



AMDG
FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
YEAR A, 3RD MAY 2020
GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY



My sheep hear 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.

Today is known as Good Shepherd Sunday, for the Gospel is always taken from St John, where Jesus speaks of himself as the 'Good Shepherd'. A shepherd leads his flock and Jesus is the shepherd who leads his followers. The sheep know his voice, trust him, and will follow only him. In the same way, we also keep today as Vocations Sunday, when the Church prays for new 'good shepherds' to lead our Christian communities, especially at this difficult time.

In the *First Reading*, Peter proclaims to the crowd that Jesus is both Lord and Christ. They are invited to have faith in Christ, and by repenting and being baptised, they will be forgiven. Peter reminds them that God's promise is for everyone.

This familiar *Psalms* demonstrates the hope and trust of the psalmist in the Lord who is my shepherd, and who cares for me providing guidance, comfort and rest.

In the *Second Reading*, Peter continues encouraging the people to follow Christ's example and to put their trust in God, particularly when times are difficult or unjust. By dying on the cross he has healed us and brought us back to God.

Jesus tells his disciples – and us – that he is the gate of the sheepfold; it is in following him that we can have the fullness of life. (*Gospel*)

In my prayer this week, I may want to take time to speak to Jesus as my shepherd and reflect on what that means for me. On this Vocations Sunday, perhaps I can also consider how I am responding to the way Jesus is calling me, and pray that others also hear his invitation.

PSALM 15 (16)

R/. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.

Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.

Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit.

He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name.

If I should walk in the valley of darkness
no evil would I fear

You are there with you crook and your staff;
with these you give me comfort.

You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.

My head you have anointed with oil:
my cup is overflowing.

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life.

In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever.

How am I feeling today? Recognising that God is present within me, I find a position that is comfortable and enter slowly into prayer.

I read this familiar psalm slowly, maybe several times, and then ponder any word, phrase or image that particularly touches me.

I may note the psalmist's hope and total trust, and sense the Lord's generosity and his constant care.

In the needs and challenges of my work and personal life, and of the current situation throughout the world, to whom do I listen? In whom do I trust?

In the past weeks, where have I experienced goodness and kindness?
I may want to express my gratitude.

I speak to the Lord about my own needs, and of all those affected by this pandemic. Or I may simply rest quietly in his presence.

I end my prayer slowly with a sign of the cross.

GOSPEL JOHN 10: 1-10

Jesus said: 'I tell you most solemnly, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate, but gets in some other way is a thief and a brigand. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock; the gatekeeper lets him in, the sheep hear his voice, one by one he calls his own sheep and leads them out. When he has brought out his flock, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know his voice. They never follow a stranger but run away from him: they do not recognise the voice of strangers'. Jesus told them this parable but they failed to understand what he meant by telling it to them.

So Jesus spoke to them again: 'I tell you most solemnly, I am the gate of the sheepfold. All others who have come are thieves and brigands; but the sheep took no notice of them. I am the gate. Anyone who enters through me will be safe: they will go freely in and out and be sure of finding pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full'.

Today, I come to spend some quality time with the Lord; I settle down.

What are the issues which keep coming to my mind today?

Gently but firmly, I put them aside. They will wait.

Slowly and deliberately, I read the text. It may be familiar, but there may be a phrase which strikes me anew. I stay with it and ponder.

The gatekeeper protects what is most valuable to him: his sheep.

Whom or what do I consider to be most valuable to me?

Do I, like the Pharisees, adhere rigidly to rules and regulations to keep out those I consider to be brigands and thieves?

Or do I simply trust the Lord to look after my treasures and myself, as the shepherd looks after his flock?

I take time to listen to his voice speaking to me through his words.

What do I hear him say to me? How do I feel?

I may come to realise that in the past I have been lured by other voices which I did not recognise, yet still followed. I tell the Lord about this.

I also tell him how I want to respond to his voice today.

In time, with gratitude for any insights I've received, I close with *Glory be ...*

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

You can be certain that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ.

First Reading

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Psalm

'I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full.'

Gospel

Acts 2: 14, 36–41; Psalm 22 (23); 1 Peter 2: 20–25; John 10: 1–10



One by one he calls his own sheep.



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