

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



The Lord Is My Shepherd

The LORD is my shepherd;
there is nothing I lack.
In green pastures he makes me
lie down;
to still waters he leads me.
He guides me along right paths
for the sake of his name.
Even though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death,
for you are at my side with your rod
and your staff that give me courage.
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff comfort me.
—Psalm 23:1–4

Sunday, April 30, 2023
Good Shepherd Sunday



Today's readings: Acts 2:14a, 36–41; Psalm 23:1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6 (1); 1 Peter 2:20b–25; John 10:1–10. The Fourth Sunday of Easter is often referred to as Good Shepherd Sunday. As part of John 10 is proclaimed, we hear Jesus boldly claim his identity as the Good Shepherd. Since young children are especially drawn to this image of Jesus, faith formation programs explore it to help children discover the voice of God calling each of his sheep by name. This relational analogy of Jesus the Good Shepherd calling his flock by name to follow him through the sheepfold gate resonates deeply. Listeners to this reading can contemplate all the ways a shepherd cares for his sheep, provides for all their needs, protects them, seeks them out if they stray, and

guides their paths. Children easily see themselves as the sheep and intuit that Jesus' offer of love, care, and protection is for each of us.

This analogy communicates God's unceasing desire to be close to us. God entered into humanity and became one of us so that we might know and believe the possibility of true relationship with him. God knows each of us. God knows every part of us. God calls each of us by name. He leads us in right paths and stays by our side as protector and provider.

Good Shepherd Sunday offers a beautiful opportunity to place ourselves in this rich image and discover anew that we are called and beloved by Jesus, our Good Shepherd.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, May 1

St. Joseph the Worker

Today marks the second special date the Church has set aside to lift up and honor St. Joseph, the earthly father to Jesus of Nazareth. As a carpenter, Joseph serves as a model for the virtue of work and provision for his family. He did this quietly, without drawing attention away from his spouse, Mary, or his son, Jesus. His steadfast faithfulness led him eventually to be named the patron of the universal Church. St. Joseph the Worker, pray for us. *Today's readings: Genesis 1:26—2:3 or Colossians 3:14—15, 17, 23—24; Psalm 90:2, 3-4, 12-13, 14 and 16; Matthew 13:54—58.*

Tuesday, May 2

The Father and I are One

Today's Scripture passage locates Jesus in the temple at Jerusalem, once again surrounded by his fellow Jews imploring him to explain himself. We can sense Jesus' exasperation with their lack of perception despite his many efforts to show and tell them his true identity. He concludes boldly, "The Father and I are one" (John 10:30). Take this essential truth to prayer today. Can you empathize with his contemporaries and their struggle to comprehend? *Today's readings: Acts 11:19—26; Psalm 87:1b—3, 4—5, 6—7; John 10:22—30.*

Wednesday, May 3

Feast of Sts. Philip and James

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the path to life. Our key link to God the Father, Jesus came to show the way to experience a relationship with the One who desires to be with us. Through following Jesus to the Father, we also become key links in the relationship chain. The apostles Philip and James were some of the first links in this unbroken chain of those who call themselves disciples of Jesus. *Today's readings: 1 Corinthians 15:1—8; Psalm 19:2—3, 4—5; John 14:6—14.*

Thursday, May 4

The Panoramic View

The pairing of today's first reading and Gospel offers the aerial view of the plan of salvation. Paul paints the broad strokes of God's covenant with the people of Israel leading to Jesus. Jesus echoes his divine role when he claims that his purpose is the fulfillment of Scripture (John 13:18). Step back and take in the panoramic view to contemplate God's plan and our role in it as disciples in this time and place. *Today's readings: Acts 13:13—25; Psalm 89:2—3, 21—22, 25 and 27; John 13:16—20.*

Friday, May 5

In My Father's House

Chapter 14 of John's Gospel is often chosen for proclamation at the Mass of Christian Burial. The words of consolation, encouragement in faith, and promise of a place of rest with God for all of eternity are just the words many need to hear when grief is fresh and there is wonder about the care of our souls after death consumes our hearts. Jesus' assurance to his beloved disciples speaks to us today. Light a candle in remembrance of departed loved ones. Sit in prayer with this passage from John's Gospel. Allow it to sink in and comfort you today. *Today's readings: Acts 13:26—33; Psalm 2:6—7, 8—9, 10—11ab; John 14:1—6.*

Saturday, May 6

Filled with Joy

Luke paints a picture of the disciples Paul and Barnabas as active evangelizers, "The disciples could not but be filled with joy and the Holy Spirit" (Acts 13:52). Pope Francis calls us to follow their example as missionary disciples. The most effective approach is exuding the contagious joy of our life in God. Practice joy today. Attend to how you radiate joy in your words, actions, and gestures. *Today's readings: Acts 13:44—52; Psalm 98:1, 2—3ab, 3cd—4; John 14:7—14.*

