



## FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER [B]

April 26, 2015

### READINGS

Acts 4:8-12

1 John 3:1-2

John 10:11-18

### CALENDAR

April 22: Earth Day

April 24: Arbor Day

April 24-30: World Immunization Week

April 25: World Malaria Day

May 1: Feast of St. Joseph the Worker; International Workers' Day

May 3: World Press Freedom Day

May 3: World Day of Prayer for Vocations

### QUOTES

...the Church, in this time of great historical change, is called to offer more evident signs of God's presence and closeness.

*Pope Francis, Vespers, 11 April 2015*

The salvation brought by Christ is continually being offered to us, that it may bear abundant fruits of goodness in keeping with the plan of God who wishes to save all his children, especially those who have gone away from him and are looking for the way back. The Good Shepherd is always going in search of the lost sheep, and when he finds them he puts them on his shoulders and brings them back to the flock. Christ is in search of every human being, whatever the situation!

*John Paul II, Jubilee Message for those in Prisons, 9 July 2000*

May the marginalized, the imprisoned, the poor and the migrants who are so often rejected, maltreated and discarded, the sick and the suffering, children, especially those who are victims of violence; all who today are in mourning, and all men and women of goodwill, hear the consoling and healing voice of the Lord Jesus: "Peace to you!"

*Pope Francis, Urbi et Orbi Easter Message, 5 April 2015*

The ministries which exist and are at work at this time in the Church are all, even in their variety of forms, a participation in Jesus Christ's own ministry as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep, the humble servant who gives himself without reserve for the salvation of all.

*John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation, Christifideles Laici of 1988*



I would like to ask all those who have positions of responsibility in economic, political and social life, and all men and women of goodwill: Let us be protectors of creation, protectors of God's plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment.

*Pope Francis, 18 March 2013*

## THOUGHTS FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

The gospel image of Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd reminds us that Christ's ministry is a ministry of service and solidarity. Jesus desires to bring the whole flock together – all men and women – rich and poor – young and old – from all the many nations and groups. Jesus desires not to dominate or control or manipulate people but to serve them, inspire them, and bring them together. This is the spirit of Easter, the spirit of the Resurrection.

If we function as “another Christ” today, what might this “good shepherding” look like? There are of course many levels of meaning. In light of the incarnation, we cannot focus only on eternal life in some other future world. Jesus is concerned with what promotes eternal life in the present. We might say that the Good Shepherd is concerned for all the things that promote life:

- Food, water, shelter, health care, nutrition
- Community, compassion, solidarity
- Mercy and forgiveness
- Spirituality, freedom, spirit
- Justice, righteousness, virtue
- Peace and nonviolence

We are called to share this same concern. With the “Good Shepherd,” we are called to be involved in the real issues of life and in justice for the whole world. We are called to empower others with the wonder of this Spirit.

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A number of years ago, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development made a very simple and direct statement connecting Jesus as the Good Shepherd and the Preferential Option for the Poor.

*We often think of Jesus as the Good Shepherd and ourselves as His flock, because He takes care of our needs whether we are the strongest of the flock or the weakest. If we are the weakest we are given special attention so that we might become strong. This image of Jesus is a visual picture of the theme of Catholic Social Teaching, Preferential Option for and with the Poor and Vulnerable. Just as Jesus made great efforts to seek out the lost and weakest sheep, so too we are called to seek out the poor, to work with them toward empowerment and strength, and to make sure that we are aware of how our decisions affect the less fortunate in our communities.*

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION IN YOUR FAITH SHARING GROUP

When have you experienced the care of a “Good Shepherd?”  
How has this experience helped you to shepherd others?

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The first letter of John refers to all of us as “children of God.”  
When have you experienced solidarity with those who are need?  
When have you experienced a connection with people who were poor?

## STORY

From: <http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/anthony-de-mello?before=1300966798>

A shepherd was grazing his sheep when a passer-by said, “That’s a fine flock of sheep you have. Could I ask you something about them?” “Of course,” said the shepherd. Said the man, “How much would you say your sheep walk each day?” “Which ones, the white ones or the black ones?” “The white ones.” “Well, the white ones walk about four miles a day.” “And the black ones?” “The black ones too.”

“And how much grass would you say they eat each day?” “Which ones, the white or the black?” “The white ones.” “Well, the white ones eat about four pounds of grass each day.” “And the black ones?” “The black ones too.” “And how much wool would you say they give each year?” “Which ones, the white or the black?” “The white ones.” “Well, I’d say the white ones give some six pounds of wool each year at shearing time.” “And the black ones?” “The black ones too.”

The passer-by was intrigued. “May I ask you why you have this strange habit of dividing your sheep into white and black each time you answer one of my questions?” “Well,” said the shepherd, “that’s only natural. The white ones are mine, you see.” “Ah! And the black ones?” “The black ones too,” said the shepherd.

The human mind makes foolish divisions in what Love sees as One.

## ACTIONS - LINKS

### April 25 is World Malaria Day.

Get some information from the World Health Organization:

<http://www.who.int/campaigns/malaria-day/2015/en/>

### Less than three minutes to advocate for increasing the minimum wage

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=GOqt153V3JI>

### **Saint Joseph the Worker and Justice for Workers**

May 1 is the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker and an international worker's holiday.

"Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan religious organization that educates and mobilizes the religious people of all faiths in the United States on issues important to working people." <http://www.iwj.org/>

For "Selected Quotations from Catholic Social Thought on the Rights and Responsibilities of Workers and Labor Unions," go to:

<http://www.usccb.org/upload/Primer-labor-Catholic-social-teaching.pdf>

### **Nuclear Weapons**

From April 27 - May 22, 2015, representatives of the 189 members of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty will come together at the United Nations in New York City to review the Treaty's operation. You can sign a petition to abolish nuclear weapons at:

[http://www.unitedforpeace.org/2015/04/03/sign-the-peace-planet-petition-for-total-elimination-of-nuclear-weapons/?can\\_id=b754562af46d89e2da9c146b2a7f7f42&source=email-for-peace-planet-sign-up-to-abolish-nuclear-weapons&email\\_referrer=for-peace-planet-sign-up-to-abolish-nuclear-weapons](http://www.unitedforpeace.org/2015/04/03/sign-the-peace-planet-petition-for-total-elimination-of-nuclear-weapons/?can_id=b754562af46d89e2da9c146b2a7f7f42&source=email-for-peace-planet-sign-up-to-abolish-nuclear-weapons&email_referrer=for-peace-planet-sign-up-to-abolish-nuclear-weapons) 874

### **"CRAZY FACTS"**

The following facts are from: [http://www.who.int/malaria/media/world\\_malaria\\_report\\_2014/en/](http://www.who.int/malaria/media/world_malaria_report_2014/en/)

Malaria is an entirely preventable and treatable mosquito-borne illness. In 2014, 97 countries and territories had ongoing malaria transmission. An estimated 3.3 billion people are at risk of malaria, of whom 1.2 billion are at high risk. In high-risk areas, more than one malaria case occurs per 1000 population.

There were an estimated 198 million cases of malaria worldwide (range 124-283 million) in 2013, and an estimated 584 000 deaths (range 367 000-755 000). 90% of all malaria deaths occur in Africa. In 2013, an estimated 437, 000 African children died before their fifth birthday due to malaria. Globally, the disease caused an estimated 453, 000 under-five deaths in 2013.

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

*Response: Shepherd us, O Lord.*

For all who are unemployed, underemployed, or living with less than a living wage, we pray...

For those trapped in the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and so many other places, we pray...

For people without access to healthy water or adequate food, we pray...

For children without access to a quality education, we pray...

For the elderly without a supportive family, we pray...

For the stressed and worried who feel so overwhelmed, we pray...

For our leaders as we need help to work together for the common good, we pray...

## PRAYER - MEDITATION

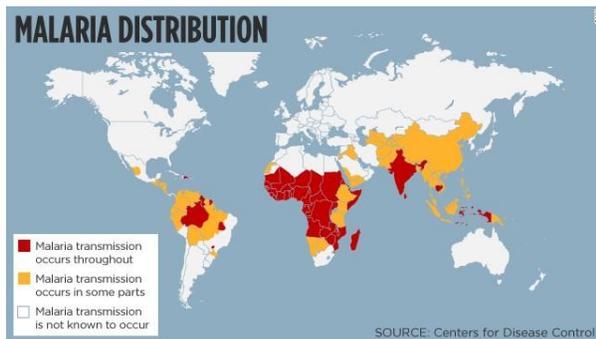
Two short prayers for justice can be found on line at [http://www.invitationtoprayer.org/prayers\\_justice.html](http://www.invitationtoprayer.org/prayers_justice.html)  
Here is one of them:

Grant us, Lord God, a vision of our land as your love would make it:

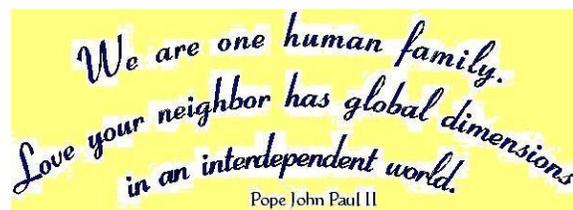
- a land where the weak are protected, and none go hungry or poor;
- a land where the benefits of civilized life are shared, and everyone can enjoy them;
- a land where different races and cultures live in tolerance and mutual respect;
- a land where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love.

And give us the inspiration and courage to build it, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

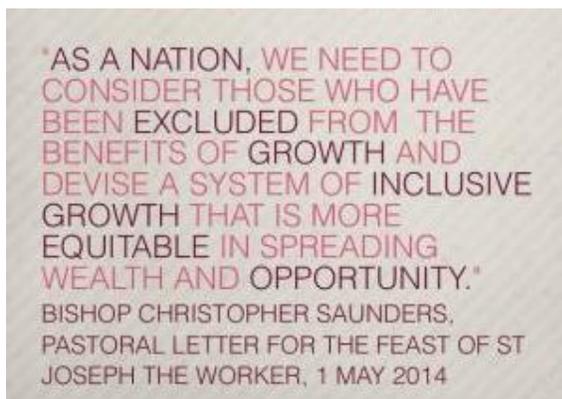
## IMAGES



<http://www.cnn.com/2014/11/13/world/africa/the-kit-that-could-end-malaria/>



<http://cgscdogh.org/social-ministrysocial-justice>



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/319755642266442006/>