

□ Reading time: 3 min.

*In 1844, a time full of questions about the future of the Oratory, Don Bosco recorded a dream in his Memoirs that illuminated and guided his mission. On the eve of announcing the move to Valdocco to the boys, he saw in a vision a confused flock of wild and tame animals which, guided by a mysterious Shepherdess, gradually transformed into docile lambs. The journey culminated in a vast courtyard dominated by a majestic church, above which the Latin inscription “Hic domus mea, inde gloria mea” (“Here is my house, hence my glory”) stood out. This episode, which echoed his first childhood dream at Becchi, foreshadowed the birth of the Salesian work, revealed the providential trust that sustained Don Bosco in moments of doubt, and spurred him to take decisive steps.*

A wonderful thing happened during those days to comfort Don Bosco, by disclosing future events to him. Let us narrate it in his own words from the pages of his memoirs:

On the second Sunday of that year (1844) I was to tell my boys that the oratory was being transferred to the Valdocco area. I was, however, truly worried because I was uncertain about the exact location, the means and the people [to help me]. On Saturday night, I went to bed feeling uneasy, but that night I had a new dream which seemed to be a sequel to the one I had had at Becchi when about nine years old. I think it best to put it down literally.

I dreamed that I was in the midst of a multitude of wolves, goats, kids, lambs, sheep, rams, dogs and birds. The whole menagerie raised an uproar, a bedlam, or, better, a racket that would have frightened even the bravest man. I wanted to run away, when a Lady, dressed as a shepherdess, beckoned me to follow Her and accompany the strange flock She was leading. We wandered aimlessly, making three stops along the way, at each of which many of those animals changed into lambs, so that the number of lambs continually increased. After a long trek, I found I was in a meadow, where those animals were grazing and frolicking, making no attempt to bite each other.

I was exhausted and wanted to sit by the roadside, but the Shepherdess invited me to keep walking. A short distance away, I came upon a large playground surrounded by porticoes, with a church at one end. Here I noticed that four fifths of those animals had become lambs. Their number was now very large. At that moment many young shepherds came to watch over them, but they remained only a short time and walked off. Then a marvelous thing happened: many lambs turned into

shepherds, and they, in increasing numbers, took care of the flock. When the shepherds became too many, they parted and went elsewhere to herd other strange animals into pens.

I wanted to leave, because I thought it was time for me to say Mass, but the Shepherdess asked me to look to the south. On doing so, I saw a field in which maize, potatoes, cabbage, beets, lettuce and many other vegetables had been planted. "Look again" She said. I did so, and beheld a monumental church. In the choirloft I saw choristers and musicians who seemed to be inviting me to sing Mass. On a white streamer inside the church there was emblazoned in large letters *HIC DOMUS MEA, INDE GLORIA MEA* [Here is my house and hence my glory will come forth]. Still dreaming, I asked the Shepherdess where I was, and the meaning of all this walking, the stops, that house, the church and then another church. "You will understand everything," She answered, "when with your bodily eyes you will behold all that you now see in your mind." I thought I was awake, and so I said, "I see clearly, and with my bodily eyes; I know where I am going and what I am doing." Just then the bell of St. Francis of Assisi Church rang the *Ave Maria* and I awoke.

*(MB II, 243-245 / MB EN II, 190-191)*