

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.