



Shepherding in Imitation of Christ

The Chair of Saint Peter, Apostle

Read:

1 Peter 5:1-4

Psalm 23:1-6

Matthew 16:13-19

The readings from the celebration of Mass on the Feast Day that honors the Chair (or Papacy) of St. Peter all focus us on the quality of leadership called "shepherding."

Our priests are the shepherds of the parish. The bishop is the shepherd of the priests and all the parishioners of his diocese. The pope is the shepherd of the world. He is called to be Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd for everyone today, in imitation of him, in obedience to him, and as a voice speaking for him, inheriting the role from Saint Peter.

All leaders — clergy and laity, religious and secular — are called to imitate Jesus' style of shepherding. Parents are to do it as they shepherd their families. Teachers are to do it as they shepherd their classrooms. Employers are to do it as they shepherd those who work under them. Secretaries are to do it as they shepherd the people who come through their office.

How does Jesus serve you? That's how we're to shepherd others.

**The Good Shepherd is caring.
He protects his flock.
He guides his sheep to safer pastures.
He goes after the lost and finds them.
He carries the weak ones uphill.
He fights off the wolves
and defeats them with the power of God.
Always alert to do his job well,
he relies on the Holy Spirit
who empowers him.**



In imitation of Christ, we care about each "sheep" and "lamb" in our lives. We guide them by taking an active interest in their problems and offering them the wisdom we've gained from experience and from the Holy Spirit. We find ways to bridge the gaps of division, i.e., seeking "the lost." We let them lean on us when they're weak or feeling unlovable or overwhelmed by difficulties. We pray for them, helping them defeat the demons that prey on them like wolves.

We continue working on our own healing process and spiritual development — as *fully* as possible — so that we can decrease and the Good Shepherd can increase in us for the sake of others. We learn how to better care for our flocks through the compassion we gain by getting in touch with our own pain, our own times of being attacked by wolves, our own need to be guided to safer pastures — and by doing whatever is possible to heal and learn from these difficulties.

In whatever ways Jesus has shepherded us, this is how we successfully shepherd others.

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here to serve you!
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for a pastoral visit.