

SUNDAY CONNECTION FROM LOYOLA PRESS
4th Sunday of Easter ~ May 3 ~

First Reading: *Acts of the Apostles 2: 14a, 36-41*
Peter and the other apostles baptize 3,000 people.

Responsorial Psalm: *Psalm 23: 1-6*
The Lord is my shepherd.

Second Reading: *1 Peter 2: 20b-25*
We have been healed by the wounds of Christ.

Gospel Reading: *John 10: 1-10*
Jesus is the gate for his sheep.

Background on the Gospel Reading: This fourth Sunday of the Easter season is sometimes called Good Shepherd Sunday because in each of the three lectionary cycles, the Gospel reading invites us to reflect on Jesus as the Good Shepherd. In each cycle the reading is from the tenth chapter of John's Gospel. This chapter sets the framework for Jesus' teaching about himself as the Good Shepherd.

Today's reading falls between the stories of Jesus' healing of the man born blind and the raising of Lazarus. Both of these stories were proclaimed in the Gospels found in this year's season of Lent.

Following the controversy that ensued when Jesus healed the man born blind, Jesus directs his allegory about the sheep and the shepherd toward the Jewish religious leaders of his time, the Pharisees.

Throughout John's Gospel the Pharisees fail to accept Jesus' ministry and teaching. They show themselves to be "robbers and thieves" because they try to lead the sheep without entering through the gate, Jesus. Through these metaphors, Jesus is telling his listeners that those who follow him and his way will find abundant life. He identifies himself both as the shepherd and the gate. The shepherds who are faithful to him are the ones whom the sheep (Jesus' disciples) should follow.

The relationship between the sheep and their shepherd is based on familiarity. Sheep recognize their shepherd and will not follow a stranger. At the end of the day, shepherds lead their sheep from pastures to a common gated area called a sheepfold. There, one shepherd protects all of the sheep until the next day when each shepherd returns to lead his own sheep to pasture.

~ Continued in next column

As shepherds move among the sheep, the sheep follow only their shepherd.

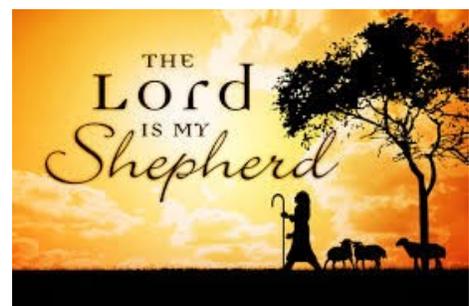
Today's Gospel also gives us the opportunity to reflect on Christian leadership. Jesus' words suggest to us that those who will lead the Christian community will be known by their faithfulness to Jesus. The leaders will recognize that Jesus is the gate for all of the sheep and that having a good relationship with Jesus is the primary characteristic of a Christian leader. Jesus' allegory also suggests that faithful Christian leadership requires a good relationship with the community: the shepherd knows his sheep, and they know him. Christian leaders follow the example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, by being faithful to him and by being a good



FAMILY CONNECTION FROM LOYOLA PRESS
The 4th Sunday of Easter ~ May 3 ~

Even though we have less experience with sheep and shepherds today in our society, we can still identify strongly with the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd and as the gate for the sheep. Psalm 23 remains a popular and favorite psalm for prayer. In the image of the Good Shepherd, we know ourselves to be protected and cared for by a loving God.

As your family gathers, ask what each person knows about sheep and shepherds. Recall that shepherds and sheep have a close relationship. Sheep will only follow their own shepherd; they recognize his voice and will not follow a stranger. The shepherd's job is to protect his sheep. In some ways, the relationship between the shepherd and his sheep is like that of a parent and child. Read together this Sunday's Gospel, John 10:1-10. Talk about how Jesus tells us that he is the gate for the sheep. The sheep enter the protection of the sheepfold through the gate. In Jesus we find protection and abundant life. Conclude by thanking Jesus for being our Good Shepherd and by praying today's psalm, Psalm 23:



~Continued on the next page

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
beside restful waters he leads me;
he refreshes my soul.

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

He guides me in right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk in the dark valley
I fear no evil; for you are at my side.
With your rod and your staff
that give me courage.

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

You spread the table before me
in the sight of my foes;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Only goodness and kindness follow me
all the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
for years to come.

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.



Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network
UNITED STATES | CANADA APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

PRAYING FROM A CONVERTED HEART

Philip Kosloski—April 20, 2020

Have you ever felt like your prayer life is going nowhere? Or, do you want to deepen your prayer, but don't know how to breathe new life into it?

When it comes to prayer, the answer is always Jesus. Not only are we supposed to address our prayers to Jesus, we also should sit at his feet and learn the art of prayer!

One of the primary ways we can imitate Jesus' own prayer is to pray from a "converted heart."

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains:

"2608 From the Sermon on the Mount onwards, Jesus insists on conversion of heart: reconciliation with one's brother before presenting an offering on the altar, love of enemies, and prayer for persecutors, prayer to the Father in secret, not heaping up empty phrases, prayerful forgiveness from the depths of the heart, purity of heart, and seeking the Kingdom before all else. This filial conversion is entirely directed to the Father."

In order for our prayer to have the greatest effect, we must pray from a converted heart. As Jesus says elsewhere, "No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." (Matthew 6:24)

~ Continued in next column

This challenges us to look inside our heart and see where our allegiance lies. Is our heart fully converted to the Lord? In what areas of our lives are we still serving another master?

St. Ignatius of Loyola wrote a similar meditation in his *Spiritual Exercises*, encouraging the individual to envision a battlefield with "Two Standards." One of the standards features God and his army, while the other is Satan and his army. Which side do we choose? Is our heart fully converted to the Lord and dedicated to his cause?



TWO STANDARDS

By Jim Manney

The meditation on the Two Standards is one of the key moments in the *Spiritual Exercises*. We're invited to imagine two armies on a battlefield. One under Satan's standard; the other under Christ's. Each army operates in completely different ways with sharply contrasting values. What Christ thinks is important is humility and poverty.

Roger Dawson, SJ, writes that we're faced with a paradox: "We see this paradox throughout the Gospels: he calls us into poverty, to take up our cross every day and to renounce ourselves. He tells us that if you really want life you are going to have to lose your life and if you want genuine richness you have to be poor. It may be challenging, but once we make that step, then we begin to share in the richness of God and to see that all we have in this world is given to us by God. When we appreciate these gifts *as gifts*, rather than something to which we are entitled, we can learn a genuine sense of gratitude, wonder and awe for these gifts, and we can begin to realize that the only possession we ever need is God. In this relationship I see myself as I really am and more importantly know that I am loved for who I am, not because of status, title, job, money or possessions – none of these lasts and ultimately none of these matters. That is what the Meditation on the Two Standards is showing us."



Next Sunday, May 10, is Mother's Day!

Online Resources:

[America Magazine](#) | [The Jesuit Review](#)

Where you can live-stream Jesuit Masses every day of the week: <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2020/03/24/here-are-jesuit-parishes-and-ministries-live-streaming-mass-every-day-week>