

Show me, then (my soul says), how I should sleep and how I should graze, and where the path is to my noonday rest. Do not let me fall away from your flock because of ignorance, and find myself one of a flock of sheep that are not yours.

Thus my soul spoke, when she was anxious about the beauty that God's care had given her and wanted to know how she could keep this good fortune for ever.

This excerpt from St. Gregory of Nyssa's commentary on the Song of Songs using the imagery of Psalm 23, appeals to the Lord Jesus Christ for the promised green pastures, restful waters and noonday rest that is the final, eternal destination of those who love God and walk in his ways. It is used in the Roman Catholic Office of readings for Thursday in the 33rd week in ordinary time with the corresponding biblical reading taken from Zechariah 11:4-12:8.

ST. PADRE PIO: Prayer: Stay With Me, Lord

Stay with me, Lord, for it is necessary to have You present so that I do not forget You. You know how easily I abandon You.

Stay with me, Lord, because I am weak and I need Your strength, that I may not fall so often.

Stay with me, Lord, for You are my life, and without You, I am without fervor.

Stay with me, Lord, for You are my light, and without You, I am in darkness.

Stay with me, Lord, to show me Your will.

Stay with me, Lord, so that I hear Your voice and follow You.

Stay with me, Lord, for I desire to love You very much, and always be in Your company.

Stay with me, Lord, if You wish me to be faithful to You.

Stay with me, Lord, for as poor as my soul is, I wish it to be a place of consolation for You, a nest of Love.

Stay with me, Jesus, for it is getting late and the day is coming to a close, and life passes, death, judgment, eternity approaches. It is necessary to renew my strength, so that I will not stop along the way and for that, I need You. It is getting late and death approaches. I fear the darkness, the temptations, the dryness, the cross, the sorrows. O how I need You, my Jesus, in this night of exile!

Stay with me tonight, Jesus, in life with all its dangers, I need You. Let me recognize You as Your disciples did at the breaking of bread, so that the Eucharistic Communion be the light which disperses the darkness, the force which sustains me, the unique joy of my heart.

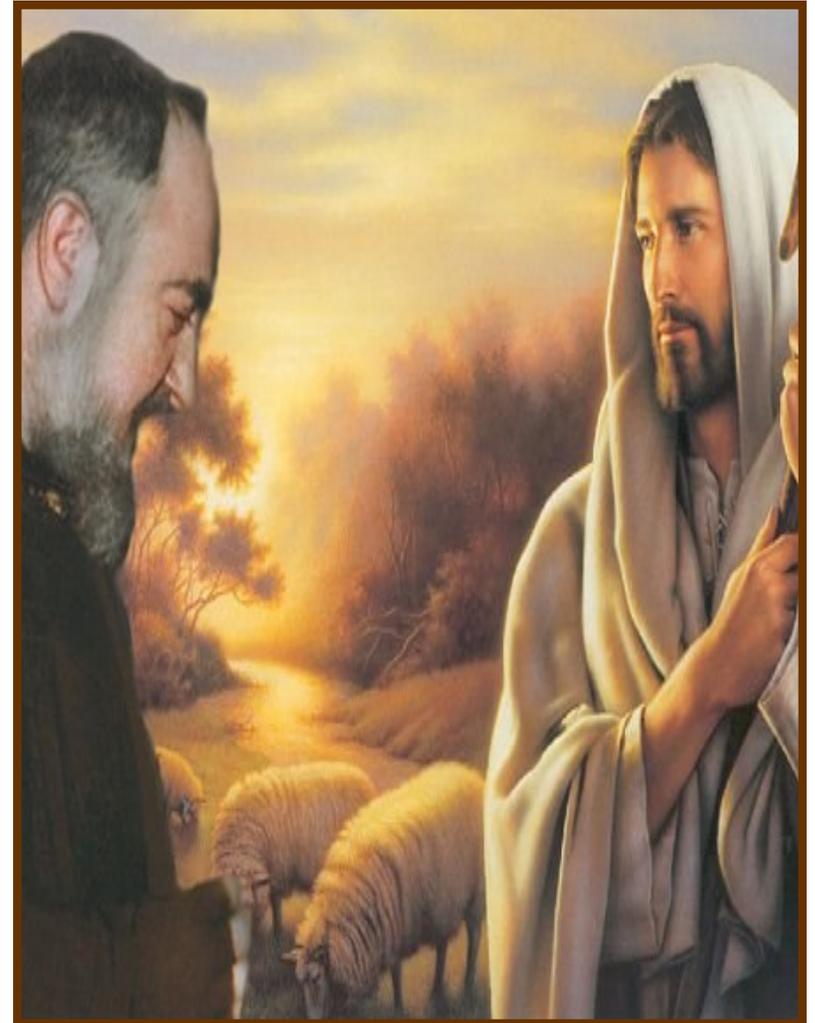
Stay with me, Lord, because at the hour of my death, I want to remain united to You, if not by Communion, at least by grace and love.

Stay with me, Jesus, I do not ask for divine consolation, because I do not merit it, but, the gift of Your Presence, oh yes, I ask this of You!

Stay with me, Lord, for it is You alone I look for. Your Love, Your Grace, Your Will, Your Heart, Your Spirit, because I love You and ask no other reward but to love You more and more. With a firm love, I will love You with all my heart while on earth and continue to love You perfectly during all eternity. Amen

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**PADRE PIO
WITH JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD**



**Always live under the eyes
of the Good Shepherd
and you will walk unharmed through evil pastures.**

PADRE PIO WITH JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Jesus is preeminently the Good Shepherd. . . Each soul can say: Jesus knows me and loves me, not in a general abstract way, but in the concrete aspect of my needs, of my desires, and of my life; for him to know me and to love me is to do me good, to encompass me more and more with his grace, and to sanctify me. Precisely because he loves me, Jesus calls me by name: he calls me when in prayer he opens to me new horizons of the spiritual life, or when he enables me to know my faults and weaknesses better; he calls me when he reprimands me or purifies me by aridity, as well as when he consoles and encourages me by filling me with new fervor; he calls me when he makes me feel the need of greater generosity, and when he asks me for sacrifices or gives me joys, and still more, when he awakens in me a deeper love for him. Hearing his call, my attitude should be that of a loving little sheep who recognizes the voice of its Shepherd and follows him always.

Father Gabriel of Saint Mary Magdalen, O.C.D.

To be shepherded by our Lord Jesus Himself means that we cannot go wrong in anything that we do as we are assured that we are in the right flock. Being in the right flock, we feel the comfort, the bliss, and the sense of belongingness that God has endowed to all His sheep. However, these feelings of exuberance, knowing that we are His, do not end in that particular realm. We are given the challenge to take part and live a life like that of our Shepherd- the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, as members of His flock, we have bigger responsibilities ahead; thus, the call for stewardship is instigated every step of the way.

As imitators of Christ, we take part of His pastoral ministry by showing concern, compassion, and love to all. Showing our care and love to the orphans, widows, homeless, prisoners and the least fortunate brothers and sisters (see James 1: 27) are some of the direct indicators that we are actively participating in the stewardship that Christ calls us all to be. In this way, people may recognize that we are Christ's and He is our head. We preach to them the good news not in every word that we say or every verse in the Bible that we quote but from the actions that we do.

As the saying goes, "actions speak louder than words." Padre Pio proved this during his lifetime with his various ministries. He was a perfect example and model of Christian Charity. Helping the sick by founding the Home for the Relief of Suffering, in the confessional where he reconciled souls to Jesus, starting prayer groups where he taught its members the virtues of Christian living, and the many other benevolent acts of charity that he performed not only during his lifetime but continue to the present day (see Matthew 25:40). By sharing his ministry with mankind Padre Pio is a model of stewardship. He was an effective evangelizer who preached, not in words but in deeds. Padre Pio has shown the world what a steward is... The question now is, are we ready to be like him and consequently be like our Shepherd, Christ the Lord?

I. Faithful Shepherd, You are not a hireling who runs away at the sight of danger, but Your fidelity was tested and proved on the wood of the Cross. Accept the gift of our gratitude for Your marvelous care. Help us to hear and follow Your voice.

Watchful Shepherd, who protects the flock and searches tirelessly for those who wander from the fold, retrieve the lost and bring them home. Tend and heal their wounds.

Good Shepherd, who lays down His Life for His sheep, nourish Your people with the Bread of Life, that we may reflect Your likeness and enjoy the spring of Living Water that never ends. Amen.

II. Where are you pasturing your flock, O good Shepherd, You carry the whole flock on your shoulders? (For the whole of human nature is one sheep and you have lifted it onto your shoulders). Show me the place of peace, lead me to the good grass that will nourish me, call me by name so that I, your sheep, hear your voice, and by your speech give me eternal life. Answer me, you whom my soul loves.

I give you the name 'you whom my soul loves' because your name is above every name and above all understanding and there is no rational nature that can utter it or comprehend it. Therefore your name, by which your goodness is known, is simply the love my soul has for you. How could I not love you, when you loved me so much, even though I was black, that you laid down your life for the sheep of your flock? A greater love cannot be imagined, than exchanging your life for my salvation.

Show me then (my soul says) where you pasture your flock, so that I can find that saving pasture too, and fill myself with the food of heaven without which no-one can come to eternal life, and run to the spring and fill myself with the drink of God. You give it, as from a spring, to those who thirst – water pouring from your side cut open by the lance, water that, to whoever drinks it, is a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

If you lead me to pasture here, you will make me lie down at noon, sleeping at peace and taking my rest in light unstained by any shade. For the noon has no shade and the sun stands far above the mountain peaks. You bring your flock to lie in this light when you bring your children to rest with you in your bed. But no-one can be judged worthy of this noontime rest who is not a child of light and a child of the day. Whoever has separated himself equally from the shadows of evening and morning, from where evil begins and evil ends, at noon he will lie down and the sun of righteousness will shine on him.