



'Worship at home' May 8th 2022



In this liturgical season of Easter, we affirm the risen Christ whose continuing presence brings hope, forgiveness and new opportunities. **Light a candle** to remind yourself that Christ is indeed risen and with you. Today is also **Mother's Day**, and we give thanks for the nurturing care and support of mothers and other special people in our lives.

Opening inspired by Psalm 23

In the darkest valley, **at the banquet table**;
in the hard work of life, **at the moments of ease**;
in our day-to-day reality, **at times set aside**—
like this time, now— **for worship, for listening,**
for paying attention;
with every step we take: **goodness and mercy follow us;**
our cups overflow.

The risen Christ is indeed with us; **now and always.**

~ adapted from Joanna Harader <https://spaciousfaith.com/>



This Sunday is often referred to in the Church's liturgical year as Good Shepherd Sunday. Images that portray Jesus as Good Shepherd have been used since early Christian times. The image on the left comes from the ceiling of a catacomb where the first Christians hid to worship God in fear of persecution from the Romans. The thought of Jesus as Shepherd brought peace and comfort and a sense of God's presence with them in difficult times.



Catacomb of Callixtus - The Good Shepherd
from *Art in the Christian Tradition*,
<http://diqlib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=54382>

St. Francis of Assisi Church in Greenlawn, N.Y.
CNS photo/Greagor A. Shemitz

Reflection

This has been another busy week.
I don't know whether I can focus on prayer today.
Something is nagging at my feelings.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

Life is busy.
There seems to be no end to work.
I can't relax.

He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters.

I have hard, painful memories. I am hurting inside.

He restores my soul.

I struggle with my relationships.
The good I want to do I cannot do.
The evil I do I do not want to do.
Who will rescue me from this shadow of darkness?

He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

I am getting older and feeling my mortality.
I grieve the loss of friends and family.

Even though I walk though the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

My fellow workers look down on me.
My boss gives me a hard time.
I have few friends at school.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

Life is full of struggles.
My health is not as it should be.
Where can I find meaningful work?

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

I am worried about the future.



Will I meet a partner?
Can I repay my debts?
Is my business going to fail?
Will my marriage last?

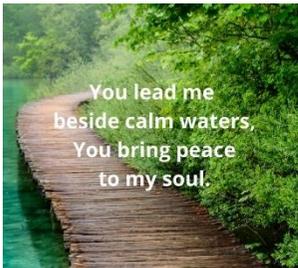
**Surely goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life.**

Lord, I believe. Help me in my unbelief.

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

—adapted from Bert Witvoet *Westview Church*

<http://www.westview.org/psalm-23-litany/>



**When have you experienced the peace
and comfort of God's presence with
you in difficult times?**

**When have you been able to offer hope
and comfort to another
in their struggles?**

Through Light and Shadow I am led,
I follow,
through the ins and outs
the ups and downs of these days,
when my heart is failing,
when my spirit rejoices,
when I can barely put one foot
in front of the other
still you beckon me on...
when I stumble you support me,
when I can go no further you carry me,
through light and shadow, in death's dark vale,
and on the mountain peaks you lead me,
through tangled webs,
on rocky ground, on smoother paths,
through light and shadow you lead me,
I follow,
may I never walk alone...

~ *Eternal Echoes*

http://sallysjourney.typepad.com/sallys_journey/ 3

John 10:27-30

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, for my Father has

given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand. The Father and I are one."

New Living Translation

We don't often hear Jesus' voice in audible ways. We are more likely to experience an inner prompting of prayer, a word from a friend that challenges us, or a bible passage that speaks to us in a new way.



Reflect on the many ways in which you hear the voice of the Good Shepherd calling you to trust.

Shut your eyes tightly.

As you sit in darkness, notice the noises around you.

When we cannot see, our other senses are heightened, and we become more aware of other sensations.

Reflect on what God might say to you as you sit in darkness. Spend some time in quietness and prayer, as you come to know the comfort and presence of the Good Shepherd with you.

Closing

Go now with your trust in the good shepherd, and let us love, not just in words, but in truth and action.

Believe in the name of Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he has commanded us. And may God be at your side, even in valleys of death.

May Christ Jesus be the cornerstone of your life.

And may the Holy Spirit abide in you and tend you with love and mercy all the days of your life.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord,

In the name of Christ. Amen.