

April 30, 2023
HYMNS FOR FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
LBW #352 “I Know That My Redeemer Live”
LBW #456 “That King of Love My Shepherd Is”
LBW #476 “Have No Fear Little Flock”

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P O God our shepherd, you know your sheep by name and lead us to safety through the valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty and security to the joyous feast prepared in your house, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

FIRST READING: Acts 2:42-47

today's reading is a description of life in the community following Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out on God's people. The new community is sustained in worship and fellowship, shares what they have, and ensures that everyone has enough.

⁴²[The baptized] devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

⁴³Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

PSALM: Psalm 23

R The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want. (Ps. 23:1)

¹The Lord is my shepherd;

I shall not be in want.

²**The Lord makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.**

³You restore my soul, O Lord,

and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.

⁴**Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I
shall fear no evil;**

for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. R

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. R

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 2:19-25

Doing the right things does not guarantee that one will not experience difficulties, hardships, rejection, or even suffering. Here Christ is presented as the model for our path of endurance and loyalty to God, particularly amid adversity.

¹⁹It is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. ²⁰If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. ²¹For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.

²²"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."

²³When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. ²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

GOSPEL: John 10:1-10

Jesus uses an image familiar to the people of his day to make a point about spiritual leadership. Those who listen to Jesus are led to abundant life.

[Jesus said:] ¹"Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ²The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁷So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P United in the hope and joy of the resurrection, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

A You are the shepherd who gathers us in your mighty and loving arms. Help your church to listen for your voice, especially when the voices of sin, idolatry, and oppression threaten to overpower us. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A The green pastures, still waters, and dark valleys of this earth all belong to you, O Lord. Sustain your creation with a love that is both mighty and just. Where there is destruction, bring healing. Where there is desolation, bring abundance. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A You proclaim shepherding love, comfort, and protection for all people and all of creation. Direct leaders in our own time to learn from your example and instruction. Give them servant hearts, that they generously seek the good of all. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A You journey with us wherever our paths may lead. We pray for those feeling overwhelmed by anxiety or depression or suffering in any way (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A You are the sheepgate that gives safety to your beloved flocks. Provide protection for refugees, victims of domestic violence, those who are imprisoned, and all people who are vulnerable to violence and mistreatment. (*Local concerns may be named.*) Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A You call your sheep by name and lead them through the valley of death. We give you thanks for those who have died and now dwell in your house forever (*especially*). Be with those who mourn, and give them hope in the promise of resurrection. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

Rejoicing in the victory of Christ's resurrection, we lift our prayers and praise to you, almighty and eternal God; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

C Amen.



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