



Open Door

MIGUEL DULICK

It is “Good Shepherd Sunday,” and the gospel quotes Jesus: “I am the gate for the sheep.” It seems the oddest of Jesus’ “I am” identities, until you realize that the shepherd himself was often the literal gate of the sheep’s pen, as he would lay his own body across the entrance to keep the sheep secure and safe from any predators. Actually, the predators that worry Jesus the most are other shepherds—“strangers” who came before him, all of whom Jesus flatly denounces as “thieves and robbers.”

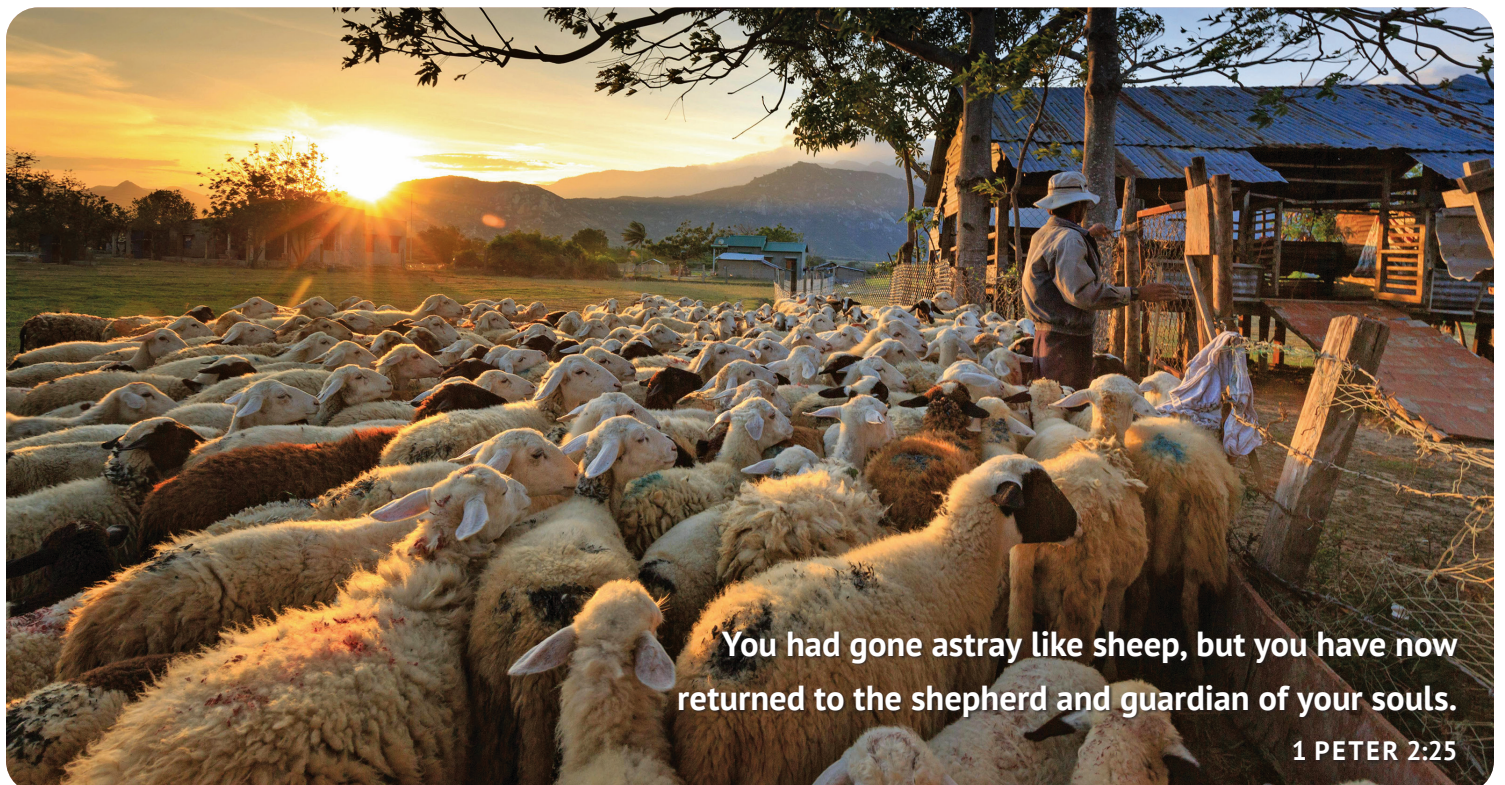
Does that scare us today? Are we vulnerable to attacks, even from those supposedly in charge of our care? When Jesus opens the gate, we go in and out through him, through Jesus, to find pasture. We follow

him because we recognize “his voice.” In the synodal Church that Pope Francis called us to, and to which we continue to be called by Pope Leo XIV, every voice is welcome and needed so that the Holy Spirit will fill the whole Church with truth.

Here in Honduras, where I live, folks with little education can offer profound witness to the love of God. It comes from their own intimacy with Jesus, recognizing his voice in their daily life. They are often the poor victims of widespread corruption, like “a thief [who] comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy.” Here in Honduras, we take refuge in Jesus, that we “might have life and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). ●

Reflect

How can we recognize voices that speak the truth? How do we recognize Jesus’ voice?



You had gone astray like sheep, but you have now returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

1 PETER 2:25

Dear Padre,

Should Christians avoid practicing qi gong or tai chi? Or even meditation in which you empty your mind? Thank you.

This is one of those questions that has been debated for a long time. Social media offers many so-called experts with vastly different opinions. It can be very confusing, particularly if you are looking for a black-and-white answer, a yes or a no.

The pope who provides us with the most helpful direction to answer this question is Pope Benedict XVI. He did not forbid Eastern spiritual practices entirely but warned against their integration into Christian life without proper discernment. His perspective was rooted in a theological understanding that Christian spirituality is a unique path focused on a relationship with Christ. He emphasized that our Catholic spiritual tradition is distinct from the goals and methods of non-Christian traditions. He believed the practice of such non-Christian traditions, without preparation and without awareness of the challenge they present, could lead to spiritual error if not approached with caution and discernment.

So, the answer is nuanced. If you are using the practice as a spiritual practice, you should proceed with the utmost caution. If, on the other hand, you are using these practices for the more common physical or psychological—not spiritual—reasons, then it is permissible. ●

Fr. Thomas M. Santa, CSsR / DearPadre.org



VLADA KARPOVICH / PEXELS

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
April 27	April 28	April 29	April 30	May 1	May 2	May 3
<i>Easter Weekday</i>	<i>Easter Weekday</i>	<i>St. Catherine of Siena, Virgin and Doctor of the Church</i>	<i>Easter Weekday</i>	<i>Easter Weekday</i>	<i>St. Athanasius, Bishop and Doctor of the Church</i>	<i>Fifth Sunday of Easter</i>
Acts 11:1–18 Jn 10:11–18	Acts 11:19–26 Jn 10:22–30	Acts 12:24–13:5a Jn 12:44–50	Acts 13:13–25 Jn 13:16–20	Acts 13:26–33 Jn 14:1–6	Acts 13:44–52 Jn 14:7–14	Acts 6:1–7 1 Pt 2:4–9 Jn 14:1–12



MARCO IACOBUCCI EPP / SHUTTERSTOCK

A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV

Our faith is authentic when it embraces our whole life, when it becomes a criterion for our decisions, when it makes us women and men committed to doing what is right and who take risks out of love, even as Jesus did.... Jesus is the true measure of our faith; he is the gate through which we must pass in order to be saved.

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