



Bringing Home the Word

Fourth Sunday of Easter | May 7, 2017

We May Safely Graze

By Mary Katharine Deeley

On a trip to Ireland years ago, our family was enchanted by the confident, stoic, long-haired Irish sheep. When I was still mastering the art of driving on the left side of the road, we rounded a narrow corner and came face to face with one of the sheep, who looked at us as if to say, “And you are...?” Clearly the sheep owned the road, whereas we were mere interlopers. I pulled to the side and waited for the sheep to cross or move,

which it did eventually, giving us the eye all the while.

When we think of Jesus as the Good Shepherd, I think we have a different picture of sheep—docile, helpless, and eager to follow anyone who feeds them. I prefer to think of us as Irish sheep who go where they want and look with suspicion at anything out of the ordinary. These sheep don’t follow any stranger’s voice; they just stare him or her down and go on their way.

On familiar ground with the one who cares for them, they gather into pastures abundant with grass. When they finish grazing in one place, a gate opens to bring them to another, and to another after that.

“I am the gate,” Jesus says. He is the one who leads us further into his life.

In Celtic spirituality, the open gate is an invitation to the spiritual life. Let us be good Irish sheep who are not afraid to wander far and wide, knowing our shepherd will come to take us home.

Let us follow our shepherd with confidence. He is not just the gatekeeper but the gate itself, promising far more than we can ever find in this world. †

*“I am the gate,”
Jesus says.*

A Word From Pope Francis

We need salvation, but at the same time we are afraid of it....When the Lord comes to save us, we must give everything...he commands; and we fear this. [Men want] to be in control...to be their own masters. [In this way] salvation does not come, the consolation of the Spirit does not reach us. [Hypocrisy is] not allowing the Spirit to change our hearts with his salvation. The freedom that the Spirit gives us is also a sort of slavery, a slavery to the Lord that makes us free. It is another kind of liberty.

—Homily,
June 10, 2013



Sunday Readings

Acts 2:14a, 36–41

“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.”

1 Peter 2:20b–25

“For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps.”

John 10:1–10

“Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Do you follow your shepherd with confidence? In what situations do you hesitate?
- What are the gates in your life Jesus has opened for you? Are you confident enough to go through them?



How Are We Called?

By Kathleen M. Basi

Pope Francis energizes us and at the same time challenges us to

actively participate in our faith. Most of us would rather practice our faith within the safety of a little box, where the Christian call is as clear-cut as the rosary, lighting a candle, and attending Sunday Mass. Pope Francis asks us to move beyond the walls of the Church and be a true witness to Christ in the world.

Like many faithful people, I always thought most issues had simple answers; however, after having a child with a

disability, I realized that when the Christian call intersects with the real world, things become more complex—life isn't that simple.

Consider the prolife cause, perhaps the most clear-cut issue imaginable. It's not enough to believe that children with disabilities have a right to be born. Their needs impose a heavy financial burden on their families: therapies, surgeries, orthotics, and so on. We have a moral obligation to support life at all stages, even when it requires societal intervention that runs counter to ideals about self-sufficiency.

Pope Francis has called us to confront complex questions and seek thorough

answers. Using this thorough process, how can we address some of the questions we face?

As followers of Christ, we will always find ourselves being called upon to respond to situations that may not be as clear-cut as they appear. Although the path may be demanding, we have the support of the Church and Christ as an example of how to do the hard work. Pope Francis has called us to labor together. Faith grows only when it is stretched. A call of faith is not a static request; to follow Christ means to get up, pick up your cross, and act. True discipleship—though difficult—is worthwhile, because it draws us closer to the heart of Christ, the source of our calling. †

Source: *Liguorian*,
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An Invitation to Stillness

By Michelle Franci-Donnay

When it comes to my prayer life, it sometimes feels as if I live in a Broadway musical. *God, I want to cry, are you here? Can you hear me? I'm having a hard time hearing you over all the noise.* But to be still, to know God deeply and intimately in the depths of silence, is not just for the saints and mystics—it's for everyone.

Here are three simple ways to practice being still with God.

Steal time. Contemplation is sometimes called the art of stealing time. How much time can you steal from your ordinary routine without missing it? Find

three to five minutes a day, gather a bit of silence around you and remind yourself that God is present. Ask God for the grace to know him in the depths of your heart. When your time is up, express your gratitude.

Sneak out. Follow Jesus' example and sneak out of the house before dawn to pray. Be aware of God's overarching presence, of his immensity and intimate love. The entire universe cannot contain him, yet he knows each of us by name. Don't strain to hear—wait. Stretch into God's creation for five minutes. Then give thanks to God for the works of his hands and go back inside.

Breathe. Christian tradition has long drawn connections between breathing and prayer. Just as the physical act of breathing puts flesh on our bones, so God takes flesh in us in prayer. Take a

well-known prayer like the Our Father and, with each breath, mentally say one word or short phrase of the prayer. Let each word sink in, consider its meaning, and breathe until you're ready to move on. †

Source: *Catholic Update*,
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Holy Spirit, fall afresh on me so I may listen to the voice of the true Shepherd. Thank you for giving us the Holy Father as Jesus' vicar on earth, the Church's shepherd to lead us toward you. Help me listen to you through Jesus. Amen.


— Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 8–13

Mon. Easter Weekday:
Acts 11:1–18 / Jn 10:11–18
Tue. Easter Weekday:
Acts 11:19–26 / Jn 10:22–30
Wed. Easter Weekday:
Acts 12:24–13:5a / Jn 12:44–50

Thu. Easter Weekday:
Acts 13:13–25 / Jn 13:16–20
Fri. Easter Weekday:
Acts 13:26–33 / Jn 14:1–6
Sat. Easter Weekday:
Acts 13:44–52 / Jn 14:7–14

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