

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



In today's readings:

Peter at his persuasive best. Acts 2:14,36-41
Jesus: shepherd and guardian of your souls.
1 Peter 2:20-25
I am the gate of the sheepfold. John 10:1-10

Next week:

The way, the truth, the life.
Acts 6:1-7; 1 Peter 2:4-9;
John 14:1-12

In a nutshell

In the context of ancient Palestinian shepherding customs, John's Gospel presents Jesus as both the 'gate' of the sheepfold (the way through which all must pass to be saved) and the shepherd who knows each of his followers by name (the leader who wields authority through love). My we always listen for the voice of Jesus, our true shepherd.



I know that voice

Love allows us to 'hear' things to which others are deaf.

During my years as a nurse, there was a staff member at our hospital (I shall call him Steve) who, although a chemist by profession, was known to be an unofficial 'counsellor' because of his wonderful interest and empathy with people.

I remember one particular patient Steve befriended: a man who was to have his gangrenous leg removed. Steve spent some time with this man before the amputation was performed, listening to his fears and reassuring him. The operation was successful, but as the patient regained consciousness he became quite distraught, crying uncontrollably so that his speech was incoherent. The doctor and nurses were fussing around him, prodding and poking his body, trying to find the reason for the patient's distress. Meanwhile Steve just looked closely at the patient, listened intently to his cries and then said to the rest of

the staff: 'It's OK, it's OK. He's not in pain. He's just relieved it's all over.' The patient nodded furiously and gradually began to calm down so that he could say, 'I'm just so glad to be RID of the thing! There's NO PAIN!!'

The staff were amazed at the accuracy of Steve's diagnosis. But I wasn't so surprised. You see, Steve didn't have extrasensory perception, he had love. He was someone who understood people simply because he listened to their uniqueness. Having taken the time to know and understand this patient, he had deeper insight into this man's condition than the medical staff. (M.L.)

At Mass one Sunday.

'Like a shepherd, he feeds his flock...' sang the congregation one Sunday. Thump. Waaah!! A toddler who had wandered up the aisle of the church tripped over and sat there crying his little eyes out.

'And gathers the lambs in his arms...' At that point a young father arrived on the scene, and gently scooped up the child into his arms.

'Holding them gently, close to his heart...'

Cuddling the child, the father carried him back to his family's pew.

'Leading them home...'

Think...Pray...Act

A Sunday Family Mass is full of 'good shepherd' images. As you pray the Mass, be aware of and enjoy the wealth of the witness around you. e.g:

- Thank a tired parent. Offer him or her a warm sign of peace.

- Smile at a fidgety child.
- Praise God for being present in this congregation through the loving care of our families.

Lord, may our community grow in love as 'a Family of families'.



church below the rooftops

Clothed with love

St Mary's Orphanage (which I visited many years ago) had a way of respecting the uniqueness of each child. Out of the mass of used clothing collected for distribution among the children, each child was allowed to select his or her own 'wardrobe'. A lay woman and a religious sister would then unpick the seams of each garment and redesign it according to the size and taste of the child. Rather than having to wear unstylish, awkwardly fitting clothes, the children were allowed to develop a sense of individuality and pride in their appearance. (Helen)



RealPeople offers faith reflections from the saints and prophets of everyday life.

A publication of
The Story Source, © 1992-2002.

www.TeresaPirola.net