

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



Good Shepherd

O Shepherd of Israel,
you know your sheep by name and call
us to heed your voice.
When we were lost and afraid, you sent
your only Son, Jesus,
the font of life-giving water,
to quench our thirsty hearts
and, by grace, restore us to life.
Open our ears so that we may hear the
voice of Jesus,
who shepherds us on the path to eternal life,
and grant to those who follow Christ
refreshment and protection.
Increase our faith in your Son
so that, with joy,
we may announce the gift of salvation to
your flock.
May your reign eliminate all hunger
and thirst
and draw all creation closer to you.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, April 17, 2016

Heed Christ's Voice



Today's Readings: Acts 13:14, 43–52; Psalm 100:1–2, 3, 5; Revelation 7:9, 14b–17; John 10:27–30. Having been raised in the country near many farms, I know the demanding work that a farmer/shepherd must put in to keep the flock or herd healthy and safe. Like our story, the farmer knows the herd and the herd knows him. My uncle Jack knew each of his cattle and could tell if one was missing. Similarly, we have come to know Christ in Baptism, and he intimately knows us. In Baptism, Jesus calls us to be heralds of justice and compassion. We hope that during Lent our reflection led us to listen more carefully and heed Jesus' invitation.

Paul and Barnabas, members of the flock, heeded Jesus' call and went forth preaching. The First Reading tells us

about the abuse and persecution they suffered on one trip. When we pay attention and listen to Jesus' call, we are obedient to his will and are faithful disciples. When you pray, what does Jesus ask of you and to what does he invite you? The beauty in all this is that Jesus calls us from all races and nations to bear witness to God's love. We are a diverse flock with many diverse gifts to share. We are one with each other as Jesus is one with his Father and the Holy Spirit. Today's Gospel affirms that no matter what, Jesus will care for us and protect us. We truly are his people and forever joined to him. Engage in some active imagination with the image of resting in God's hand. What comforts you or challenges you in this image?



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, April 18, 2016

Gatekeeper

On Sunday, we also heard about the Good Shepherd. The metaphor presented today is that Jesus is the gate for the sheep. He will care for his flock, making sure that they pasture in good fields and are protected from thieves. Do you hear the sound of the Shepherd's voice? How do you respond to his call? Keep in prayer our priests and bishops, our earthly shepherds. May they remain close to the Good Shepherd. *Today's Readings: Acts 11:1–18; Psalm 42:2–3; 43:3, 4; John 10:1–10.*

Tuesday, April 19, 2016

Preaching

The story in Acts continues to illustrate how the disciples of Jesus went to the ends of the earth preaching the Gospel. Their preaching introduced many, including the Gentiles, to Jesus the Savior. The story of the early Church invites us to consider how we set out to share the Good News. If we have been transformed in the waters of rebirth and unite ourselves to Christ, are not our hearts on fire with God's love? Consider befriending a missionary, either through a local church or college, and begin writing to them and encouraging them in their work. *Today's Readings: Acts 11:19–26; Psalm 87:1b–3, 4–5, 6–7; John 10:22–30.*

Wednesday, April 20, 2016

Light

Jesus is the Word made flesh. At Mass when we listen to the Scriptures, our hearts are illuminated. Now, recall the Rite of Baptism. Each of us received the Light of Christ as a sign of his light within us. We are charged to share this light, the Word of God, with all those in darkness. As disciples, let us illuminate the hearts of others by sharing God's love and joy. Try making a candle this week and use it for prayer. *Today's Readings: Acts 12:24–13:5a; Psalm 67:2–3, 5, 6 and 8; John 12:44–50.*

Thursday, April 21, 2016

Praise

For many, Easter is over, but for the Christian community, it continues until Pentecost. It can be difficult to sustain Easter joy for all fifty days. The psalm today provides us a text that reminds us of God's faithfulness; by sending his Son, we were saved. Let us forever sing the praise of our God for he has truly done marvelous things for us. Find your favorite song of praise and sing it loudly. Let the joy and awe of the Holy Spirit fill you. *Today's Readings: Acts 13:13–25; Psalm 89:2–3, 21–22, 25 and 27; John 13:16–20.*

Friday, April 22, 2016

Relationship

The Gospel today invites us to reflect deeply on our relationship with Jesus. Jesus insists on faith and hope. We must believe in him to have access to the Father. Through his Death and Resurrection, he will prepare a place for us. This is a sign of his permanent commitment to us. He will come back to rule over all creation. Take a moment today to journal about what troubles you in your faith life. *Today's Readings: Acts 13:26–33; Psalm 2:6–7, 8–9, 10–11ab; John 14:1–6.*

Saturday, April 23, 2016

Friendship

What is the best way to get to know someone? Usually, as we form a relationship, we spend time telling stories and sharing life events, which leads to some type of bond. In the Gospel, Jesus is clear that to know him is to know God. Jesus' actions and words reveal God to us and lead us to deeper communion with God. In turn, we follow him and continue his work in the power of the Spirit. Take a moment today to reconnect with an old friend. *Today's Readings: Acts 13:44–52; Psalm 98:1, 2–3ab, 3cd–4; John 14:7–14.*

