

*Assumption/St. Paul*

*&*

*St. Peter the Apostle Parish*

Daily Reflection By Linda Bishoff

February 22, 2010  
Feast of the Chair of St. Peter

[1 Peter 5:1-4](#)

[Psalm 23:1-3a, 4, 5, 6](#)

[Matthew 16:13-19](#)

The metaphor of the Shepherd and his Sheep for Jesus and his followers is a common one in scripture. We see it played out today in three different passages. The Twenty-third Psalm, I believe, is one of the most beautiful and tender readings in the Bible. It is a Psalm of trust and comfort, chosen by families for loved one's funerals more than any other. At the time of its writing, the relationship between the shepherd and his sheep was one well known to all. Sheep are totally dependent upon their shepherd. They are not an intelligent and independent breed. The shepherd must see that they are led to the greenest pastures they could not find by themselves. Sheep can not drink from swiftly flowing water, and as their shepherds know this, they guide them beside still waters. The valley of the shadow of death was an actual place in the holy land, with many dark, rocky hiding places in the bordering mountains that harbored wolves and other enemies. A shepherd used his rod and staff to gently guide the sheep in the right direction. I am truly touched to be a sheep in the Lord's flock, for what better care than His could there be?

In Matthew today, we see for the first time in scripture, Jesus reveal himself as the Messiah. It is Peter, the fisherman, first apostle to be called by our Lord, who comes to know this. The Lord chooses this simple everyday man to be the builder of his church. Today is the celebration of the chair of Peter. In St. Peter the Apostle Church we can see the beautiful stained-glass window of Peter holding the keys, a symbol of his responsibility handed down from God. If he can do it, so can I, and so can any of us. He calls us from First Peter to be the gentle shepherd-like leaders of other Christian people. We are not to be boastful or arrogant, but always supportive, preparing ourselves for our "place in the house of the Lord forever."

Father, we thank you that as in the beautiful parable in which you tenderly look for and find the lost lamb, even as the ninety-nine are together, we rejoice in knowing that you do the same for us when we are lost and in need of comfort.