

July 21, 2024

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jer 23:1-6 | Eph 2:13-18 | Mk 6:30-34

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

What words do we associate with being misled? Deceived, fooled, cheated? While these actions make great plot points in novels and movies, in real life they are offenses against justice, charity, and truth. In both the first reading and the Gospel today, we hear that God's people are being misled ("Woe to the shepherds who mislead and scatter the flock of my pasture") and/or left to their own devices ("for they were like sheep without a shepherd"). In the time of Jeremiah the kings of Judah, who were shepherding in God's name, were not tending their flock: They had "scattered [his] sheep and driven them away." Jeremiah prophesies that the Lord will gather the remnant of his flock and bring them back to their meadow; in short, the Lord offers hope. He would raise up from the house of David a true shepherd to guide and guard his people. The incarnation of Jesus is the manifestation of that hope, and in him we have a guiding light to lead us along the correct path. He will never deceive, fool, or cheat. In this world filled with unrest and division, he offers something that no mortal man or woman can: He is the one who saves and redeems. He is the one true shepherd.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

When life is packed with activities and stress, today's readings remind us what we need to do – let go of our worries and focus on Jesus. Just as, in the first reading, God's people are scattered because of poor shepherding, all of us can lose sight from time to time of what should be first and foremost in our lives: our relationship with Jesus. The key to living a good life is to listen to Jesus' words and disregard all the other noise out there. St. Paul writes that Christ is our peace, reconciling us to God and giving us access in one Spirit to the Father, through himself. In addition to Jesus bringing us the peace we need, he also guides us to the Truth. As Christians, we choose Truth over chaos and deception. It's easy to be inadvertently misled in this busy world; losing one's way is rarely intentional. But we can all struggle at times with keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus and his loving, guiding hand. If we want true peace in our lives, choose Jesus; choose his compassion and love; and be open to his desire to "teach [us] many things."

PRAY This week find your true rest and peace by meeting Jesus at daily Mass or Eucharistic adoration. Even better, why not share the peace of Christ with someone who you know might be struggling, and invite them to come to Mass or adoration with you? The crowds of people who came to see Jesus learned about him from others; let us do the same and share the joy we find in Jesus with others.

“
In Christ Jesus
you who once
were far off
have become
near by
the blood
of Christ.”

(Eph 2:13)



Invest time each week to expand your vocabulary and deepen your faith.

21 July 2024

WORD OF THE WEEK

Dei Verbum \ˈdā-ē ˈvər-bəm \

Meaning “word of God,” *Dei Verbum* references a Vatican II document also called *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*. *Dei Verbum* explores the ways God communicates with humanity and describes the church’s foundation on scripture, tradition, and the teaching authority of the church. It also upholds the divinely inspired nature of scripture and its compatibility with both scientific and historical truth.

Pronunciation: <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-dei-verbum>

CONTEXT

The affirmation of the Bible in the life of the church, resoundingly given by *Dei Verbum*, would be consistently reaffirmed by every pope since the Council. —Donald Senior, C.P., Paulist Biblical Commentary

Listening in faith to the revealed **Word of God**—Christ himself—is the definitive principle of Catholic theology; it leads to understanding and speech and to the formation of Christian community. —International Theological Commission

WHY IT MATTERS

Like Eucharist, the **word of God** is intended to be food for the journey. A sound appreciation of our sacred story and its inspired guidance is vital to the life of every believer: God becomes known to us through the conversation he desires to have with us.

From *Dei Verbum*: Hearing the **word of God** with reverence and proclaiming it with faith, . . . this council wishes to set forth authentic doctrine on divine revelation and how it is handed on, so that by hearing the messages of salvation the whole world may believe, by believing it may hope, and by hoping it may love” (1).

RELATED WORDS

Scripture | Tradition | Revelation | Lumen Gentium

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Should I read the Bible?

Don’t think of it as an obligation. Do it because it’s the most wonderful choice you can make for your life! If you attend Mass faithfully, you’re already familiar with the overall story. The lectionary—the book of readings used at Mass—covers a cross-section of passages from Old and New Testaments, paired as promises fulfilled.

The idea of opening to Genesis, chapter one, makes many folks shrink from the attempt. You don’t have to read scripture cover to cover. You may appreciate the support of parish-sponsored Bible study or faith-sharing groups. Page-a-day reflection books provide an easy introduction to bite-sized verses for beginners. Think of it like a swim class: Sign up at the level that suits your current skill.

The Bible is the Everest of books. You won’t conquer it at once. It will take training to reach the more exotic parts. But with practice, you’ll become more fit for the journey you’re undertaking. Start today!

—Alice Camille, from *Questions Catholics Ask* <http://tinyurl.com/QCA-bible-reading>

REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

FEAST OF SAINT MARY MAGDALENE (JULY 22)

Jesus is for everybody

Mary Magdalene was the first person in history to encounter the risen Jesus. That’s pretty amazing when you consider that she was perhaps the lowliest of the disciples, mistrusted by the others. Why not the apostles Peter or John? They were also at the tomb that morning, had seen it empty, and had gone to tell the others. Jesus chose Mary precisely so that the possibility of such an encounter could be realized by everyone.

READINGS: Song of Songs 3:1-4; John 20:1-2, 11-18 (603 <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/072224.cfm>). “*Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord.’*”

FAITH IN ACTION

Lowliness does not disqualify a person from discovering Christ. Ponder the empty tomb and you, too, can see the Lord.



Bringing Home the Word

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)
July 21, 2024

Follow the Leader

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

This is not simply the name of a childhood game. It is actually an essential directive for living. We learn so many things in life because we followed someone. That is how we learned to read, to play a musical instrument, to speak another language, to understand social behavior.

Many nations at the time of Jeremiah represented their kings as shepherds, leading the people to verdant pastures and restful waters. We see this in the art they left behind. However, many of the kings of Jeremiah's day were not good leaders—not attentive shepherds, nor

faithful to God, who had entrusted the people to their care. Consequently, God stepped in to be their shepherd. This is the image of the divine shepherd found in Psalm 23. Jesus also characterized religious leaders as shepherds. He was distraught that the people were “like sheep without a shepherd” (Mark 6:34).

Is this situation different today? Many are eager to follow a leader, but which one? Ours is a multicultural, pluralistic, international society with innumerable viewpoints. Voices cry out from many corners, demanding to be heard. But which voice should we heed? Which worldly leaders should we follow? It's apparent that our leaders, both civic and religious, disagree on certain matters. What are we to do? The issue is not “with whom do I agree?” but rather “whose point of view makes me a better person? More compassionate? More understanding? More selfless? More Christlike?” Are we following the right leader? †

Sunday Readings

Jeremiah 23:1–6

I will raise up shepherds for them who will shepherd them so that they need no longer fear or be terrified; none shall be missing.

Ephesians 2:13–18

Now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have become near by the blood of Christ.

Mark 6:30–34

His heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd.

Voices cry out from many corners, demanding to be heard. But which voice should we heed?

A Word from Pope Francis

Compassion is born from contemplation. If we learn to truly rest, we become capable of true compassion.... We need—listen to this—we need an “ecology of the heart,” that is made up of rest, contemplation and compassion. Let us take advantage of the summertime for this! It will help us quite a bit.

ANGELUS, ROME, JULY 18, 2021



REFLECTION
QUESTIONS



- The Good Shepherd seeks to unite, not divide. Who are the Good Shepherds today?
- Jesus the Good Shepherd cares for all. Do we?

Infinite Layers of Mystery

Kathleen M. Basi

We live in a world where science reveals wonders as distant as the far reaches of the universe and as intimate as our own DNA. We prize knowledge and revere those who help us reach greater understanding of the world and ourselves. It is a good thing to seek wisdom, but focusing too much on intellect makes it easy to get jaded about the things that defy scientific testing. We think we should be able to pull apart the strands of the universe and reduce everything to its components. When we can't, we start worrying that we're being taken for a ride.

Yet mystery surrounds us. In every age, humans have looked to the night sky with wonder and awe, marveling at the size of the universe and our own tiny



place within it. And who contemplates the death of a child without asking, "Why?" Mystery can inspire awe; it can deepen grief; it can challenge our faith. As we long to understand the earth, so we long to understand the one who

made us. Yet some things will always remain unfathomable. The tension between these two opposing realities will not be resolved on this side of eternity. The deeper we dig, the more we will understand about God. Yet the more we understand, the more layers of mystery are revealed.

As frustrating as it may seem, that's a good thing. Contemplating all that cannot be understood offers a much-needed balanced perspective, namely: there is a bright center of the universe, and I am not it. As hard as it may be to do this, living the faith means accepting, even embracing the reality that not all things can be known and understood. At least not now. The poet Rainer Maria Rilke said it beautifully in his *Letters to a Young Poet* when he wrote about being patient toward the unknown, embracing the questions within, and living in the moment to uncover the answers. †

Wisdom from Catholic UPDATE

From "End-of-Life Moral Issues" by Thomas A. Shannon, PhD

When we face difficult decisions at the end of life, we should consider what the intervention does to the patient and for the patient. Modern medicine, as good as it is, cannot cure everything. We must also remember that we are finite beings; we do not live forever. Moving from attempting to cure to providing comfort care is a difficult decision, but it may be one of the most significant gifts we can give to a loved one because it will make the final days more peaceful by helping to relieve his or her suffering and providing the comfort of companionship. †

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Caring God, bless us with good rest and eyes open to the beauty that surrounds us so that we may be patient and compassionate people. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

July 22–27

Monday, St. Mary Magdalene: Sg 3:1–4b
or 2 Cor 5:14–17 / Jn 20:1–2, 11–18


Tuesday, Weekday:
Mi 7:14–15, 18–20 / Mt 12:46–50

Wednesday, Weekday:
Jer 1:1, 4–10 / Mt 13:1–9

Thursday, St. James:
2 Cor 4:7–15 / Mt 20:20–28

Friday, Sts. Joachim and Anne:
Jer 3:14–17 / Mt 13:18–23

Saturday, Weekday:
Jer 7:1–11 / Mt 13:24–30

Bringing Home
the Word 

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