

Word Sharing Circle (WSC) Reflection Guide

4th Sunday of Easter (Cycle A, Year I)

May 7, 2017

Community Word:

The Holy Spirit empowers us to do the works of Jesus.

Theme:

We are empowered by the Holy Spirit when we listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd who takes control of our lives.

Promise:

“I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.” (Jn 10:10)

Reflection:

In the liturgical readings for the 4th Sunday of Easter, Jesus is presented to us as the “Good Shepherd.” In places where sheep are herded, the shepherd is responsible for his flock and takes care of them. Without the shepherd bad things could happen to a sheep or his entire flock. Psalm 23 gives us a very moving picture of the Lord as our good and responsible Shepherd. He leads us, his flock, to where goodness and provisions are found. And if we just follow him we will have everything that we need. He keeps us safe from harm, protects us from the dangers of worldly allurements and defends us from the temptations and deceptions of Satan. As his lambs and sheep, we entrust our lives to him because we know that without him we would be lost and remain wanting. Truly, with Jesus as our Shepherd, there is nothing we shall want.

Jesus is also the gate for the sheep and when we enter it we are secure with the Truth. As the Good Shepherd, he leads us through the gate where he protects from following misleading beliefs, falsehood about our faith, wrong values and patterns of worldly ideas. As his sheep, we are united with Lord by a special bond of love and reciprocal knowledge that guarantees us the immeasurable gift of eternal life. Our relationship with Jesus is established by knowing that when he calls us and we follow him through his gate and allow him to mold us into worthy disciples, we will be assured of receiving his guidance and righteousness. Our theme for this week echoes this scenario in our spiritual journey: **We are empowered by the Holy Spirit when we listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd who takes control of our lives.**

As his flock, our attitude towards our Good Shepherd is described by two action words – ‘to listen’ and ‘to follow’. These words describe the basic characteristics of those who embark on a faith journey doing the will of God so that their lives may be complete and abundant. By listening to his word, our faith will be nurtured and strengthened. Each day, even when we are faced with trials and difficulties, God’s word is the source of nourishment that brings love, comfort and hope into our hearts. On hearing God’s word, disciples of Jesus receive his teachings and live it, putting them into practice not only for oneself but for the benefit of others as well.

In the second reading, we find what it means to follow the Good Shepherd. It entails ***“patience in suffering for doing what is good,”*** (1 Pt 2:20b). Christ, by his own suffering, left us an example to follow, opening for us an entirely new way to find happiness, the way of sacrificial love. Even when we have lost our way because of sin, Christ saves us from that dark valley and brings us to the lush pasture and refreshing water of spiritual light and renewal. He walks with us and leads the way through the path to eternal life where we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

It is deeply consoling to know that we do not have to wander about like lost sheep because Jesus is with us as the “Guardian” of our souls. We experience true joy, knowing that we are under the personal care of a “Good Shepherd” who calls us by name with a true and faithful voice, clearly apart from the voice of deceivers and false prophets who mislead and destroy. For, as he promised, **“he came that we may have life and have it more abundantly,”** (Jn 10:10).

Prayer:

Jesus, my loving and good Shepherd, teach me to be humble and always dependent on You. Allow me to recognize Your voice that I may not go astray. Keep me always within Your sheepfold, that I will be safe from temptation. Teach me to be in union with Your flock to remain strong against any form of distraction. Remind me how much You love me by your sacrificial love that we will gain life in abundance. Amen.

Reflection Questions:

1. Am I a humble sheep in the Lord’s flock? How do I show my dependence on Jesus as my Shepherd?
2. How do I respond when called to be a lay under-shepherd for God’s people (as LSS shepherd, circle shepherd, class shepherd, teacher, sharer, or leader)?

This Week’s Daily Mass Reading Guide:

May 7, 2017 (Sun) - Acts 2:14, 34-41/Ps 23:1-6/1Pt 2:20-25/Jn 10:1-10

May 8, 2017(Mon) - Acts 11:1-18/Ps 42:2, 3; 43:3, 4/Jn 10:11-18

May 9, 2017(Tues) - Act 11; 19-26? Ps 87:1-7/Jn 10:22-30

May 10, 2017(Wed) - Acts 12:24-13:5/Ps 67:2, 3, 5, 6, 8/Jn 12:44-50

May 11, 2017 (Thur) - Acts 13:13-25/Ps 89:2, 3, 21, 22, 25-27/Jn 13:16-20

May 12, 2017 (Fri) - Acts 13:26-33/Ps 2:6-7, 8, 9, 10, 11/Jn 14:1-6

May 13, 2017 (Sat) - Acts 13:44-52/Ps 98:1-4/Jn 14:7-14

“Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Rea6d your Bible daily!”