

THE LORD'S DAY AT HOME

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

3rd May 2020

"Good Shepherd" Sunday



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 Sunday. 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 Sunday prayers.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

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

All: Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Leader: Our journey through Eastertide continues as we celebrate a Sunday with a special name – "Good Shepherd" Sunday. This is what Jesus called himself in the Gospel, reminding us that he loves us and cares for us. Everything he did at Easter he did to save us, like a shepherd rescuing his sheep. Celebrating the resurrection of Jesus and his love as our shepherd, we praise God's glory as we say:

GLORIA

All: 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

Leader: 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, one God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

GOSPEL READING

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: he 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.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

REFLECTION

Leader: Every year on this Sunday we hear Jesus saying something about being our shepherd: in his time shepherding was a full-time and demanding job – the shepherd basically lived with his sheep (remember Bethlehem?), finding them safe places to pasture, caring for them if injured, and walking ahead of them (not behind, with sheepdogs!) on their common journey. Jesus uses this example of a caring and loving shepherd to describe his mission: how do we experience that in our lives today? We may not like being called "sheep," but when we have a shepherd as loving as Jesus, perhaps we should embrace that description, and allow ourselves to be the "sheep of His flock."

A THOUGHT FOR OUR YOUNGER FRIENDS: Sheep can be a bit silly sometimes – just standing around in a field or following each other aimlessly. Sometimes we can imagine that sheep can't look after themselves! That's why they need a shepherd, someone who can help them, look after them, protect them. Have you ever played "Follow My Leader", where you have to copy everything that one person does? (Have a go with your family!) Jesus, as our Good Shepherd, wants us to "follow his lead" through all our lives. Let's promise to be his sheep today!



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

Leader: Let us pray that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, will help keep us safe as the sheep of his flock.

Leader: We pray for all our young people today, as they face the choices of life, that they may let Jesus, the Shepherd, guide them. We pray:

All: Good Shepherd, hear our prayers!

Leader: Today we pray especially for vocations – that people will hear God calling them to serve in the priesthood, religious life, or some other service. We pray:

All: Good Shepherd, hear our prayers!

Leader: Let us pray for Pope Francis, Bishop John and our own priests, that they may be good shepherds. We pray:

All: Good Shepherd, hear our prayers!

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 LORD'S PRAYER

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

All: 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.

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

All: Amen.

PREPARATION FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

Leader: It is 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. He never ceases to offer himself for us but defends us and ever pleads our cause before you: he is the sacrificial Victim who dies no more, the Lamb, once slain, who lives for ever. 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

All: 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

Leader: 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.

All: The Lord is my shepherd: there is nothing I shall want.

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

All: The Lord is my shepherd: there is nothing I shall want.

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

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

All: The Lord is my shepherd: there is nothing I shall want.

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.

All: The Lord is my shepherd: there is nothing I shall want.

FINAL PRAYER AND BLESSING

Leader: 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.

All: Amen.

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

All: Amen.

Leader: Let us bless the Lord!

All: Thanks be to God!