

Discussion Questions for *A Sicilian Farewell*

by MaryAnn Diorio

NOTE: These questions may be used in a variety of ways, including book club or reading group discussions, Bible study groups, or for personal meditation.

1. Luca struggled with discerning God's will. At times he wasn't sure he was hearing God's voice. Jesus said His sheep hear His voice. Have you ever struggled with hearing God's voice? What could be the problem when a Christ-follower does not hear God's voice?
2. Maria wanted to submit to God's will, but she doubted that Luca was hearing God's voice. Is submitting to God's will a challenge for you? Is submitting to someone in authority over you a challenge for you? If so, why? What does the Bible say about submitting to those in authority over us?
3. Luca was imprisoned for a crime he did not commit. Jesus was crucified for sins He did not commit. What can we learn about Christ during the times we are wrongly accused? What can we learn about ourselves?
4. When Paulina admitted her guilt and asked Luca's forgiveness, he could have grown bitter and angry with her. Instead, he chose to forgive her. It has been said that forgiveness means living with the consequences of one's wrongdoing toward us. Are you paying the consequences for someone else's sin? If so, how are you handling that situation? Are you handling it the way Jesus would? If not, what can you change?
5. There are times when following Jesus seems to bring all kinds of trouble. These troubles could cause us to think that we missed God's will. Is it true that favor and blessing are always a sign of God's will? Could a person still be in God's will when everything when everything seems to be going wrong? Have you interpreted blessings as God's favor and problems as God's wrath? Is this an accurate interpretation of Scripture?
6. Luca was a tailor. This was his trade. But his calling was to preach the Gospel. How can we distinguish between our trade or profession and our calling? Are they ever one and the same? Are they always different?
7. Maria struggled to be content in her new surroundings. She missed her homeland and the house in which she'd lived all of her life. Have you ever struggled to be content in the midst of your circumstances? Why is contentment important? Why is living in the past a grave spiritual danger?
8. In Matthew 19: 29, Jesus said this: "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for My name's sake will receive a hundredfold and will

inherit eternal life.” How did this verse apply to Maria? Have you left family, children, or a home for the cause of Christ? What happened as a result?

9. Luca stood fast in the strength of Christ when facing temptation. What temptation are you facing? Are you facing it in God’s strength and grace? If not, what do you need to change?

10. Will Dempsey eventually remembered the truths his mother taught him as a boy. Why is it important to instill God’s truth into the hearts of our children? What does God mean when He says this in Isaiah 55: 11: “. . . so shall My word be that goes out from My mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”