



Dearest sisters and brothers in Christ,

Are you feeling lost? Does the day weigh you down? Are you feeling like you do a lot each day but still feel somewhat empty where it counts in your heart? These are moments that we all share, as children of God and as members of the delicate human family. We are connected by vast fibers of humanity in our struggles, in our sorrow, in our celebrations, in joy, in prayer and in all that we experience.

The good news is that we are never alone! Our Lord is our shepherd. We always have His abundance, care, love, compassion, understanding and guidance. Always! Know that every step we take, if we look to God, our steps will be illuminated. We have the Good Shepherd to tenderly care for us and to show us the way that leads to God.

*"I am the good shepherd, says the Lord.
I know my sheep, and mine know me."*

John 10:14

The feelings of being lost are signs of detachment from God. God is eternally within us, and we need only connect our spirit with the spirit of our Lord in love, compassion toward ourselves and others, kindness that extends beyond boundaries we could ever measure. Trust in God. Trust that you will have everything you need, just when you need it and more.

Blessings come from all directions: from a stranger that happens to mention how lovely you look, from a colleague that offers heartfelt insight, from a neighbor that smiles when you're feeling alone, from a child who shares a look that conveys the magical power of innocence and love. Our blessings come in all shapes and sizes, from all generations of wisdom and across time and distance. Count your blessings! Why not try this simple practice to give yourself the gifts of gratitude?

Gratitude is the antidote for pain, suffering, grief, and the feelings of being lost and alone. Gratitude is a prayer in motion. The practice of gratitude invites us to actively bring to mind and heart, all the goodness this life offers us. Every time we put gratitude into action, we bless someone else, and we experience the blessings anew, all by the grace of God. This is what Shakespeare referred to as being "twice blessed".

*Make your life a living prayer of gratitude to God through acts of kindness, compassion, respect, humility, and love. Be the change you wish to feel in our own heart. In God's holy name, we pray. *Amen.**

Fr. Vincent Phung