

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

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

**GLORIA**

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.

**COLLECT**

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.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING** Acts 2:14,36-41

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.  
On the day of Pentecost Peter stood up with  
the Eleven and addressed the crowd with a  
loud voice: "The whole House of Israel can be  
certain that God has made this Jesus whom  
you crucified both Lord and Christ."

Hearing this, they were cut to the heart  
and said to Peter and the apostles, "What  
must we do, brothers?" "You must repent,"  
Peter answered "and every one of you must  
be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for  
the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive  
the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise that  
was made is for you and your children, and  
for all those who are far away, for all those  
whom the Lord our God will call to himself."  
He spoke to them for a long time using  
many arguments, and he urged them, "Save  
yourselves from this perverse generation."  
They were convinced by his arguments,  
and they accepted what he said and were  
baptised. That very day about three thousand  
were added to their number.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM** Psalm 22

Response:

**The Lord is my shepherd;  
there is nothing I shall want.**  
or  
**Alleluia!**

- 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. (R.)

- 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 comfort. (R.)
- You have prepared a banquet for me  
in the sight of my foes.  
My head you have anointed with oil;  
my cup is overflowing. (R.)
- 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. (R.)

**SECOND READING** 1 Peter 2:20-25

A reading from the first letter of St Peter.

The merit, in the sight of God, is in bearing  
punishment patiently when you are punished  
after doing your duty.

This, in fact, is what you are called to do,  
because Christ suffered for you and left an  
example for you to follow the way he took.  
He had not done anything wrong, and there  
had been no perjury in his mouth. He was  
insulted and did not retaliate with insults;  
when he was tortured he made no threats  
but he put his trust in the righteous judge. He  
was bearing our faults in his own body on  
the cross, so that we might die to our faults  
and live for holiness; through his wounds you  
have been healed. You had gone astray like  
sheep but now you have come back to the  
shepherd and guardian of your souls.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**Alleluia, alleluia!**  
**I am the good shepherd, says the Lord;**  
**I know my own sheep and my own know me.**  
**Alleluia!**

**GOSPEL** John 10:1-10

A reading from the holy Gospel according to  
John.

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.  
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

**I believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

*(all bow during the next two lines)*

**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.**

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

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.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

**The Good Shepherd has risen,  
who laid down his life for his sheep  
and willingly died for his flock, alleluia.**

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

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.  
Amen.

**THE WORD**

Year A • Psalter Week 4

**SAFETY IN  
NUMBERS?**

(JOHN 10:1-10)



During these Sundays of Easter, the first reading, from the Acts of the Apostles, describes the life and mission of the early Christian community. The extracts from the Gospel of John concentrate on the relationship of the individual disciple to Jesus.

In the image of the sheepfold, we can imagine more than one flock of sheep together. The animals do not have distinct markings, but this does not matter, as the way in which the particular shepherd gathers his own is to call them by name: the individual sheep recognises the voice of its own shepherd and comes obediently to him. The shepherd then walks off and the sheep follow trustfully: no need for dogs or whistles.

Jesus also describes himself as the gate of the sheepfold. Sometimes there was no gate or door to keep the sheep safe, so the shepherd would lie down across the opening and the shepherd's body would then become the barrier to protect the flock from predators. But Jesus is more than that. He is offering ultimate safety, which we call salvation, pasture which the prophets declared the messianic shepherd would provide, and finally abundant life. Jesus is also making a contrast between himself and the leaders of the people who have failed in their responsibilities to care properly for those entrusted to them. ■

**REFLECT**

This passage is leading up to Jesus' describing himself as the good shepherd, the model for all those who are given a position of authority in the community. He will act out dramatically what this entails when he washes the feet of his disciples to teach them that authority manifests itself in humble service. The ultimate expression of this dedication to others is to lay down one's life for them: we can see this most clearly in the likes of Archbishop Oscar Romero who followed the example of Jesus in caring for his people to the extent of literally giving his life for them.

We might think today about our relationship with the risen Jesus. We consider in this Easter season that he entered into glory by way of the cross, so the gratitude which we feel is an important part of our attitude towards Jesus. It is, in some ways, easier and less demanding to think of ourselves as one of the flock, one of the crowd, and that Jesus gave his life for a vast and anonymous group. But John the evangelist does not let us off so lightly. In the Gospel today, Jesus is presented as calling his own sheep out of the amalgamated flocks one by one. He knows and can recognise each member of his own flock. Each one must respond: each one must follow. To cultivate a personal relationship with Jesus rather than simply be a member of the congregation is a challenge which some of us might rather not face; but the proper relationship of the disciple with Jesus, according to the Fourth Gospel is love: no one else can do that for us. ■

**LEARN**

A sheepfold would be formed of a circular stone wall with an opening: it would have thorny branches on the top to deter predatory animals.

Shepherds in the area would bring their flocks to a common sheepfold for safety at night and put them in together.

Smaller, more remote sheepfolds would have no gate or attendant: the shepherd would lie down across the opening to keep the sheep in and predators out.

**DO**

Look at the congregation at Mass: do you find it easier to imagine yourself as just one of the crowd or as a guest invited personally to a celebration? Remember that Jesus, the good shepherd, knows your name.

**SAY**

**The Lord is my shepherd;  
there is nothing I shall  
want (Psalm 22:1)**