

## Follow the Leader

**T**his is not simply the name of a childhood game.

It is actually an essential directive for living. We learn so many things in life because we followed someone. That is how we learned to read, to play a musical instrument, to speak another language, or to understand social behavior.

Many nations at the time of Jeremiah represented their kings as shepherds, leading the people to verdant pastures and restful waters. We see this in the art they left behind. However, many of the kings of Jeremiah's day were not good leaders—not attentive shepherds, nor faithful to God, who had entrusted the people to their care. Consequently, God stepped in to be their shepherd. This is the image of the divine shepherd found in the responsorial psalm. Jesus also characterized religious leaders as shepherds. He was distraught that the people were “like sheep without a shepherd” (Mark 6:34).

Is this situation different today? Many are eager to follow a leader, but which one? Ours is a multicultural, pluralistic, international society with innumerable viewpoints. Voices cry out from many corners, demanding to be heard. But which voice should we heed? Which worldly leaders should we follow? It's apparent that our leaders, both civic and religious, disagree on certain matters. What are we to do? The issue is not “with whom do I agree?” but rather “whose point of view makes me a better person? More compassionate? More understanding? More selfless? More *Christlike*?” Are we following the right leader?

*Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA*

### FOR *Reflection*

- ★ *Our Shepherd never pits us against each other but brings us together. Is this reflected in the way we live in society?*
- ★ *Our Shepherd cares for all, not just those whom society has privileged. Do we?*

*I will raise up shepherds for them who will shepherd them so that they need no longer fear or be terrified; none shall be missing.*

JEREMIAH 23:4



# Dear Padre,

**I read this is the liturgical year of Mark, that next year will be the year of Matthew, and the following year, Luke. Then it starts over with Mark again. Why doesn't John have a year?**

**T**he purpose in a three-year cycle of readings at Mass was primarily a pastoral one. "The treasures of the Bible are to be opened up more lavishly, so that richer fare may be provided for the faithful at the table of God's word. In this way a more representative portion of the holy Scriptures will be read to the people in the course of a prescribed number of years" (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy [*Sacrosanctum Concilium*], 51).

All of Scripture is the word of God, but "Christ, present in his word, proclaims the Gospel" (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 29). Moreover, Christ reveals himself to us from four different Gospel perspectives. For some people, John's version—often deeply symbolic and theological—can be pastorally challenging.

The semicontinuous reading of the three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) "provides a presentation of each Gospel's distinctive doctrine as well as a development of the Lord's life and preaching" (*Lectionary for Mass*, 1970; 16,1). Nevertheless, John's Gospel appears in all three cycles. For example, five readings from chapter six on the bread of life are inserted in Year B, when Mark's short Gospel is proclaimed. John's Gospel is also read during Easter and scattered throughout the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Lent.

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## A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*



*For leadership there is only one road: service. There is no other way. If you have many qualities—the ability to communicate, etc.—but you are not a servant, your leadership will fail, it is useless, it has not power to gather [people] together.*

ADDRESS TO PONTIFICAL COLLEGES  
AND RESIDENCES OF ROME, MAY 12, 2014

## Calendar

### Monday

JULY 19

Weekday

Ex 14:5–18

Mt 12:38–42

### Tuesday

JULY 20

Weekday

Ex 14:21–15:1

Mt 12:46–50

### Wednesday

JULY 21

Weekday

Ex 16:1–5, 9–15

Mt 13:1–9

### Thursday

JULY 22

St. Mary Magdalene

Sg 3:1–4b or

2 Cor 5:14–17

Jn 20:1–2, 11–18

### Friday

JULY 23

Weekday

Ex 20:1–17

Mt 13:18–23

### Saturday

JULY 24

Weekday

Ex 24:3–8

Mt 13:24–30

### Sunday

JULY 25

Seventeenth Sunday in

Ordinary Time

2 Kgs 4:42–44

Eph 4:1–6

Jn 6:1–15

**Do you have a question for the Padre?**

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