBS!”

burying her curly head more deeply into Auntie’s shoulder. “I’ve a lovely picture about Jesus,” she went on, “with all the sheep around Him, and some lambs, too, close up to His feet; but, Auntie, do you know what?”

Auntie looked down into the eager shining eyes.

“No, darling. What?”

“The very littlest lamb of all is on Jesus’ shoulders—being carried!” Anna gazed in triumph over the group of children. How did they feel about being the baby now? “The reason,” Anna finished with dignity, “that Jesus carried the poor, tired little lamb was just because it was the baby.”

Rose and Philip smiled, but John said heartily, “Of course.”

“The Good Shepherd will carry us, too,” said Auntie, “when we grow tired, or the way is too rough for our feet. He is very anxious that we shall not fall. If the little lambs fall upon sharp stones, or even in the mud, they get either hurt or dirty. The Good Shepherd wants His lambs white and beautiful.”

“Like mine. I wash it every morning, Auntie,” said Rose.

“Yes, you are a good little shepherdess. Now, with the little lambs of Jesus, when the cruel stones come or the slippery, ugly mud, a little lamb need only cry out: ‘Good Shepherd, pick me up! I can’t go any farther unless You carry me!’ and, exactly the same way as in Anna’s picture, Jesus will place the frightened little lamb upon His shoulders and take it to the safe, beautiful pasture again. And I hope the little lamb, back in the soft green grass, won’t forget to say, ‘Thank You, Sweet Shepherd, for carrying me over the bad place.’”

“You mean, Auntie,” said Philip thoughtfully, “that sins are our falls, don’t you?”

“Yes. Every thought or word or action that we can’t be happy to offer the Good Shepherd is some sort of a fall. The little lamb’s whiteness is spoiled a bit. The best way is to call out very quickly that we need to be carried. Then we don’t fall. If we have been slow, or careless, or maybe simply willful, and have tripped over the rocks or slipped down into the mud, then the Good Shepherd will cure the hurt, will wash away the spot, with His Precious Blood, as soon as we say, ‘I’m so sorry! Next time I’ll call out in time and not tumble down!’ The most wonderful thing about this Good Shepherd is that He gave His life for His sheep. He shed His Precious Blood that His sheep might be saved. There never was such another Shepherd.”

“And there never will be, Auntie,” said Rose, “because Jesus stays our Shepherd always, doesn’t He?”

“Surely. Other shepherds may be faithful and kind, may guard the sheep from danger and trouble, but our Good Shepherd said, ‘I lay down My life for My sheep.’ It is because we know He died for us that we understand how very, very much He loved us. When we think of Jesus as our Shepherd, we mustn’t forget the kind of Shepherd He is. So we say, ‘The Good Shepherd’—He is good the way God is good, which is in such a great, wide, grand way that we can’t measure the goodness. Anna, here, might as well try to take that high hill, where the sheep are grazing, into her plump little hand as we to try to measure that goodness of Jesus, our Shepherd.”

“It’s love and kindness, too, isn’t it, Auntie?” asked Philip.

“FEED MY LAMBS!”

“Yes. And unending carefulness. The Shepherd is always looking out for His sheep and His little lambs. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He had a very solemn talk with His apostles, especially with St. Peter.”

“Because,” said John, “St. Peter was the chief apostle.”

“That is why. Do you know the question Jesus asked St. Peter?”

Rose and Philip looked uncertain. Anna, quite as was to be expected, had fallen asleep.

John gazed thoughtfully across the bright meadows. Something was in his mind about that last talk Jesus had with His apostles. Auntie waited, watching John’s face.

“Was it,” said he at last, “something about ‘Do you love me?’”

“Yes, John. And St. Peter answered the Savior, ‘Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.’ Now listen to what Jesus, the Good Shepherd, said to St. Peter after that: ‘Feed my lambs.’”

“Oh!” cried Rose. “Did He mean us, Auntie?”

“He meant you children, His very little lambs, and us big people, the lambs of the flock, and later Jesus added to St. Peter, ‘Feed my sheep.’”

“But who are the sheep, Auntie?” Rose asked.

“The sheep are the bishops and priests, of whom St. Peter was the head. St. Peter was to feed all, from the highest to the lowest and simplest. There is somebody in the world today who is the successor of St. Peter—” Auntie paused.

“Oh, we know!” cried Rose and Philip and John together. “Our Holy Father, the pope, is the successor of St. Peter!”

Anna stirred at the shout.

“Hooray!” said she cheerfully, only half-awake.

“Oh, Anna!” said Rose reproachfully.

“That’s all right,” said Auntie, kissing the flushed face. “I’m glad you were all ready with the answer this time. And, children, this successor of St. Peter has also heard the Good Shepherd say, ‘Feed My lambs, feed My sheep.’ And, hearing the command of Jesus, the pope has thought particularly of the very little lambs like you. He knows little lambs need food as much as, if not more than, the bigger ones. Little lambs must not be allowed to suffer from hunger just when they need plenty of nourishment in order to grow. Over there on the hillside the little lambs would die if they found no food. So the little lambs of God’s flock, the flock of the Good Shepherd, are to be fed, not only with bodily food, but also with the Blessed Food of the soul. The Holy Father says, ‘Feed My very little lambs with the Bread of Heaven.’”

“Holy Communion,” said John, reverently.

“Holy Communion,” repeated Anna, with a baby pronunciation of her very own.

And overhead in the branches of the elm tree, a bird suddenly burst into joyous song.

John’s eyes met Auntie’s, and the little boy smiled.

“It sounds,” he said, “as though the bird knew we were glad.”

“Or else as though he wanted to remind Auntie that we mustn’t tell all the stories in one morning,” laughed Auntie. “Anna has surely heard more than enough, and indeed we all have. Let’s remember the Good Shepherd, and stay very close to Him, and tomorrow try to learn some more about Him.”

“FEED MY LAMBS!”

“And I’d like,” said Anna, slipping to the ground and taking Auntie’s hand invitingly, “to go over to the hill and see the lambs.”

So they started off for a walk, Anna leading the little procession by always dancing a trifle ahead of Auntie, whose hand she tightly held.

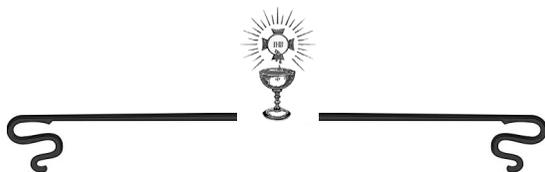
“Anna jumps around like a lamb, anyway,” said Rose.

“Well,” said John quickly, “she’s gentle like one, too.”

“We mustn’t forget we are all lambs of the Good Shepherd,” said Auntie, “who love one another dearly, who love the Shepherd, and whom He loves with more love than we can put into words.”

Then Rose felt ashamed of having felt a wee bit cross about Anna’s restlessness, and, running up to the laughing child, she kissed one round cheek.

It was a very happy party that visited the flock upon the hill that day.



BIBLICAL PASSAGES

1. Read the story of the Good Shepherd: John 10:1-15.
2. Read about Jesus’ appearance to St. Peter after His Resurrection: John 21:15-17.

POINTS OF DOCTRINE

1. *Who made the world?* God made the world.
2. *Who is God?* God is the Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things.

3. *What is man?* Man is a creature composed of body and soul, and made to the image and likeness of God.
4. *Why did God make you?* God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in heaven.

PRAYER TO MEMORIZE

Because God made all things, including each of us, we offer back to God all that He gives us each day. Every morning, offer your day and yourself to God:

*My God, I offer up to You
My soul and heart—and my mind too;
And all I do or hear or say
And all my work and all my play.
Amen.*

Younger children may pray a simplified version:

*My God, I give You myself and my day.
Amen.*

BAPTISM

WHEN Auntie and the four children paid a visit to the flock upon the hill, something very sweet happened. Rose's little lamb, with the blue ribbon around its neck, ran lovingly toward her to be petted. "See, Auntie!" Rose cried. "I told you it knew me! Oh, you dear, darling little lamb! Don't be cross, mother-sheep! I won't hurt your baby!"

For the mother-sheep had hurried after her baby and, with soft sounds and tender pushes of her nose, was anxiously coaxing it away from Rose. You see, the mother-sheep was jealous.

"Would you know your lamb from the others?" Philip asked.

"N—no," said Rose, who hated to admit that she could not have picked out her pet except for the blue ribbon. "If anyone took off the ribbon, I'd have to wait till the lamb ran to me."

John was caressing every sheep within reach. He was so very gentle that animals never feared him.

"Well," said he, "Auntie, that's the difference about our Lord. He knows His sheep as well as they know Him. Because He is God, and knows everything."

The next morning the group gathered again, under the trees.

"Is this a catechism class?" Philip suddenly asked.

“No, dear. You have that in church, don’t you?” Auntie answered. “This is just a little while we spend talking about the great day that is coming: First Communion. We know our catechism pretty well, don’t we? Not the big one, of course, but our own simple one made entirely for the littlest lambs. I feel we are away up in that. But we might learn it all the way through beautifully, and at the end find ourselves still very stiff and clumsy about loving our Lord. When He comes to us, we don’t want to welcome Him into our souls only with answers out of the catechism, do we?”

Rose burst out laughing.

“No, Auntie. That would be like our company manners, wouldn’t it?”

“Very much. Jesus is our Savior, our Best Friend, the Good Shepherd of our soul. We must greet Him by fairly running to Him as the little lamb ran to Rose this morning—‘Here I am, dear Shepherd, loving Jesus! Because I studied my catechism, I know You are God, and that You became man for me. And I love You very much, and am glad to receive You into my soul!’ We can tell Him about our talks here in the back yard, which we had simply in order to learn to love Him more before He came to us. We can ask Him anything. There is nothing He cannot do.”

“And He knows all our names,” said John thoughtfully.

“Anna Marie Madeleine,” said Anna promptly. “That is mine.”

“Yes, He shall call His own by their names, our names given in Holy Baptism, the first sacrament we receive.”

“Baptism makes our souls all shining and white,”

BAPTISM

said Rose. "Mother said so when our baby brother was baptized."

"The catechism says so, too," said Philip.

"But Mother explained," Rose persisted, "original sin is like a horrid spot, and Baptism washes it off, every bit."

"Nice and clean," Anna added, blinking at a bluebird that blinked back at her from a bough near Auntie's head.

"That's lovely," said Auntie. "And how does Baptism make our souls white and spotless?"

"Through the Precious Blood of Jesus," John replied.

"I thought it was through the water," said Rose uncertainly.

Philip giggled, but Auntie gave him a very decided frown.

"The water is what is used in giving the sacrament. It's the outward sign, the thing we can see," said Auntie. "The grace, which is the washing out of the stain that is upon our souls because Adam and Eve sinned, comes only through the Precious Blood of Jesus."

"I think," said Rose in a very hurt tone, "it's not nice for Philip to laugh at me."

"It's not a bit nice," Auntie agreed; "and Philip means never to do it again. He forgot, that's all. If you children tease one another, our whole time will be wasted, because each one will be afraid to speak out, for fear the others will laugh. Rose did the honest, and the sensible thing, in telling what she thought."

"I'll not laugh any more, Auntie," said Philip, his cheeks very red.

"Thank you, laddie. Baptism makes us children of God, and heirs of heaven, and it also does something of

which the blue ribbon around the neck of Rose's lamb made me think."

"What?" asked Philip and Rose eagerly.

"Baptism leaves a mark upon our souls, a mark nothing can ever rub out. So when the Good Shepherd looks upon us, He sees the mark that sets us apart as His property. Rose saw the blue ribbon and she thought, 'My lamb, the one I love best!' No matter in what miserable condition Rose found her lamb, no matter how far from the others, she would say, 'That is my pet lamb, for it wears the blue ribbon I tied about its neck.' So it is with the mark of Baptism. Do as we will, go where we please, our soul shows always that we belong to Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, who shed His Precious Blood that His sheep might be saved."

"But if we are very, very wicked afterward, Auntie?" John asked.

"Still there would be the mark of Baptism in our soul. We might be so wicked that people around us would say, 'They can't be Christians. Christians could not be so evil.' And yet our Lord, looking sorrowfully at us would know, 'They are the sheep of My Fold; they belong to Me.' In their soul they carry the mark of Holy Baptism, the mark that is the promise of their salvation unless they willfully choose to be lost."

"We don't choose to be lost," said Philip decidedly.

"I'm going to heaven," declared Anna; "some day."

"If you're good," Rose corrected.

"Of course," said Anna comfortably. "When I get big, I'll never be naughty."

"If you try hard, and keep Jesus in your soul," said Auntie, "you never need be naughty. The question is, how hard will Anna try?"

BAPTISM

Anna stared doubtfully at Auntie. Anna loved comfort and petting and doing as she pleased.

"I don't know yet," said Anna at last. "But I'll talk to Jesus about it when my First Communion comes."

With that, Anna threw herself back into Auntie's arms and contentedly watched her friend the bluebird amusing himself looking for insects among the leaves. Auntie kissed Anna's plump, dimpled cheek. All four children were different, and the Good Shepherd would lead each one the way He knew to be the best.

"Nobody could do anything better," said Auntie. "The Good Shepherd will take the best of care of the lambs who always listen for His voice. It's the way of little lambs to follow foolish things, to enter paths not safe for creatures so small and untrained. Then the Good Shepherd calls, 'Come back, stay near Me! I know where you will be safe, and if you listen for My voice, you shall never be alone.' Best of all He tells us, 'I am going to feed you. I intend giving you the Bread of Angels, which is My Body and Blood. Little lambs, prepare your hearts by loving Me as much as you can. Don't be afraid to laugh and play and be very happy. I want you to come to My Feast full of joy.' The Good Shepherd wants a happy flock about Him."

"We're very happy," said John. "It must be terrible not to know about the Good Shepherd."

"Like those who don't believe in God," said Philip.

John gazed far, far off, beyond where the fluffy clouds seemed to touch the tops of the hills.

"Some little boys," said he softly, "are priests when they grow up; and God lets them go to those people who don't know about Him and tell them about the Good Shepherd."

“And,” said Rose solemnly, “if the priests get killed when they talk about God, they’re martyrs. Aren’t they, Auntie?”

“Yes, dear. To die for the Faith our Lord taught is to be a martyr. And, do you know, martyrdom is sometimes called the ‘Baptism of Blood.’”

“Yes,” said Philip. “I studied about it. If anybody who hasn’t been baptized with water should be killed because he believed in Christ, he would be baptized by blood.”

“That’s splendid. I wonder if any little lamb here can tell Auntie about the third kind of Baptism?”

Rose and John eagerly began together, but in different words, so Auntie put her hands over her ears, crying, “Oh, please, please wait! Rose, you begin, dear.”

“It’s Baptism of Desire,” said Rose. “If you want something terribly, you desire it. And sometimes people have known about Jesus, and never been baptized.”

“Then send for the priest,” Philip advised.

“Yes,” Rose went on, “if there is a priest.”

“And if there’s no priest, any other person might baptize,” Auntie hinted.

Rose’s cheeks grew redder in her zeal to explain what Baptism of Desire meant.

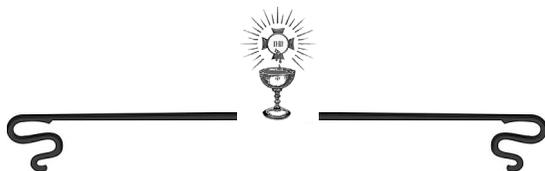
“I know, Auntie. But suppose nobody knew how, or nobody would, or the poor thing was dying all alone—then a wish to be baptized would do. Isn’t that it?”

“Yes, darling. The heartfelt wish to receive the sacrament would take the place of the Baptism of Water, and in such a case we say the person received the Baptism of Desire. Do all the little lambs understand?”

To Auntie’s surprise, it was Anna who inquired, “Would that person with the desire belong to the Good Shepherd, like us?”

BAPTISM

“Yes, dear. That person would be as you are through Baptism—the child of God, and heir of heaven, one of the lambs of the Fold of Christ, our Good Shepherd.”



BIBLICAL PASSAGES

1. God calls each of us by name. Read Isaiah 43:1.
2. Jesus asked us to teach others about Him and to baptize others in the name of the Blessed Trinity. Read Matthew 28:18-20.

POINTS OF DOCTRINE

1. *What is a sacrament?* A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace.
2. *From where do the sacraments get the power to give grace?* The sacraments have the power of giving grace from the merits of Jesus Christ.
3. *What is Baptism?* Baptism is a sacrament that cleanses us from original sin, makes us Christians, children of God, and heirs of heaven.
4. *Is Baptism necessary to salvation?* Baptism is necessary to salvation, because without it we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.
5. *Who can administer Baptism?* The priest is the ordinary minister of Baptism; but in case of necessity, anyone who has the use of reason may baptize.
6. *How is Baptism given?* Whoever baptizes should pour water on the head of the person to be baptized,

and say, while pouring the water, *“I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”*

PRAYER TO MEMORIZE

Glory Be

*Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.
Amen.*