

## ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

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

## PENITENTIAL ACT

You raise the dead to life in the Spirit:

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

You bring pardon and peace to the sinner:

Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

You bring light to those in darkness:

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

*May almighty God have mercy on us.... Amen.*

## THE 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.**



## OPENING PRAYER

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....

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

### FIRST READING Acts 4: 8 - 12

#### A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter said: 'Rulers of the people, and elders! If you are questioning us today about an act of kindness to a cripple, and asking us how he was healed, then I am glad to tell you all, and would indeed be glad to tell the whole people of Israel, that it was by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the one you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by this name and by no other that this man is able to stand up perfectly healthy, here in your presence, today. This is the stone rejected by you the builders, but which has proved to be the keystone. For of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved.'

**The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.**

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

**Ps. 117:1. 8-9. 21-23. 26. 28-29**

### R. The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone. or Alleluia!

1. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his love has no end. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in men: it is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes. **(R)**
2. I will thank you for you have given answer and you are my saviour. The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone. This is the work of the Lord, a marvel in our eyes. **(R)**
3. Blessed in the name of the Lord is he who comes. We bless you from the house of the Lord; I will thank you for you have given answer and you are my saviour. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; for his love has no end. **(R)**

## SECOND READING 1 John 3: 1-2

### A reading from the first letter of St. John

Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us by letting us be called God's children; and that is what we are. Because the world refused to acknowledge him, therefore it does not acknowledge us. My dear people, we are already the children of God but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed; all we know is, that when it is revealed we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is.

**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: 11 - 18

### A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said: 'I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep. The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and the sheep do not belong to him, abandons the sheep and runs away as soon as he sees a wolf coming, and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep; this is because he is only a hired man and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And there are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and these I have to lead as well. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock, and one shepherd. The Father



# focus on sunday

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (Day of Prayer for Vocations) 21st April 2024

Today is a day of prayer to deepen our own sense of vocation, and to pray to the Lord to call men and women into a life of ministry and service within religious life.



loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me; I lay it down of my own free will, and as it is in my power to lay it down, so it is in my power to take it up again; and this is the command I have been given by my Father.'

**The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

## NICENE CREED

**I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,**

**All bow for following three lines: and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

## AFTER THE CONSECRATION

**The mystery of faith.**

**Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.**



The Good Shepherd is one of the most ancient Christian symbols: a mural found in the second-century Roman catacombs of St Calixtus is believed to be the earliest example of Christian art. The metaphor of shepherd for ruler was used widely in pre-Christian writings, but today's Gospel sees Jesus imbuing the role with complex and contradictory characteristics.

The Shepherd is also the sacrificial Lamb: in this one Gospel chapter, the phrase 'he lays down his life for his sheep' occurs ten times. And this act of surrender, born out of love for his flock, becomes an act of triumph, as he takes up his life again, echoing the journey from cross to Resurrection. In John's Gospel, the washing of feet replaces the Last Supper narrative, and the loving shepherd allegory corroborates Christ's servant leadership, while the declaratory "I am" utterance follows the Scriptural pattern of divine self-revelation.

The word 'pastor' has long been used to denote ordained leaders, and in 2013 Pope Francis urged priests: "Be shepherds with the smell of the sheep". The sheep in today's Gospel are astute, intelligent beings: they recognise the true Messiah. With Christ as the true Shepherd of us all, lay and ordained, we may ask ourselves on this Vocations Sunday: what call(s) am I answering in my life? What voices am I listening to? Who and what am I choosing to be led by, as the voice of God calls out to be heard, shepherding us to safety, comfort, and hope.

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