

**1. Read** — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

**2. Meditate** — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage. **God what are you saying to me through this?**

**3. Pray** — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

**4. Contemplate** — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence.  
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**How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

[1] Deut. 30:19

[2] The Penny Catechism

[3] Psalm 34:15

[4] 1 Peter 3:10-11

[5] Glossary of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

[6] Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI); September 26, 2003

[7] Chris Stefanick; *Absolute Relativism*

[8] Glossary of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

[9] John 10:27

# Quick Connect

**What is the Gospel saying? John 10:27-30** — Pg. 1

**What is the Church saying Past and Present?** Pages 1-3

**What is God saying to you through this passage?** Page 4

## Gospel Reading – John 10:27-30 – Roman Missal

Jesus said: “My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can take them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can take them out of the Father’s hand. The Father and I are one.”

## Spiritual Reading – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter – Office of Readings

**From a homily on the Gospels by Saint Gregory the Great, pope**  
*Christ the good shepherd*

*I am the good shepherd.* I know my own—by which I mean, I love them—and my own know me. In plain words: those who love me are willing to follow me, for anyone who does not love the truth has not yet come to know it. My dear brethren, you have heard the test we pastors have to undergo. Turn now to consider how these words of our Lord imply a test for yourselves also. Ask yourselves whether you belong to his flock, whether you know him, whether the light of his truth shines in your minds. I assure you that it is not by faith that you will come to know him, but by love; not by mere conviction, but by action. John the evangelist is my authority for this statement. He tells us that *anyone who claims to know God without keeping his commandments is a liar.* Consequently, the Lord immediately adds: *As the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep.* Clearly he means that laying down his life for his sheep gives evidence of his knowledge of the Father and the Father’s knowledge of him. In other words, by the love with which he dies for his sheep he shows how greatly he loves his Father. Again he says: *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them; they follow me, and I give them eternal life.* Shortly before this he had declared: *If anyone enters the sheepfold through me he shall be saved; he shall go freely in and out and shall find good pasture.* He will enter into a life of faith; from faith he will go out to vision, from belief to contemplation, and will graze in the good pastures of everlasting life. So our Lord’s sheep will finally reach their grazing ground where all who follow him in simplicity of heart will feed on the green pastures of eternity. These pastures are the spiritual joys of heaven. There the elect look upon the face of God with unclouded vision and feast at the banquet of life for ever more. Beloved brothers, let us set out for these pastures where we shall keep joyful festival with so many of our fellow citizens. May the thought of their happiness urge us on! Let us stir up our

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hearts, rekindle our faith, and long eagerly for what heaven has in store for us. To love thus is to be already on our way. No matter what obstacles we encounter, we must not allow them to turn us aside from the joy of that heavenly feast. Anyone who is determined to reach his destination is not deterred by the roughness of the road that leads to it. Nor must we allow the charm of success to seduce us, or we shall be like a foolish traveler who is so distracted by the pleasant meadows through which he is passing that he forgets where he is going.

### **Virtue and Vice – Lesson and Discussion**

*“Cast the net over the right side of the boat”*

“I call heaven and earth today to witness against you. I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live.”[1] We have defined what good is, which is life and blessing, and that evil is death and curse. We have been given free will, which Saint Bonaventure says is the second most powerful thing in the universe. Our free will enables us to choose: good or bad; life or death; blessing or curse; what will we choose?

“If we hope to be saved, we must follow the rule of life; we are bound always to hate sin and love God.”[2] This basic rule of life is spoken of by the Psalmist, “Turn from evil and do good”[3] and by Saint Peter the Apostle, “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep the tongue from evil and the lips from speaking deceit, must turn from evil and do good...”[4]

**What is sin?** – The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, “An offense against God as well as a fault against reason, truth, and right conscience. Sin is a deliberate thought, word, deed, or omission contrary to the eternal law of God.”[5] Sin is when we deliberately use our free will to choose evil.

**What is vice?** Vice is a habit acquired by repeated sin. We fall into vice when we repeatedly misuse our free will.

Evil and good have been placed before us. God has given us free will to choose good and avoid evil. Sin, therefore, is a misuse of our free will. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do right we misuse our free will. When we misuse our free will we sin and deprive our self and others of good and we offend God, who is all good and deserving of all our love.

“In his 2010 Christmas address to the College of Cardinals, the Roman Curia, and the Governate of Vatican City State, Pope Benedict XVI spoke clearly and strongly about the profoundly disordered moral state in which our world finds itself. Speaking about the grave evils of our time – for example, the sexual abuse of minors by the clergy, the marketing of child pornography, sexual tourism, and the deadly abuse of drugs – he observed that they are all signs of ‘the tyranny of mammon which perverts mankind’ and they result from ‘a fatal misunderstanding

of freedom which actually undermines man’s freedom and ultimately destroys it”[6]

Our world tells us that we are free and so we can do whatever we want. **Why is this wrong?** This is wrong because the world waters down the truth to make us think by doing whatever we want is good when actually we are free so that we can choose the good and avoid the evil. Good is absolute and determined by the one, true and good God. Moral relativism states that good is whatever each person determines good to be and thus to sin is to go against one’s own idea of what good is. Moral Relativism allows for a person to even change what they believe the good to be. Sin therefore according to the relativist is simply going against or not choosing the good that you yourself have determined. “When asked what sin is, then-President-elect Barack Obama summed up moral relativism beautifully by saying, ‘Being out of alignment with my values.’”[7]

**What is virtue?** – The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, “A habitual and firm disposition to do the good. The moral virtues are acquired through human effort aided by God’s grace; the theological virtues are gifts of God.”[8] Jesus the Good Shepherd says of His flock, “I know them, and they follow me”[9]. In following Christ, we are called to virtue, to have the firm disposition to do the good.

It is our choice to live a life of vice or virtue.

**What should we do if we are living a life of vice?** First we need to realize that it is never too late to do the right thing. We can always begin avoid evil and pursue good. We have to first believe in the good., that their actually is a right thing. We have to believe in the good as revealed by Christ and His Church. Once we have come to know the truth and the good, it is then that we can begin to love the truth and the good. Saint Gregory says, “for anyone who does not love the truth has not yet come to know it” Our knowledge of truth and good and our love of truth and good lead to action, the “keeping of his commandments. Saint Gregory also says, “He [Saint John] tells us that *anyone who claims to know God without keeping his commandments is a liar.*” We should never be discouraged from doing the right thing, for if it is good, then it is possible. This is not possible for man alone, but with the grace of God.