

PARABLES OF MERCY

The Good Shepherd

Luke 15:4-7

*“Rejoice with me, I have found my
lost sheep”*



Year of Mercy

Pope Francis has initiated this Year of Mercy as an opportunity for pilgrimage, reflection and commitment to action that will enable Mercy to be made concrete and practical in our own local communities.

Thank you for your willingness to enter into this time of prayer and reflection. May it be an experience of Mercy which will enable you to further respond with Mercy and compassion in your local community.

Lectio / Visio Divina

Lectio Divina is a Latin term meaning “Reading with God”.

Visio Divina is a Latin term meaning “seeing or looking with God”.

We hope that the parable windows will be a Lectio / Visio Divina for the community of pilgrims in the Year of Mercy so that we may also “See with God”.

The practice of sacred reading has been practiced in the church for centuries, and has its origin in the monastic life as a pathway for prayer with scripture. It leads us gently into a deeper relationship with Christ as we open ourselves to him. It is the ultimate DIY spiritual project.

Brendan Lodge Photography

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There are four steps in the traditional practice of Lectio Divina.
But they do not need to be followed in this particular sequence.

1. Lectio Visio (reading-looking)

Look at the window slowly,
read the scripture ...become aware of a particular
word - phrase - colour - object or character.
(There is a page for your jottings inside the back cover.)

2. Meditatio (reflection)

Let the significant word / object / colour / character fill
your mind without straining to analyse them.
You are in God's presence,
let the Holy Spirit lead your understanding.

3. Oratio (prayer)

Allow your heart to speak to God,
in words or emotions inspired by the parable
or the thoughts that have come to you while reflecting.

4. Contemplatio (rest)

Let go of ideas and words and allow yourself to rest in the
presence of God in simple wordless contemplation.

(Adapted from the
Lectio Divina pamphlet - NZ Catholic Bishops Conference 2011)



The Good Shepherd - Luke 15:4-7

“Rejoice with me I have found my lost sheep.”

The Shepherd looks for the lost sheep.

Finding it, he puts it in on his shoulders, and goes home rejoicing.

1. Look and be open to the parable window
Look for a particular colour, character, object, concept or word that may seem significant.
2. Let that which is significant
fill your mind without analysing;
you are in God's presence -
let the Holy Spirit lead your understanding.
3. Allow your heart to speak to God
as you are inspired by the parable.
4. How am I called to respond?
Allow yourself to rest
in the presence of God.

At each of the parable windows, there are three basic questions:

- As I look and ponder the parable window, what do I notice? Why?
- Where is love, or mercy or faithfulness, compassion or forgiveness in this parable?
- How am I called to respond?

A space for journaling:

(Please jot down your thoughts and insights for further reflection)

You may like to enter the parable window through your imagination, as a character or an object ... actually allowing yourself to experience the Mercy and Love of God.



The Good Shepherd

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

Then Jesus told them this parable: “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”

Psalm 23

The Lord is my Shepherd, there is nothing I shall want

Ezekiel 34:11

Thus says the Lord: I myself will look after and tend my sheep. As a shepherd tends his flock when he finds himself among his scattered sheep, so will I tend my sheep. I will rescue them from every place where they were scattered when it was cloudy and dark. They shall lie down on good grazing ground, and in rich pastures on the mountains of Israel. I myself will pasture my sheep; I myself will give them rest, says the Lord God. The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal, shepherding them rightly.

From John 10

The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock. I tell you most solemnly, I am the gate of the sheepfold. All others who have come are thieves and brigands. I am the gate. Anyone who enters through me will be safe: they will go freely in and out and be sure of finding pasture. I have come that you may have life and have it to the full. I am the Good shepherd; the one who lays down his life for his sheep. They too will listen for my voice, and there will be only one flock, and one Shepherd.”