**Solidarity with Sisters’ Communal Prayer**

**May 8, 2022 – Fourth Sunday of Easter**

*Jesus said, “I know my sheep, and mine know me.” (John 10:14)*

**Please bring *bread and drink* that is traditional to your family,**

**or your favorite.**

**HELLOs** and then Betty mutes everyone. **(Suzie and Betty)**

**WELCOME (Mary Dolmage)**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* Knowing that it takes a village to raise a family we wish all mothers, grandmothers, aunts, sisters, and godmothers a very happy

Mother’s Day

* Cecilia and I prepared today’s communal prayer.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading to lead us in prayer today: Judy Sholes, Richard McGinnis, Sister Jennie Lechtenberg, Sister Jo’Ann De Quattro,

Sister Vera Ruotolo, Cheryl Dowden,

* If you’d like to read on future Sundays, please get in touch.

Now let’s move from getting here to really being here.

**SETTLING IN (Mary Dolmage)**

Let’s quiet ourselves so we can be attentive to what God hopes for us today. Notice your breath as it goes in and out…. Let it slow and deepen… and slowly fill you with the peace of Christ. We begin with 3 deep breaths. One to be here… one to be together… and one to welcome in the Spirit who never leaves us.

Now let’s rejoice with God in song:

**OPENING SONG** **- “Like A Shepherd” Bob Dufford (Betty Thompson)**

<https://youtu.be/jLaVLAWaD1Q>

**GREETING (Cecilia Estrada)**

Let us rejoice, for Jesus Christ is risen! Alleluia! Alleluia!

All: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**CALL TO WORSHIP/ GATHERING PRAYER**  **(Cecilia Estrada)**

O God, our loving Shepherd,

you come to us with strength and love, with tender mercies, patience, and protection.

We see you in the very living of our days, and yet we often fail to praise you or to offer our burdens to you. Hear us, Good Shepherd, as we lift our prayers to you.

We pray for those in need-those who are hungry or are homeless.

We pray for those in pain-the abused, brokenhearted, and the lonely.

We pray for the sick in body and in mind, and for those who grieve.

We pray for the life of this community and all those who put their trust in you, for all of their todays and all their tomorrows.

To you we sing praise in the work of our everyday lives. In those comings and goings of our simple and complicated living, make us instruments of your peace and grace.

Bless us and our loved ones we pray.

Blessed Be!

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Mary Dolmage)**

Today we look at the metaphor in Scripture of God as the Good Shepherd. Jesus is the most equipped guide we could ever have. Holding all of creation in the palm of his hand, Jesus is the God of the gigantic and a lover of every minute detail about us. It’s comforting to know that God cares for us, protects us, and guides us. No matter what happens, we can always count on the Good Shepherd to walk beside us. If we are too weak to keep walking, he will carry us on his shoulders. Throughout our journey we will be nourished and refreshed by the water of Jesus’s life-giving Spirit.

*(Slight pause)*

Now Judith Sholes will read from the Gospel of John. Then Richard McGinnis will offer questions that will lead us into silence.

**READING 1** **John 10:27-30**  **(Judy Sholes)**

Jesus said: My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never be lost. No one will ever snatch them from my hand.

Abba God, who gave them to me, is greater than anyone, and no one can steal them from Abba God. For Abba and I are one.

*(Slight pause)*

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS 1 (Richard McGinnis)**

When have you felt most at home as a member of Jesus’ flock?

How do you allow yourself to be the sheep of Jesus’s flock?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE** **(Cecilia/Mary:** Share slide. **Betty:** time,chime.)

Cecilia: Now Lynn Bufka will read from Catholic Women Preach by Sister Jane Nesmith SBS for the Fourth Sunday of Easter.

**READING 2 (Lynn Bufka)**

Our gospel reading today, from the tenth Chapter of John, reminds us, as Jesus’ disciples, that The Good Shepherd knows us by name and reminds us of the importance of listening to His voice.

"Jesus," says John, "is the Good Shepherd." He is the trustworthy one who is willing to lay down his life for his sheep.  We are challenged to trust Jesus throughout our lives.

We have all experienced the storms of life and may have experienced a sense of hopelessness and despair, even emotional or spiritual trauma. In those difficult times it’s easy to be distracted by voices that offer relief from our pain. We may even feel the urge to follow anyone or try anything that promises a moment of happiness, or a brief feeling of peace.

It is in those moments we want to listen for the voice of Jesus. For it is this one and only Good Shepherd who calls out to us in our heartbreak, our loneliness, in our frustration and our guilt.

This Good Shepherd brings **love** to our lovelessness.  This Good Shepherd brings  **power** to our powerlessness. This Good Shepherd stands by **His promise,**   "I give you life eternal and nothing in all creation will ever be able to snatch you out of my hand."We are invited to listen to the call of the Good Shepherd, to accept his invitation, to let him be our God. Listen to Jesus.

* Listen from that tiny voice in your heart.
* Listen in the events of your lives.
* Listen to the love and promise to be our God forever.
* Listen through the words of others who love and care about us.

My sisters and brothers, on this Fourth Sunday of Easter, let us remember that we belong to Jesus, who loves us far more than we can ever hope for or imagine.   Jesus’ only purpose is to be the Good Shepherd who promises us safe passage through the uncertainties of life. We have nothing to lose in following our Good Shepherd-but everything to gain. …the **Way of salvation…** the **Truth that endures forever**…the **Life that never ends.**

*(Slight pause)*

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS 2 (Richard McGinnis)**

When have the storms of your life distracted you from hearing Jesus’ voice?

Where do you mostly strongly hear God’s call …. In your heart… In the events of your life… In God’s promise of love….In Community?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE** **(Cecilia/Mary:** Share slide. **Betty:** time,chime.)

Cecilia: We will now listen to a reflective meditation. As you listen let the words “Lead me, Guide me in Your Ways” settle deep within you. Notice if there is a path that looks like your own.

**READING 3**

**Lead Me…Guide Me by Monica Brown; video by Sr. Susan Francois**

<https://youtu.be/GOSWFvLcQEw>

*(Slight pause)*

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS 3 (Richard McGinnis)**

Where are you asking the Good Shepherd to lead you? and what do you need along the way?

How do you determine which paths to follow? When have you had to change paths even when you thought you were on the “right” one?

When the Good Shepherd has asked you to walk a path you did not want, how have you responded?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE** **(Cecilia/Mary:** Share slide. **Betty:** time,chime.)

Cecilia: Suzie De Quattro will lead our sharing.

**SHARING (Suzie DeQuattro)**

We invite you to share the essence of what is emerging within you from our readings and silence. We welcome new voices, and we know the wisdom of our community includes both words shared and silent listening. Let’s begin in silence as we gather our reflections. *[Longer pause]*

Who would like to start our sharing? *[Let silence extend until someone is moved to speak.]*

*[Sharing]*

*[If there is extended silence during the sharing:]* Is there anyone else who would like to share?  *[Long-ish pause]*

*[Stop by about 11:20.]*

Thank you.  We can continue after the final song, as we often do.

Now let us pray together, with Sister Jennie.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY (S. Jennie Lechtenberg)**

Let’s pause to notice the prayers that arise in us now. (Pause) Our response will be: Holy Shepherd, lead us.

God within us, help all Christians to be united in truth and love as one flock. For this we pray. Holy Shepherd, lead us.

God among us, show us our next steps to bring to life, merciful justice, and right relationships in society, in solidarity with Catholic sisters. For this we pray. Holy Shepherd, lead us.

God around us, lead all nations and their leaders to listen to your voice of peace.

For this we pray. Holy Shepherd, lead us.

God of all, bless those facing illness, injury, or difficulty. May they find healing and strength in the arms of the Good Shepherd. For this we pray. Holy Shepherd, lead us.

Good Shepherd, bless all mothers and all women who inspire and nurture, that they may know the love and appreciation of those around them. For this we pray, Holy Shepherd, lead us.

For what else shall we pray? Please unmute yourself to speak, and mute yourself afterwards.

(Shared prayers) Holy Shepherd, lead us.

God beyond all names, thank you for receiving our intentions, spoken and unspoken. We entrust all to you. Amen.

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (S. Jo Ann’ DeQuattro)**

As we prepare to share this meal, let us be conscious of the Holy One we call our Creator, Friend, Mother, Father, Sister, Brother, Redeemer, Provider, and Shepherd.

 Mindful of those who tilled the soil, those who harvested its bounty, and those who toiled in the heat of sun and kitchen, we ask blessings on all of them, they are here with us in a special way.

We ask you, Holy One, to accept these gifts and transform them into plenty to share with our sisters and brothers in need. Accept our gratitude for your love and grace. Accept our efforts to give thanks for each other.

Bless and inspire all young people to realize their visions of a better world, a world of peace. Bless those whose generosity and commitment makes possible their dreams: their parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers, and all others.

Bless all of us as we struggle to be engaged in the transformation of our world.

 Bless us as we become eucharist for one another.

Give us and our world, we pray, plenty of knowledge and wisdom,

plenty of justice and compassion, plenty of bread and peace.

**SHARING BREAD (S. Vera Ruotolo)**

Holding the bread and drink let us pray together, as we extend our hands outward and bless this bread and drink in thanksgiving for life.

“Open our eyes to see the hunger of others. Thank you for promising and giving us food for the journey.”

Whoever you are and wherever you are on your journey of faith there is a place for at Christ’s table. We are one bread. We are one body. Let us now take the bread and drink, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by God’s love.

(long-ish pause)

Let us say: Amen. So be it! Blessed be!

**THE PRAYER OF JESUS (Betty Thompson)**

Now let us join our hearts as if we could join our hands in harmony with our family throughout the world:

***All (muted):*** Our Father, Our Mother, you unite heaven and earth. Holy is your name.

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,

and do not let us fall into temptation, but deliver us from evil

for the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

**FINAL BLESSING (Cheryl Dowden)**

Good Shepherd,

We are the sheep of your flock.

Be near us this day.

Strengthen us and help us,
That in our daily life we will walk with you,
To serve you in the quietness of spirit,

And live our lives in your service.

Help us to always recognize your voice,

So that when you call,

We will be listening for our name.

Blessed Be!

**CLOSING SONG:** Mahalia Jackson, “Somewhere Listening:

**Cheryl**: Now let us join Mahalia Jackson in singing “Somewhere Listening”

(Betty: Audio only) <https://youtu.be/dKmVVzLQUV0>

When Jesus calls me, I will answer,

When Jesus calls, I’m going to answer,

When Jesus calls me, yes, I’m going to answer,

I’ll be somewhere listening for my name.

I’ll be somewhere, somewhere listening,

Well, I’ll be somewhere listening,

I’ll be somewhere listening for my name.

I’ll be somewhere listening,

Lord, I’ll be somewhere listening for my name.

I’ll be somewhere listening for my name.

If I live, I live right, I know I’ll answer,

If I live, I live right, one day I’m going to answer,

If I live right, I know I’m going to answer,

I’ll be somewhere listening for my name.

Well, I’ll be somewhere listening, somewhere listening,

I’ll be somewhere listening for my name.

Lord, somewhere listening,

Lord, somewhere listening,

I’ll be somewhere listening for my name.

**RESOURCES**

**The Inclusive Bible**

The First Egalitarian Translation

Rowman and Littlefield Publishers

**The Living Word**

LTP Publications 2021-2022

**Catholic Women Preach**

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

SR. JANE Nesmith SBS

# Lead Me, Guide Me ... a video prayer reflection

[Susan Francois, CSJP](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1j7u7sET4SNzym_69QyR9g) A video prayer reflection set to "Lead Me, Guide Me" by Monica Brown. Photos and video by Susan Francois, CSJP.

# Somewhere Listening

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