

To watch over them.

To defend them from the wolf.

To heal their diseases.

To expose himself to every danger and to be ready to lay down his life for his beloved flock.

Ah! what shepherd ever fulfilled all those duties more faithfully than Jesus has towards us?

He knows us. *I know my sheep.* He has known us from eternity. He knows us with an affectionate knowledge. He knows us and loves us. He knows each one of us—rich and poor, learned and unlearned, great and humble. He knows all our thoughts, all our wants, all our sufferings, all our distresses, all our miseries.

He feeds us—with the nourishment of his divine Scriptures, with the inspirations of his Holy Spirit, with the exhortations of his ministers, with good thoughts, holy desires, above all with the life—giving food of the Eucharist, his adorable Body and Blood; so that each one of us can say with the Psalmist 'The Lord rules me, and nothing shall be wanting to me: in the place of pasture there he has placed me.'

He watches over us. His merciful providence continually attends us. He never loses sight of us for a moment. Not a hair of our head can fall to the ground without his knowledge and permission. He is ever present with us in the sacrament of his love.

He defends us from the wolf, and

from the roaring lion who goes about seeking whom he may devour. He defends us from all our spiritual enemies. His cross is a shield, his Name is a bulwark of defence. It makes the Demons tremble in the lowest pit of hell. There is no assault that can be made on our poor souls, which Jesus the good Shepherd is not prepared to repel. The hellish wolf may bark but he cannot injure us, so long as we remain under the protection of this best of shepherds.

He heals their diseases. Every malady of our souls is healed by Jesus. There is balm in Gilead to assuage our pains and console our hearts. In the sacred bath of his precious blood we are washed clean from all the impurities of spiritual disease. To heal our souls he has established the Sacraments which impart life to the dead, and quicken with new vigour those who are already alive. For what other purpose do we receive Baptism, Extreme Unction or Penance, Confirmation, Matrimony or the Holy Eucharist, that sovereign and unfailing remedy for every disease, which is administered in person by the Heavenly Physician of our souls?

He has exposed himself to all suffering and danger, he has offered up his life for his beloved sheep. *I lay down my life for my sheep.* He has come into the world and encountered the Prince of darkness even in the frail and mortal flesh over which that cruel enemy had obtained such a triumph. He has led a life of poverty and suffering. He has