



THE LORD'S DAY AT HOME

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (B) "Good Shepherd Sunday"
Sunday 25th April 2021

If you are housebound or self-isolating at this time, please use these prayers to unite yourself with the worship of the Universal Church, and your own Parish this Maundy Thursday. If alone, read or say these prayers quietly to yourself. If with another, or in a family, someone should read the "leader" parts, and others respond. It might be suitable to find a special, quiet place at home for your prayers.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon Cf. Ps 32: 5-6

A: The merciful love of the Lord fills the earth; by the word of the Lord the heavens were made, alleluia.

Sign of the Cross

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

A: Amen.

Introduction

L: Easter is a long season, and as it unfolds we will be thinking about many things – the growth of the Church, Baptism, the Eucharist, the Ascension of Jesus and the role of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. But for this Sunday we are still thinking about the actual resurrection of the Lord itself: it was real, and moreover it was physical: the tomb was empty, because Jesus was walking around in his glorified body! Joyfully celebrating the bodily resurrection of Jesus, we praise God's glory as we say:

Gloria

A: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Opening Prayer

L: Let us pray.

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. Who lives and reigns with you in the

unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

A: Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

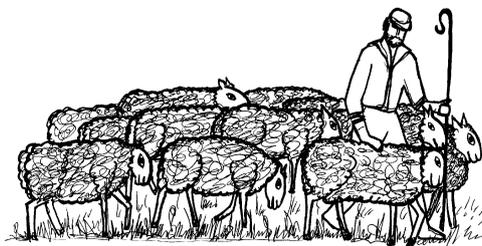
Gospel Reading

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.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

A: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



Reflection

For about four hundred years the early Church was somewhat shy about depicting the crucifixion of Jesus: far more common was showing him as the Good Shepherd – the title he claims for himself in today's Gospel. There are two sides to this image: what we see in Jesus, and what we see in ourselves! Jesus as the Good

Shepherd is full of selfless love for every single sheep, unlike a hired hand, and will even sacrifice his life for the sake of the flock. Jesus as the Good Shepherd was willing to face the wolf that was his persecutors, to lay down his life for our sake. Jesus as the Good Shepherd is the one who will lead us, find us when lost, heal us when hurt, and guide us through the narrow gate that leads to eternal pastures. This is all wonderful, but for it to "work" there is the other side: we must acknowledge that we are his sheep! We belong to him, and we will follow his lead, and allow him to guide us. We admit that sometimes we are silly and selfish, and will get lost, so that he has to come looking for us. We accept that he will protect us by laying down his life, so that we can be free. In our culture to be "sheepish" is not seen as a good thing; today, however, let us be proud to be sheep of His flock, with the risen Good Shepherd guiding us to eternal green pastures!

For our Younger Friends

You may have seen a shepherd at work in the fields, with his dog or dogs running round in answer to his whistles, chasing the sheep into their places. This is NOT the sort of shepherd Jesus says he is today! Back in Jesus' day, hundreds of years ago, the shepherd actually lived with a flock of sheep (remember the shepherds of Bethlehem when Jesus was born?), and when they were on the move the shepherd walked first, at the head of the flock. The sheep all followed him. This was so that the shepherd could look out for any danger (like wolves!) and protect the sheep. But this meant that a lazy or silly sheep could wander off, and the shepherd would have to stop and find it again. So Jesus as our Good Shepherd doesn't stand still, whistling at dogs, but he is walking in front of us in life, facing the things we

will face, and asking us to stay close and follow him!

Today is Vocations Sunday: a "vocation" is a call from God to do some special work – like being a priest or a nun. Have you thought about what you want to be when you grow up? Perhaps God is calling you to some special work in the Church! Today have a think, a pray, and a chat with mum and dad about what God might call you to do!

Profession of Faith

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Intercessions

L: Because we are God's children by water and the Spirit we confidently pray for the life of the world in the name of Jesus.

We profess Jesus to be our Good Shepherd. May we always seek to live as faithful members of his flock. Lord, in your mercy ...

A: Hear our prayer.

We acknowledge the power of the risen Christ as the source of healing for the world. May the Spirit of Jesus bless the work of all who labour to discover cures for deadly diseases. Lord, in your mercy ...

A: Hear our prayer.

We seek to follow the Good Shepherd wherever he calls. May those he calls to service in the Church as priests or religious give generously of themselves. We ask for a sense of vocation in all God's people. Lord, in your mercy ...

A: Hear our prayer.

We are consoled by our hope to be like Christ in the glory of the resurrection. May the dead find mercy in the One who laid down his life for all peoples. Lord, in your mercy ...

A: Hear our prayer.

Please add your own prayers for the needs of the Church, the world and your local community. You may wish to add particular prayers for family members, friends or neighbours in need at this time.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

L: At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

A: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

L: Grant, we pray, O Lord, that we may always find delight in these paschal mysteries, so that the renewal constantly at work within us may be the cause of our unending joy. Through Christ our Lord.

A: Amen.

Preparation for Spiritual Communion

L: Loving Father, it is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, at all times to acclaim you, O Lord, but in this time above all to laud you yet more gloriously, when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. By the oblation of his Body, he brought the sacrifices of old to fulfilment in the reality of the Cross and, by commending himself to you for our salvation, showed himself the Priest, the Altar, and the Lamb of sacrifice. At the Last Supper he showed the fullness of your love, as he gave his Body and Blood for his people. Even though we are not in Church, and not able to receive communion today, we open our minds and hearts to your generous love and the gift of Jesus your Son, welcoming him spiritually into our lives.

Pause for a moment of silent prayer and reflection.

Spiritual Communion

A: My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Thanksgiving Psalm

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

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

L: 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 men;

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

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

L: I will thank you for you have answered 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.

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

L: Blessed in the name of the Lord is he who comes.

We bless you from the house of the Lord;

You are my God, I thank you.

My God, I praise you.

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

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

THE CONCLUDING RITE

Final Prayer and Blessing

L: Let us pray.

Look upon your flock, kind Shepherd, and be pleased to settle in eternal pastures the sheep you have redeemed by the Precious Blood of your Son. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

A: Amen.

L: May the Lord ✠ bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

A: Amen.

L: Let us bless the Lord!

A: Thanks be to God!

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