



AMDG
FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
YEAR B
22ND APRIL 2018



**The Good Shepherd knows us
and we know him**

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's *First Reading* is taken from Peter's speech to the Council in Jerusalem, following his and John's arrest. In it, Peter bears witness to the power of the resurrected Christ by which a man lame from birth was brought back to health. Peter quotes from today's *Psalms* 117 (118) to reinforce the point that only by the name of Jesus, the keystone, is salvation possible.

The *Second Reading* shows St John encouraging the Christian communities of modern-day Turkey by sharing his own experiences of what he has seen and heard. That the world cannot always understand must not shake our confidence in the love that God has 'lavished upon us'.

This love is given tangible form in the image of Christ, as presented to us each year in the *Gospel* of 'Good Shepherd Sunday'. Not only are we led to safety, fed, given rest, watched over and brought back if found to be in danger, we are also known, loved and died for.

This week in my prayer, I may like to ask for the grace to know more fully my Risen Lord, the Good Shepherd, who knows me and has the greatest care and compassion for me.

SECOND READING 1 JOHN 3: 1-2

Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us,
by letting us be called God's children;
and that is what we are.

Because the world refused to acknowledge him,
therefore it does not acknowledge us.

My dear people, we are already the children of God
but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed;
all we know is, that when it is revealed
we shall be like him
because we shall see him as he really is.

I begin this time of prayer gently.

I take my time to still myself, ponder what grace I may need today,
and gradually become aware of myself as a child of God.

I make a slow sign of the cross.

If I can, I approach this wonderful reading with joy.

As I read, slowly, I notice where I am drawn.

What touches me in this text? What moves me?

I stay there, allowing the words or a phrase to have an effect on me.

What is this love that I am called to think on?

Can I recall an experience of the lavishness of God's love,
perhaps through some event or encounter, maybe in the distant past ...
maybe this week? I ponder ...

Perhaps the love I have shown someone else has been the way they have come
to realise the love of God for them.

I give thanks for this ...

As I ponder prayerfully, I may begin to recall times when I have experienced a
sense of rejection, as Jesus himself experienced rejection.

I bring this to the Lord, knowing I am called to have a share in every aspect of
his life.

As I come to the end of my prayer, I try to approach the future with a sense of
trust and hope. Though I may not know what tomorrow will bring, I can take
comfort in the glorious promise:

'We shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is'.

Glory be to the Father ...

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 take some moments to become aware of how I am as I approach this time of prayer.

As I begin to read this most famous of Gospel passages, I let myself settle, and imagine Jesus the Good Shepherd watching over me with attentive kindness.

I read slowly, stopping frequently to let its words or images move me.

What do I notice?

Maybe the Good Shepherd giving his life for his sheep?

Perhaps his voice? The sheep listen to this. What does it sound like?

I pause to listen; to go deeper ...

Jesus is distinguishing himself from the ‘hired hands’ – he knows his own relationship to the sheep is different from the others.

What is his relationship with me? And mine to him?

What is it like to ponder that I am his, and he always acts out of love?

I am known by Jesus in the same way that Jesus himself knows the Father, and the Father knows Jesus. How does this make me feel?

I end my prayer by talking with Jesus from the heart.

Maybe I feel drawn to ask him to help me trust him ever more completely, and to accept that I am truly known and loved by him.

Perhaps I also sense a desire to do all I can to cultivate the unity of one flock under one Shepherd.

Our Father ...

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

The merciful love of the Lord fills the earth.

Entrance antiphon

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

Psalms

Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us!

Second Reading

I am the Good Shepherd,
who lays down his life for his sheep.

Gospel

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

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



How does this
image speak to
me in my prayer?



ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH
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