

The Lord Is My Shepherd

The prominent image for God in today's readings is the shepherd. This might be an unfamiliar image for city dwellers, but it is a very rich religious image. The Bible tells us that early Israelites were herders, so they know a lot about shepherds. They knew that shepherds follow the wandering of their sheep and attended to their needs—not the other way around. They knew that shepherds lived with their sheep in the hills for long periods, away from family, friends, and the comforts of life. They knew that shepherds helped birthing and dying. They knew that all of this is a messy, smelly business, and no job for the fastidious.

Many nations of the ancient world, Israel included, thought of their kings as shepherds of the people—leaders who should be willing to do for their people what the shepherd does for the sheep. This explains why, on the feast of Christ the King, we represent our king as a shepherd rather than a victorious military commander, as many kings are. But more than this, throughout his life—at his passion and death, and now in his risen glory—Christ cares for us and leads us as a shepherd does. He embraces the messy, smelly reality of life. He is a shepherd-king, intent on our needs, searching for us when we seem to be lost. How comforting it is to know he carries us on his shoulders.

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR Reflection

- ★ Recite today's responsorial psalm slowly and thoughtfully.
- ★ Which images of Psalm 23 touch you the most? Why?



*The lost I will search out,
the strays I will bring back,
the injured I will bind up,
and the sick I will heal.*

EZEKIEL 34:16

CHRISTIAN ROSEMIK/SHUTTERSTOCK

