

## April 12 - Saturday

*He restores my soul.  
He leads me in right paths \_for his name's sake.*

### Psalm 23:3

One of the amenities that a computer offers is the capacity to restore your work easily. Those of us who had the chance to work with typewriters knew how tedious it was to correct a mistake. At times you have to pull the pages apply some liquid to erase letters or words before you can restore the document to what you intended it to be. With a computer, all comes with just a click of a mouse.

The Psalmist also speaks of restoration but unlike working a document in a computer, he speaks of the restoration of the soul. The shepherd restores the soul of the sheep through the provisions that were made available – green pastures, living waters.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd offered the same to us. He said: "*Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest.*" (Matthew 11:28). He also gave a hint of what is available through him when he spoke these words to the Samaritan woman at the well, "*If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.*" (John 4:10). Most of all what Jesus did on the cross was to restore us with God, to erase our sins not through a cheap liquid but through his costly and precious blood so that we can walk and live a new and resurrected life in his likeness, a life that “befits his name” (NJB), a life that “brings honor to his name.” (NLT) What a joy and what a privilege!

### **Prayer:**

*Thank Lord Jesus, for restoring our souls  
and for leading us to walk in God's way.  
Amen.*

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## April 11 - Friday

*The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
he leads me beside still waters;*

### Psalm 23:1-2

Good shepherds are dependable provider. This is what the Psalmist reminds us of God – I shall not want can be also be translated as “I have everything I need.” For a sheep the basic and foremost need are green pastures, fresh and flowing water. In the metaphor, the shepherd provides the much needed rest for the flock and guides them through living streams to quench their thirst, allowing renewal and refreshment to take place. What an inspiring image but also one that calls for a response from our end.

Trusting God to provide is walking the faith, believing that our needs, not our wants, will be provided. The fear that what we need and worst of all what we want will not be available in the future leads to hoarding, the accumulation of things that we do not need and even food that will be spoiled for not being consumed within its edible timeframe. This is what happened to the manna provided by God in the exodus story. The people were given specific instruction to gather what they can eat for the day, just enough for their need. But some hoarded, they succumbed to their inner fear that it might not be available tomorrow, only to wake up the following day with spoiled food. (Exodus 16:16-20) In the midst of our tendency to hoard someone said that “there is enough in the world for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed.” The Bible said it plainly, *The Lord is my Shepherd, I have everything I need.*

## Prayer:

*O God, our Shepherd  
Teach us to trust you \_  
to provide what we need. Amen.*

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## April 10 - Thursday

*He himself bore our sins \_in his body on the cross,  
so that, free from sins,  
we might live for righteousness;  
by his wounds you have been healed.  
For you were going astray like sheep,  
but now you have returned  
to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.*

**1 Peter 2: 24-25**

On March 30, 1981, 69 days after he assumed the Presidency of the United States, President Ronald Reagan was shot in an assassination attempt. One of the four persons wounded aside from the President was a Secret Service agent, Timothy McCarthy whose primary duty was to protect the President at all cost. This is what Presidential Guards are trained for they shield the President with their own body to save whoever is occupying that high office.

The Bible uses the imagery of the shepherd to remind us of the extraordinary way God shields, protects, and saves us. A good shepherd possesses that impeccable character and valuable quality of a gallant guard – the willingness to lay down his life for his flock. This is the image of Jesus that Peter portrayed in his letter to the early church. Jesus is the shepherd and the guardian of our souls.

Only a few occupy that highest position in the land and enjoy the

protection of the elite guards. But one essential truth that the Bible reminds us today is that we have someone who keeps watch on us, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and in fact through eternity, the risen Christ – the shepherd and guardian of our souls. That’s how special we are!

**Prayer:**

*Thank you, O God for sending Jesus,  
the Shepherd and Guardian of our souls.  
May we value and live our lives  
worthy of his protection and his salvation. Amen.*

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**April 9 - Wednesday**

*For to this you have been called, \_because Christ also suffered for  
you,  
leaving you an example, \_so that you should follow in his steps.  
"He committed no sin, \_and no deceit was found in his mouth."  
When he was abused, \_he did not return abuse;  
when he suffered, he did not threaten;  
but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.*

**1 Peter 2:21-23**

*“Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace”* This is the refrain of the hymn that Helen M. Lemmel wrote in 1922. Jesus is the point of reference upon which our lives revolve. Peter used the word example – He (Jesus) is the example whom we follow in life. Some disagree, as they said in the Visayan dialect; *“dili na karon panahon ni Kristo, panahon na sa mga listo.”* The word *Kristo* (Christ) and *listo* (quick) rhymes, the translation would be – “Today is not the time of Christ, it is now the time of the quick,” those who are insidiously clever.

Following Christ's steps is the main substance of being a disciple. The question we should be asking as we face the challenge of daily living is not just how quickly and safely we can resolve our problems but more so on the issue of what would Christ do given the same challenge. These are moments when we turn our eyes upon Jesus. We are called to make decisions and to face the consequence of our choices based on our faith in him. And like Christ, we submit everything and trust that in the end God judges justly!

**Prayer:**

*Help us O God "to fix our eyes on Jesus,  
the pioneer and perfecter of our faith." Amen.*

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**April 8 - Tuesday**

*For it is a credit to you if, being aware of God,  
you endure pain while suffering unjustly.  
If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong,  
what credit is that?  
But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it,  
you have God's approval.*

**1 Peter 2:19-20**

What is your credit score? I did not get the question when I first heard about it. I thought that it refers to how much credit does a person have. Later, I discovered that this question is a big deal to many people who want to borrow money or who want to get a credit line. Credit scores are numbers that refer to statistical probability of the 'worthiness' or the ability of the person to pay debts.

It crosses my mind, when I read what Peter wrote when he mentioned about credit and God's approval. The terms sounded like banking vocabulary but definitely the tool of measurement is way beyond mathematics. Credit, suffering unjustly, enduring, God's approval is hard to digest in a world that puts high premium on personal rights and privilege. What Peter listed are tough words considering that during his time values such as freedom, equal opportunity, human rights were unheard of or if not enjoyed only by the powerful and the mighty.

But the challenge is issued to all of us who are *'aware of God'* to live differently – enduring suffering for doing right – responding in a manner so radical that puts the world upside down. Who would have thought that the Christian faith will survive in the Roman Empire which was so rough and tough? But the way of Jesus outlives the way of the emperors. God's approval was stamped for those who endured unjust suffering.

**Prayer:**

*It's difficult, O God, we confess –  
to suffer unjustly.*

*May we find your approval as we respond \_  
to the challenges that confronts us daily\_  
in faithful obedience to your call. Amen.*

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**April 7 - Monday**

*While they were talking and discussing,  
Jesus himself came near and went with them,  
but their eyes were kept from recognizing him.*

**Luke 24:15-16**

The development of high-tech photography added a new word to our vocabulary – paparazzo or paparazzi. A paparazzo is a “freelance photographer who aggressively

pursues celebrities for the purpose of taking candid photographs.” (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary) The photos they took will then be sold for several hundreds or thousands depending on the subject and the kind of situation depicted. The paparazzo’s relentless pursuit of celebrities wherever they go hinges on their ability to spot and to recognize them.

In the Emmaus story that we pondered yesterday we got a situation where Cleopas and his companion failed to recognize the risen Christ. It was in the midst of their discussion about the crucifixion and the story circulating that Jesus body was missing that the risen Christ came near and walked with them as a stranger. “Their eyes were kept from recognizing him...” this would be a paparazzo’s missed opportunity, the subject was so near, so close and yet one failed to get a good frame or a good shot.

Think about situations when we ourselves failed to recognize God’s presence or God’s prompting in our lives. Scenarios viewed in retrospect that leads us to say that actually God was with us then, the risen Christ walks and talks with us “along life’s narrow way,” as expressed in the lines of the hymn “He Lives.” The good news is that even in our failure to recognize God, God did not fail to recognize us!

**Prayer:**

*Help us, O risen Christ  
to recognize your presence in our midst.  
for now, you are with us, always, Amen.*