



AMDG
FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
(GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY)
YEAR B, 25TH APRIL 2021



‘They too will listen to my voice ...’

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty ever-living God,
lead us to a share in the joys of heaven,
so that the humble flock may reach
where the brave Shepherd has gone before.

This Sunday we are invited to deepen our awareness of the protective, caring love that surrounds us, holds us and sustains us. This love was made incarnate in Jesus the Good Shepherd.

In John’s letter (*Second Reading*), we are encouraged to meditate on the deep love that the Father lavishes upon us, by calling us his children.

Centring our lives on this reality will help us on our pilgrim journey – and this week’s *Psalm* is associated with pilgrimage, sung by those entering Jerusalem. For us it becomes a resurrection song. The one who was reviled and rejected becomes the cornerstone that our faith is built upon; Christ is our refuge and our strength, and the psalmist reminds us to place our trust in our loving Lord.

In the *First Reading*, Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, quotes from this same psalm. Christ, who was rejected and condemned by the religious leaders of the time, is the source of Peter’s authority and his gift of healing.

In the *Gospel*, the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd is used to draw out the depth of the love that God has for his people. Jesus lays down his life for us so that we might truly live. By describing himself in this way, Jesus is describing the close, intimate relationship we are each called to have with the living Lord. Although we are many, we are one flock, with one Shepherd who knows each one of us personally. Jesus trusts that we will listen to his voice.

As we pray this week, let us ask for the grace to truly listen with open and accepting hearts to the needs of our community, and to the needs of the earth. May we, too, may become loving shepherds to each other, and to the environment.

PSALM 117 (118)

R./ The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone.

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
for his love has no end.

It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in humankind;
it is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in princes.

I will thank you for you have given answer
and you are my saviour.
The stone which the builders rejected
has become the corner stone.
This is the work of the Lord,
a marvel in our eyes.

Blessed in the name of the Lord is he who comes.
We bless you from the house of the Lord;
I will thank you for you have given answer
and you are my saviour.
Give thanks to the Lord for he is good;
for his love has no end.

Taking all the time I need, I allow myself to become still.
I remind myself that I am always in the presence of our loving God ...
even though I may not be aware of it.

I read the psalm slowly and with reverence.
As I do so, I recall how this psalm has been sung and prayed by countless
generations, and by Jesus himself.
I am connected to them through my prayer.

What words, phrases or images am I drawn to from this psalm of praise ...?
Trust ... rejection ... refuge ... gratitude ...?
Why are these words important in my life?
When have I seen answer to prayer?
What am I thankful for?

As I draw my prayer to an end, I focus on the opening and closing phrases of the
psalm: *'Give thanks to the Lord for he is good ... for his love has no end.'*

I close my prayer with my own words of thanks.

GOSPEL JOHN 10: 11–18

Jesus said:

‘I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep. The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and the sheep do not belong to him, abandons the sheep and runs away as soon as he sees a wolf coming, and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep; this is because he is only a hired man and has no concern for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep.

And there are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and these I have to lead as well. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock, and one shepherd.

The Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me; I lay it down of my own free will, and as it is in my power to lay it down, so it is in my power to take it up again; and this is the command I have been given by my Father.’

I prepare to pray slowly, with care, love and attention.

When I feel ready, I read the Gospel with the same loving care and attention.

Jesus purposefully uses rich imagery to teach and to reveal.

It may help my prayer today to imagine being held, contained, and protected by Jesus, the Good Shepherd. I rest for a while in this image.

The idea of the Good Shepherd that Jesus shares here is perhaps very familiar to me. I ask for the grace to listen to him now, with the curious ears of a child.

I ask Jesus my loving Shepherd to guide me in my prayer, and to reveal what he wants me to hear today.

I wait upon the Shepherd ... I listen to the Shepherd ...

I place all my needs and deepest desires before the Good Shepherd of my life.

Without any haste, I close my prayer, joining Jesus in praying ‘*Our Father ...*’

Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

'I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep.'

Gospel

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
for his love has no end.

Psalm

This week's texts if you want to explore further:

Acts 4: 8–12; Psalm 117 (118); 1 John 3: 1–2; John 10: 11–18



“Think of the love that the Father has lavished upon us, by letting us be called God’s children: and that is what we are.’

Second Reading



ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH
IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

JESUIT
Ministries



Prepared by St Beuno's Outreach in the Diocese of Wrexham

LDS