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## Fourth Sunday of Easter - 8 May 2022

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# 8 May 2022

## Fourth Sunday of Easter

Reflection by Anthony Doran

### Introduction

The Fourth Sunday of Easter is known as Good Shepherd Sunday, and on this Good Shepherd Sunday, our readings are rich in images of God as Shepherd: calling to us, caring for us, protecting us, nurturing us. Are we ready to be cared for by our Good Shepherd?

### Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you are the good shepherd who lays down his life.  
Lord, have mercy.

You gather your scattered children into one flock.  
Christ, have mercy.

You have lavished us with gifts of love.  
Lord, have mercy.

### Collect

*The oration*

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.

*Commentary by Gerard Moore*

There are reminders in this prayer back to the 'lamb' imagery in the Easter Triduum, however with significant transposition of meaning. The shepherd has overcome death and in resurrection is one with God in heaven. The sense of shepherd is more of one who blazes a path than of the tender carer of the animals in his charge. The collect seeks that God lead the flock into that same place of joy, offering a sense of the Church as ever under the watchful presence of the divine. The note of humility tempers any Christian boasting or self-aggrandizement in relation to the power of the resurrection. The collect witnesses a broadening of the usual Easter images, and an

enlargement of the range of meanings applied to Christ as shepherd. In part this may arise from the origins of the prayer as a collect during an ancient paschaltide service of evening prayer, where it was possibly prayed in conjunction with a shepherd psalm. Unfortunately, the current version has omitted a reference to the Holy Spirit and baptism that was in the earliest manuscript tradition.

## **First Reading**

*Acts 13:14, 43-52*

This Sunday we find the apostles Paul and Barnabas continuing to preach the Good News, this time in Antioch. While many heard this message with rejoicing and thanksgiving, not all were so receptive. Shaking the dust from their feet, Paul and Barnabas move on to further mission fields.

## **Responsorial Psalm**

**Psalm 99:1-3. 5. R v. 3**

*We are his people, the sheep of his flock.*

This psalm of thanksgiving opens with an invitation to praise God and continues with the reasons why we should praise God: the Lord's goodness to us, for we are God's people, 'the sheep of his flock.'

## **Second Reading**

*Apocalypse 7:9, 14-17*

This Sunday's reading from the Book of the Apocalypse finds a great multitude of the elect gathered around the throne of the Lamb. In a paradox of images, the Lamb itself is the shepherd of the elect, leading the elect to springs of living water.

## **Gospel Reading**

*John 10:27-30*

We are the sheep of the flock of Jesus. As such, we will never be lost, and nothing can take us away from the care and protection of Jesus and the Father.

## Reflection

During the Easter season, our First Reading is always taken from the Acts of the Apostles. And these First Readings have been telling us the story of the beginnings of the Church. How the Apostles were the witnesses to the Good News of the Resurrection. And then, how these Apostles proclaimed that Good News to the people of Jerusalem – the Jews.

Today's First Reading marks something of a watershed. After preaching to the Jews in the synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia, many of them decided to become followers of Christ: 'To remain faithful to the grace God had given them. '

Now, Paul and Barnabas faced opposition to their preaching. In response to the opposition they faced, Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and proclaimed that they were doing what the Lord had commanded them to do. And quoting the prophet Isaiah, they proclaim, 'I have made you a light to the nations, says the Lord, so that my salvation may reach the ends of the earth.'

In the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, the Lord utters these words to the Suffering Servant. And the task given to the Suffering Servant is to make the saving acts of God known to all the world. By quoting this verse from the prophet Isaiah, Paul and Barnabas are placing themselves in the line of tradition. They, too, are making the saving acts of God known to all the world. They are proclaiming to all the world the Good News that Jesus Christ has been risen from the dead by the Father.

This is the watershed. Because from now on, the Acts of the Apostles will not be concerned with the proclamation of this Good News in one small corner of the world. No. From now on, the story in the Acts of the Apostles will follow Paul as he preaches the Good News on his missionary journeys all over the known world. Preaching the Good News of the Resurrection of Jesus to Gentiles of every race and nation. These journeys of Paul will eventually lead him to proclaim the Good News in Rome – the capital of the known world in his time. There he will witness to this Good News with his life. Just as Peter would also do. Give witness to the Good News of Jesus by giving his life.

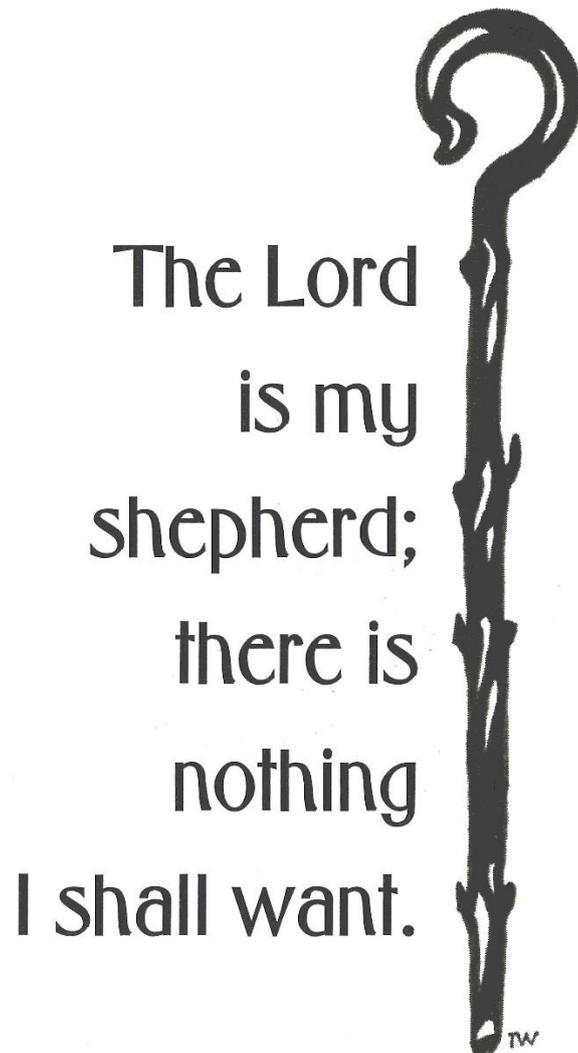
The preaching of the Good News to the Gentiles is not just some accident. The Good News is preached to all the world not just because Paul and Barnabas faced opposition in Antioch. To make the saving acts of God known to all peoples and races and nations is part of God's plan. Just as it was in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, so it is in the Acts of the Apostles.

Why do we get excited about this? Why is this so important for us? Well, quite simply, we are in the inheritors of this tradition. Because when the Good News was proclaimed to the Gentiles in Rome and Malta, and Egypt and Iraq, and Greece and India and Ireland, it was preached to our forebears. These in turn proclaimed it to their children, and their children, and their children. And it is proclaimed this very day to us. The fact that we gather in a church on the other side of the world, two thousand years after the preaching of Paul and Barnabas first started preaching to the Gentiles is testament to the fact that this same preaching is part of God's plan.

And it remains part of God's plan to this very day. Today, the Fourth Sunday of Easter is known as Good Shepherd Sunday and it is a day when, as a Church, we pray for vocations to the Priesthood. So that more men may answer the call to be a light to the nations and proclaim the saving acts of God to the world in this day and age.

So, in a special way, we need to pray earnestly and seriously that many men may respond to God's call to the priesthood. To preach the Good News to all the world. It is easy to become discouraged by the prospect of the future. For all change is frightening and uncertain. And to be called to ministry in these times can a bit frightening and uncertain. But we must always remember: the power of the resurrection of Jesus is indeed the power to change the world. We share in this gift through the Holy Spirit which is given to us at our Baptism and Confirmation.

And the gifts we have, we are given to share.



# Prayer of the Faithful

## Introduction

We rejoice, O Lord, that we are your people and the sheep of your flock. Trusting in the wonder of your goodness, we bring you our needs.

## Petitions

We pray as your countless people, standing with Francis our Pope and all the leaders of our Church; clergy, lay and religious. May we rejoice in your resurrection and bring into being the reign of God, to your praise and glory.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the members of the Plenary Council and the committees and workers who support them. As we come together to respond to the vision of the future Church, give us a more profound faith, greater courage, deeper spirituality and the ability to discern clearly the direction of the Holy Spirit.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray that all world leaders will hear your voice and listen; that their hearts will be turned to compassion for those they govern, understanding that ultimately all is yours to be justly distributed.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those gathered here as your people. Fill us with your Holy Spirit and shepherd us to serve each other and the world around us.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for members of our community, and others known to us, who are suffering any sort of adversity particularly due to the pandemic. Keep their hearts fixed on you. May they know your presence and love in their pain and in the caring hands of others.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray on this World Day for Vocations, that we all will acknowledge the need for lives dedicated to our baptismal vocation to be Christ to all we meet. May we each see that our Christian vocation requires us to be unafraid to live a faithful life and to declare ourselves as followers of Christ.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

## Conclusion

Father, we know that you spread your tent over us that in you we may live and move and have our being. In gratitude we present our petitions through the power of the Spirit and in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

## Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

### GA

All people that on earth do dwell. W Kethe/ Genevan Psalter. 533  
All the earth proclaim the Lord. L. Deiss. 534  
Baptised in water. M Seward/ Gaelic Melody. 179  
Christ is made the sure foundation. J M Neale/ H Purcell. 482  
Come to me. G Norbert. 228  
Easter Alleluia. M Haugen. 358  
Eye has not seen. M Haugen. 466  
Gift of finest wheat. O Westendorf/ R E Kreutz. 191  
Hail, Redeemer, King divine! P Brennan/ W Flood. 390  
Like a shepherd. B Dufford SJ. 467  
O Christ, the great foundation. T Lew/ S Wesley. 483  
O flock of Christ. J Quinn SJ/ M Vulpius. 357  
One bread, one body. J Foley SJ. 193  
Shepherd me, O God. M Haugen. 24  
Take and eat. M Joncas. 198  
The Church's one foundation. S Stone/ S Wesley. 484  
The Lord is my shepherd. B Boniwell. 506  
The Lord's my shepherd. (Crimond). J. Irvine. 473

### AOV1

All people that on earth do dwell. W Kethe/ 'Genevan Psalter. 25  
All the earth proclaim the Lord. L. Deiss. 184  
Because the Lord is my shepherd. C Walker. 66  
Come to me. G Norbert. 37  
Come to the water. F Andersen MSC. 74  
Eye has not seen. M Haugen. 146  
Like a shepherd. B Dufford SJ. 160  
One bread, one body. J Foley SJ. 129  
Shepherd me, O God. M Haugen. 33  
The Lord is my shepherd. B Boniwell. 26  
The Lord's my shepherd. (Crimond). J. Irvine. 144

### AOV4Kids

O how good is Christ the Lord. Traditional. 84

### AOVNG

The Lord is my shepherd. Joshua Blakesley. 127

### CWB

Shepherd of souls, in love, come feed us. J. Clifford Evers. 804  
The Lord my shepherd rules my life. Christopher Idle. 829  
The Lord is my shepherd. Brian Boniwell. 830  
The Lord is my shepherd, my shield. Joseph Wise. 831  
The Lord's my shepherd. *Scottish Psalter*. 833

## **CWBII**

### *Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions*

O flock of Christ. Attr. Wipo of Burgundy, tr. James Quinn SJ. 345

Good shepherd, you know us. Christopher M. Idle. 357

Shepherd of souls, in love, come feed us. Omer Westendorf. 596

Shepherd me, O God. Marty Haugen. 597

The Lord is my shepherd. Brian Boniwell. 619

### *Additional selections by Chris deSilva*

The Lord's my shepherd. *Scottish Psalter*. 620

## **S&S1**

Shepherd me, O God. Marty Haugen. 59

We are God's people. Jeffrey Roscoe. 76

## **S&S2**

The Lord is my shepherd. Joshua Blakesley. 250

We are his people. Greg Walton. 273

## **Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy**

Psalm 99: *We are his people: the sheep of his flock./Alleluia.*

Psalm 99: Christopher Willcock SJ. CWB 335 (stanzas 1, 2, 4)

Psalm 100 (99): Jenny O'Brien. JOBC pg. 45

We are his people: Paul Mason. PM pg. 75

We are his people: Tony Alonso. LPC pg. 61

## **Music selections by Michael Mangan**

Easter alleluia (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]

Shout out with joy (LCC) *Based on Ps 100* [Gathering]

You are my shepherd (FWS) *Based on Ps 23* [GIFTS]

One body in Christ (Esp V1) (TWB) [Communion]