

Living the Word

MEDITATING ON THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

4th Sunday of Easter

A resource for personal, family
and community prayer.

“the sheep hear his voice...”

Gospel: John 10:1-10

¹Jesus said, “I tell you most solemnly, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate, but gets in some other way is a thief and a brigand.

²The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock; ³the gatekeeper lets him in, the sheep hear his voice, one by one he calls his own sheep and leads them out.

⁴When he has brought out his flock, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know his voice.

⁵They never follow a stranger but run away from him: they do not recognize the voice of strangers.”

⁶Jesus told them this parable but they failed to understand what he meant by telling it to

You are invited to read the Gospel passage attentively, respectfully and reverently as a gift of God.



them.

⁷So Jesus spoke to them again: “I tell you most solemnly, I am the gate of the sheepfold.

⁸All others who have come are thieves and brigands; but the sheep took no notice of them.

⁹I am the gate. Anyone who enters through me will be safe: he will go freely in and out and be sure of finding pasture.

¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full.”

For more information check out <https://lectio.newrydominican.com>

028 3026 2178 | lectiocentre35@gmail.com

Reading

The fourth Sunday of Easter is known as Good Shepherd Sunday. All the Gospels in each of the three cycles present Jesus as the Shepherd and his followers as the sheep. Shepherd is one of the biblical titles for a leader; in memory of the days when the Jews were sheep-rearing nomads. The Gospel invites us to celebrate “Good Shepherds” in our lives – parents, teachers, guides, friends, church leaders, community or political leaders – who have shepherded us with humility, vision, care and faithfulness. The sheep respond with trust, instinctive trust.

Jesus also speaks about himself as “the gate” – meaning it is not a possessive relationship. He does not dominate or control but allows the sheep to pass freely in and out, to be themselves, making their way to a deeper and fuller life – “life to the full.”

Recognising

You are invited to meditate on the passage, or any part of it, by letting it speak to your life experience until you feel to say “I recognise this passage.”

v4. “..he goes ahead of them and the sheep follow because they know his voice”

Can you recognize people in our world today whose leadership has inspired you to follow their example? They speak with truth and integrity and you feel safe and secure in their care. You trust them instinctively and are

ready and willing to listen to their voice.

v3. “..one by one he calls his own sheep and leads them out”

From life experience, can you remember a leadership role that was entrusted to you– in family, community or public life? You did your best to lead humbly, wisely and with integrity. Jesus, the “Good Shepherd”, lived again in you at that time.

v7. “I am the gate of the sheepfold”

Can you remember “gatekeepers” in your own life - people who care for you and have given you the freedom to be yourself, to grow and develop freely? You know that they will always be there for you.

v9. “letting you go freely in and out”

Or perhaps you have become “a gate” for others – a secure and enabling presence allowing those in your care to take more responsibility to be creative and develop their own gifts and talents and, so, enter into the fullness of life?

v1. “anyone who does not enter ..through the gate.. is a thief and a brigand”

Can you remember times when you have not listened to the voice of the shepherds in your life/country/world? Times when you have been led astray and have lost the ability to hear the “shepherd”. Instead, you listened to the voice of strangers and wandered into very dangerous pastures.

Responding

Having recognised God's presence in life, you are invited to **respond** in your own words, in prayer (thanksgiving, repentance and petition).

Heavenly Father, on this Good Shepherd Sunday, I thank you for the leadership of Pope Francis. He speaks a language that I can understand. He cares deeply about everyone, especially the poor and the vulnerable – “one by one he calls them and leads them out.” He lives and preaches with wonderful simplicity and mercy. He is not afraid to admit his mistakes, therefore I feel you can trust him. In his relationship with non-Christian people he is, in truth, “a gate”- someone with whom everyone can be themselves and are respected and affirmed for who they are.

Lord, I ask forgiveness, for the times when I have expected too much from the Good Shepherds in my own life - when I have held them up on a pedestal and have forgotten that they too are human and can make mistakes. Lord, have mercy.

Heavenly Father, raise up leaders who will live out their role as a vocation to serve those in their care. Let them come close to us, the people, so that we

can get to know them and they can get to know us and build up a relationship of trust. May they lead by example and have the courage to say what needs to be said and to do what needs to be done, even when it is not popular. Inspire in them a vision of “life to the full” so that all your children may find true freedom, joy and contentment.

Resting

You are invited to enter deep prayer by simply **resting** your heart in God's presence (Contemplative moment). The quiet repetition of a word or phrase from the passage might help you on this journey into greater silence and stillness, e.g. “**hear his voice**”.

Reflecting

From your journey with this passage, you are now invited to **reflect**, and put into your own words, any new insights or understanding that you have received (Wisdom moment).

From your journey with this passage, what new insight has been given to you into the meaning of...trust or listening or good leadership?

A good leader inspires others to follow their example and encourages them to realize their true potential.



Children

Reading

Jesus encourages his friends to be like sheep, to listen to his voice and to follow his path, because he is the Good Shepherd who always takes great care of, and wants the best for, his flock. Jesus' friends are slow to understand what he means so he tells them that if they follow him, they will live life to the full.

Recognising

Can you remember meeting a 'Good Shepherd' at home or in school who cared for you, wanted the best for you, was worth listening to, and following, because they filled your life with positivity?

Can you remember a time when you heard the voice of someone you trusted (maybe a parent, grandparent or teacher) and you decided to follow their example to be a better version of yourself?

Responding

Father, I thank You for the many 'Good Shepherds', especially in my family, who have helped me to appreciate the gift of

life by caring for me and desiring the best for me.

Father, I am sorry for the times that, like the friends of Jesus, I ignored the voice of the 'Good Shepherds' in my life and chose to follow people who held me back from living life to the full.

Father, I ask that I may be filled with new desire to follow the example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, so that my words and actions may bring life to the people that I meet.

Resting

Rest in the caring embrace of the Father by repeating "LIFE TO THE FULL" for as long as it is possible.

May your heart be filled with new life as you are drawn deeper into the Father's presence.

Reflecting

The caring person who wants the best for you is worth listening to and following.

A simple summary of Lectio steps can be found in the porch of the church.