



The Shepherd's Sacred Heart

Praying for the Lost Sheep

Prepare: Read Luke 15:3-7

When St. Peter Canisius saw a vision of Christ's Sacred Heart, he felt great sadness as he realized that Jesus still suffers today whenever his love is despised, ignored, and rejected. From then on, he offered up all of his work as a sacrifice of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Think of how deeply the Good Shepherd grieves in his heart when one of his lambs wanders off and gets lost. His sacred heart burns with love for them. Now think of the lost ones in your family and others you care about who have wandered off. As much as you wish they'd find Jesus and come back to the church family, Jesus desires it far more. He's not waiting for them to find him; he's going after them!

Luke 15:3-7 shows how wonderful he feels when he carries them back on his shoulders. The weight of the cross was heavy and cruel, but this weight of carrying his beloved back into the fold is delightful, because it's the victory side of the cross.

To be picked up and carried by Jesus, people have to first realize that they're lost. When they do, repentance begins. Until then, they dodge him in bushy brambles and dark caves, because they misinterpret his intentions. But Jesus doesn't give up. He's jumping in and out of the bushes and caves with them, hoping that as they twist through life they will change their angle of view and see him reaching out to them with love.

Deep down in their wounded hearts, they long to be found and carried back to the security of God's pasture. The sacred heart of Jesus aches because of their wounds. His pain will



become their healing when they give their hearts to him. While we wait for this, we can help by offering up our prayers as a sacrifice to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, like St. Peter Canisius did.

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque saw in a vision how the Sacred Heart burns with love for all of us. Jesus told her that all who rely on his Sacred Heart will receive comfort in their afflictions, peace in their homes, and abundant blessings in every undertaking. For the sake of the lost lambs we know, let's dedicate our hearts to Jesus' Sacred Heart.

This means loving as he loves – with our whole lives, in our work, our homes, and our relationships. It means remembering that those who despise, ignore and reject Jesus are further damaging their own wounded hearts, and we pity them.

A Prayer for the Lost Sheep in Your Life:

"Dear Jesus, bless my home, my family, and _____, as well as all of our endeavors. May we all experience Your mercy through a contrite heart and a repentant spirit. May we all benefit from Your charity in all our needs, especially those that help us to overcome sin. St. Margaret Mary and St. Peter Canisius, pray for us. Amen."