



Feed My Sheep | Nicolette Peñaranda  
Yarn and paper collage on canvas

## From the Artist | Rev. Nicolette Peñaranda

As a mixed media artist, I wanted to try something I've never done before—perhaps the silliest decision someone with a deadline could make. This entire piece<sup>28</sup> (with the exception of the three hearts) is made of yarn. For some reason, the feeling of a sheep's wool kept sticking out to me everytime I read this text. We refer to Jesus as both *el Cordero de Dios*<sup>29</sup> and the shepherd. So why not lean into sheep imagery?

This post-resurrection story concludes the wandering for Peter so the subject of this piece sits in front of the Adinkra symbol, *Nkyinkyim*,<sup>30</sup> for life's twisted journey. We have seen the ins and outs of his ministry as he accompanies Jesus, which brings us to this dialogue between the two. In this piece, the two of them are portrayed as sheep, Peter being at the right hand of Jesus. The sheep are branded with *Agyinduwura*<sup>31</sup> at the center of their chests. They carry with them a symbol of loyalty and faithfulness. The face of each sheep is the symbol *Kokuromotie*<sup>32</sup> to represent cooperation and harmony. Jesus asking Peter to feed his sheep demonstrates the faith that Jesus has in Peter to do this work. This value of cooperation is also present in the *Mpatapo*-shaped<sup>33</sup> flowers in the field. They are symbols of peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Above the sheep sits *Kojo Baiden*.<sup>34</sup> God has traditionally been represented as the sun in various cultures, which brings us to this omnipresent symbol operating as such in this piece. And to the left we see *Akoma*,<sup>35</sup> or hearts. While we interpret the heart as love, it is also a symbol for endurance and patience.

*Here's my heart. Here are the things I care about so deeply. And you—someone who makes mistakes, doesn't follow directions, and sometimes even betrays me—you are so loved and trusted enough to keep this good work going even after I'm gone.*

This is a message to all of us. It doesn't matter how poorly you may think of yourself or how others may view you. To Christ, you are beautifully and fearfully made. And Christ believes in you in spite of it all.