

Reflection on I Peter 5

February 22, 1010
Lenten Vespers
Marion Servants of the Visitation

The first passage addresses the Presbyters. You may be wondering like I did, who are they?
Presbyters are the officially anointed leaders and teachers of the Christian community.

Right away we are quick to think this only applies to the priests --
But this also applies to other leaders – church officers, Catechists, and teachers, (and yes parents are called to be teachers too, whether they assume that role or not).

The advice is to lead with the right intention and motivation – **willingly** and **eagerly**. Do not lord it over others or be proud – the call is to shepherd the flock – Christ is our example of the Great Shepherd and He is a **Gentle Shepherd**.

The shepherd's staff was to use as a walking stick to help him as he cleared and checked out the way before he lead the flock into an area to ensure it was safe. It was also used to ward off wild animals. It was **not** used to beat the flock. We all respond much better to **gentle** and **kind** words and actions.

Leaders must lead by example. The shepherd knows the path and the pasture he is leading the flock to. Leaders are called to continually be in tune with the spirit and where the spirit would have them lead.

Leaders must know Christ and the still small voice of the Spirit - to be able to introduce and teach others who He is and help them learn to listen to Him. The flock knows the voice of their shepherd – and the flock follows only His voice.

Leaders are called to tend the flock – Just as Jesus did. He did not just preach and tell people what to do – **He did it Himself**. He lived out the scriptures and we are called to do the same. Jesus helped and healed people along the way; He was a servant to those He came to serve.

Leaders must be willing to be a servant - **Be gentle, not proud**, and just as Christ was willing to wash the feet of the disciples – a leader must be willing to do likewise and wash other's feet.

Leading is not easy. Sometimes it is lonely, sometimes the decisions are not easy or popular. Even the disciples did not want Christ to die.

- Be supportive to the leaders that GOD has placed in your life, especially our church leaders.
- Be supportive (to the leaders) by; Not grumbling and complaining.
- Be willing to lend a **helping hand**, (there is always something which needs to be done).
- Remember we are family called to **Love** one another
- Pray for our leaders – lift them up to the Lord and help to strengthen them.

The second part of this chapter is advise to the community – all of you who think the first part does not apply to you, there is something for you. Those under the care of leaders, and now we are addressing all. We are all anointed and called – you received an anointing at your baptism and confirmation and are called to serve.

We are all called to humility.

- Be sober and vigilant – Be **alert** and **steadfast** in your **faith**.
- **Resist the evil one** – he is real and is out there. He will tempt all. Just as Christ Himself was tempted in the desert – so are we.
- Realize when you are tempted, tried, and/or suffering – the community – this community is here to share and help strengthen you.

God Loves you and cherishes you so much!!

He will not desert you, especially in the desert. But if He would allow even His own Son to be tested – know that you will be tested also. You will have the Holy Spirit and Christ Himself to restore you.

Just as you are the clay in the potter's hands – the potter is shaping you and you think you know what kind of vessel He wants you to be and then flop and clay moves into another shape – you thought you were to be a dish and He shapes you into a beautiful vase.

- (He will) Confirm you – He created you and He continues to create you now into all He wants you to be.
- Strengthen you – **His strength** is what will sustain you and He will lift you up to be more than you can be or could ever imagine being.
- **Trust Him** – Be open to His spirit and allow Him to help you discern and use all your gifts – not just the ones you like.

Christ used fasting, prayer, and He quoted the scriptures – and He was able to resist the temptations of the devil. We are called this lent to fast, pray, read and study the scriptures so we can resist. Strengthen yourself and stay close in the flock and listen to the Shepherd. When the flock is in the desert it does not have the hills to protect it as it did in the green pastures so the flock must stay close to keep from being attacked, especially in the desert. This is what we are doing through our own Lenten Vespers to stay close to each other.

**Praise GOD that our calling is to HIS eternal glory –
To HIM is the glory now and forever!! Amen**

Mary L. Delaney