

**“...They were like sheep without a shepherd” (Mark 6:34)  
Deacon Dan’s Homily for Sunday, July 18, 2021**

If you turned to the person next to you and asked “How are you doing?”; it is likely he or she would reply with one of two responses; “Just fine...or good...or something like that.” If you continued to inquire, they may likely say “Busy”, “super busy”, “Oh, I’m so busy.”

The first answer I’ll write off as a quick response just to say something that kind of expected and isn’t really an answer, or maybe it is an answer to a question that really isn’t really looking for a real answer.

The second response; “busy”, is probably the truth. In fact its also an answer that is kind of expected, we’ve come to believe its good to be busy, maybe its even a sign of success to be busy...could it even be somewhat holy to be busy? After all, aren’t *“Idle hands the Devil’s workshop?”*

Well, if all this is true, then why does Jesus tell his apostles, “Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.” Why do we hear in the Gospels he so frequently goes away by himself to pray? Is the answer in our Psalm for today?

*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;  
beside restful waters he leads me;  
he refreshes my soul.*



These simple lines give us so much comfort. The Lord is my shepherd ; I shall not want— doesn't this mean that I have turned my life over to my Shepherd. My life is in His hands. If I follow Him good will follow.

Have you ever had a shepherd, a leader, a coach, a teacher, a mom or a dad, a wife or a husband who has nothing but the best in mind for you; who watches out for you? How comforting it is to be in their care. It is safe to be with them.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd whose "heart was moved with pity for them." Good shepherds live with their sheep. They understand the dangers and they give their sheep protection. They give them what they need. This is our Lord, the Shepherd who protects us, who accompanies and stays with us and gives us what we need.

In verdant pastures he gives me repose. Can you remember a time when you've just laid out on a beautifully green field out in the country, or up in the Sierras and looked up into the sky...a light refreshing breeze flowing over the top of you. Or sitting on a beach, perhaps Lake Tahoe, on a nice summer day in the afternoon, gazing out into the blue water, with the light waves rolling onto the sandy beach. How restful, how peaceful, how it can refresh our souls. That is of our Shepherd reminding us of His presence, of His invitation to lead us into Him.

We need times of solitude, times of quiet, times of reflection and thought away from the business of life. Because busy is habit forming, it can be consuming. Busy can slowly and deceitfully move our centering from being in God to being in the world. And, that's disordered.

The world, things, job, school, hobbies, sports, carpool, iphone, video games, TV, will be in our lives, but they should not be the center. When they are our center we are like the people Jesus saw when he came ashore and "...saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things."

They were a people lost, without direction, searching for something to satisfy their longing inside of them. We're no different. Oh sure, different clothes, very few tunics; different ways of communication, very few papyrus scrolls...but us, as a people, we're still searching, still wondering where we are going; what's next for us?

So, how do we reorient ourselves to God. Or, if you're already on the right track, how can we do it better? The answer is to "follow him"; yes, follow the Shepherd's example; Go away by yourself to a deserted place and rest a while...with Him. And, you're now thinking...I'm too busy! And, maybe you are too busy, but too busy doing what? What needless things can be reduced in our lives so He can be increased in our lives?

I'd like to give you four invitations. 1. Improve your prayer time and frequency. 2. Purposefully read, listen to or watch something in Scripture every day. 3. Come to be with

our Lord, here, once a week for any amount of time. 4. Make a retreat; half-day, one day, two days, three days.

Many of us have carefully, dutifully saved up for a new car, a vacation, a home or retirement. I'm inviting you to start a savings account, start investing in something that will outlast all of those things...our soul.

Personal prayer time with God doesn't have to be formal and you don't need an appointment. Start small and build from there. But, make it happen, and make it happen every day. I spoke about ACTS a couple of years ago. ACTS stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication.

ADORATION – Start your prayer time by praising God. Tell God how wonderful He is. Tell God how much you appreciate His love and His creation.

CONFESSION – Confess to God all the ways you've let Him down. Tell God you are sorry for your sins. Ask for His forgiveness.

THANKSGIVING - Thank God for all the good things in your life. Once you get started, this may take longer than you think! No matter what your troubles are, there is always much to be thankful for.

SUPPLICATION – The word supplication means to humbly and earnestly ask. Tell God what's going on in your life. Share your prayer requests. Don't hold back. Tell God everything, from the bottom of your heart. God loves you, and He wants to hear every detail.

You can make this outline work for you when you first wake up: It is good to wake up with you God! Use it at noon: Lord please forgive me for failing in this way\_\_\_and help me be better. Use it on the way home from work or school: Lord, thank you for \_\_\_\_\_whatever was a gift to you today. Use it at bedtime: Lord, I ask you for help with this\_\_\_\_\_. That's four times each day; and its personal, its your prayer with God! *You might consider a little time listening to His response, as well. He usually has something to say to us.*

Read, listen to, or watch something that has Scripture as its main thing. There is so much available. Terri gave me this book for our Anniversary ("Bible in a Year". 2017. Augustine Institute). I'm working on it. I'm not that great about reading every single day, but I do have catch up days to get me back on track. You will be amazed at how something written 3,400 years ago can apply to your life today. That's why this book is the best selling book of all time, each year...still!

Third, come and be with our Lord for any amount of time once a week. We have Mass every weekday at 8:15, we have Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament every Thursday from 9:00 to 5:00. At 5:00 we have a Holy hour; the Church is open every day from

7:30 – 4:30 PM. Come and sit with Him in quiet, pray, listen, share yourself with Him for any amount of time during the week or on Saturday or Sunday afternoon.

Lastly, have you ever considered a retreat? We have one of the most beautiful retreat centers in the United States 20 minutes from here. Christ the King Passionist Retreat Center in Citrus Heights offers all different kinds and lengths of retreats. Bishop Soto calls it the jewel of the Diocese. From the moment you drive into its tree lined driveway, you will feel the calm and spiritual uniqueness of the place. The Passionist fathers who lead the retreats are remarkable and are fulfilling their founder, St. Paul of the Cross', mission by giving you a gift of time with our Lord that will lift you up.

So, that's it. We don't have to be sheep without a shepherd. We don't have to let the things of the world be our center, we don't have to answer "busy" when someone asks us how we are. Rather, we can be centered around our Lord, Jesus Christ; and if asked How ya doin? We can answer "I am fine, may I tell you why?"

#### Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 107

Reading I

#### **Jer 23:1-6**

Woe to the shepherds

who mislead and scatter the flock of my pasture,  
says the LORD.

Therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of Israel,  
against the shepherds who shepherd my people:

You have scattered my sheep and driven them away.

You have not cared for them,

but I will take care to punish your evil deeds.

I myself will gather the remnant of my flock

from all the lands to which I have driven them

and bring them back to their meadow;

there they shall increase and multiply.

I will appoint shepherds for them who will shepherd them

so that they need no longer fear and tremble;

and none shall be missing, says the LORD.

Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD,

when I will raise up a righteous shoot to David;

as king he shall reign and govern wisely,

he shall do what is just and right in the land.

In his days Judah shall be saved,

Israel shall dwell in security.

This is the name they give him:

“The LORD our justice.”

Responsorial Psalm

**Ps 23:1-3, 3-4, 5, 6**

R. (1) The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

In verdant pastures he gives me repose;

beside restful waters he leads me;

he refreshes my soul.

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

He guides me in right paths

for his name’s sake.

Even though I walk in the dark valley

I fear no evil; for you are at my side

with your rod and your staff

that give me courage.

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

You spread the table before me

in the sight of my foes;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Only goodness and kindness follow me

all the days of my life;

and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD

for years to come.

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Reading II

**Eph 2:13-18**

Brothers and sisters:

In Christ Jesus you who once were far off

have become near by the blood of Christ.

For he is our peace, he who made both one

and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through his flesh,

abolishing the law with its commandments and legal claims,

that he might create in himself one new person in place of the two,

thus establishing peace,

and might reconcile both with God,

in one body, through the cross,

putting that enmity to death by it.

He came and preached peace to you who were far off

and peace to those who were near,

for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

Alleluia

**Jn 10:27**

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord;

I know them, and they follow me.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

**Mk 6:30-34**

The apostles gathered together with Jesus  
and reported all they had done and taught.

He said to them,

“Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.”

People were coming and going in great numbers,  
and they had no opportunity even to eat.

So they went off in the boat by themselves to a deserted place.

People saw them leaving and many came to know about it.

They hastened there on foot from all the towns  
and arrived at the place before them.

When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd,

his heart was moved with pity for them,

for they were like sheep without a shepherd;

and he began to teach them many things.