

## FIRST READING

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles 2:14. 36-41  
God has made him both Lord and Christ.'

On the day of Pentecost Peter stood up with the Eleven and addressed them in a loud voice: 'The whole House of Israel can be certain that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ.'

Hearing this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the apostles, 'What must we do, brothers?' 'You must repent,' Peter answered 'and every one of you must be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise that was made is for you and your children, and for all those who are far away, for all those whom the Lord our God will call to himself.' He spoke to them for a long time using many arguments, and he urged them, 'Save yourselves from this perverse generation'.

They were convinced by his arguments, and they accepted what he said and were baptised. That very day about three thousand were added to their number.

The Word of the Lord.

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 22

Response                      The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.  
or                                      Alleluia!

1. The Lord is my shepherd;  
there is nothing I shall want.  
Fresh and green are the pastures  
where he gives me repose.  
Near restful waters he leads me,  
to revive my drooping spirit.              Response
2. He guides me along the right path;  
he is true to his name.  
If I should walk in the valley of darkness  
no evil would I fear.  
You are there with your crook and your staff;  
with these you give me comfort.      Response
3. You have prepared a banquet for me  
in the sight of my foes.  
My head you have anointed with oil;  
my cup is overflowing.                      Response
4. Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me  
all the days of my life.  
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell  
for ever and ever.                              Response

## **SECOND READING**

A reading from the first letter of St Peter 2:20-25

You have come back to the shepherd of your souls.

The merit, in the sight of God, is in bearing it patiently when you are punished after doing your duty. This, in fact, is what you were called to do, because Christ suffered for you and left an example for you to follow the way he took. He had not done anything wrong, and there had been no perjury in his mouth. He was insulted and did not retaliate with insults; when he was tortured he made no threats but he put his trust in the righteous judge. He was bearing our faults in his own body on the cross, so that we might die to our faults and live for holiness; through his wounds you have been healed. You had gone astray like sheep but now you have come back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

The Word of the Lord.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** Jn 10: 14

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the good shepherd;

I know my own and my own know me

Alleluia!

## **GOSPEL**

A reading from the Gospel according to John 10:1-10

Jesus said: 'I tell you most solemnly, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate, but gets in some other way is a thief and a brigand. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock; the gatekeeper lets him in, the sheep hear his voice, one by one he calls his own sheep and leads them out. When he has brought out his flock, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know his voice. They never follow a stranger but run away from him: they do not recognise the voice of strangers.'

Jesus told them this parable but they failed to understand what he meant by telling it to them. So Jesus spoke to them again:

'I tell you most solemnly,

I am the gate of the sheepfold.

All others who have come

are thieves and brigands;

but the sheep took no notice of them

I am the gate.

Anyone who enters through me will be safe:

he will go freely in and out

and be sure of finding pasture.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

I have come so that they may have life

and have it to the full.

The Gospel of the Lord.

## ***Prayers of the Faithful***

**Celebrant:** “The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want” says the psalmist. We present the gospel fearlessly and inspire all people to turn to the loving embrace of Christ.

1. We pray for the church; that it may, like Peter in the First Reading, proclaim the gospel fearlessly and inspire all people to turn to the loving embrace of Christ.  
Lord hear us.
2. We pray for our civil leaders. Lord, inspire them to make wise decisions in these days.  
Lord hear us.
3. We pray for vocations’ that men and women may be inspired to dedicate their lives to the work of service in the Church and may respond generously to God’s call.  
Lord hear us.
4. We pray for married couples and families’ that they grow in love for one another.  
Lord hear us.
5. We pray for scientists and researchers. Lord, enlighten them as they work to understand what is happening-guide their work as they strive to find ways to treat and protect us.  
Lord hear us.

### **Celebrant:**

Father in heaven, you are the shepherd who looks after and cares for his flock. Grant us what we need today. We make our prayers as always in the name of Jesus, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

### **REFLECTION:**

When the American film director John Ford was interviewed about his technique for making Westerns, he stated that there was only one way to open a film to arouse people’s interest. You must begin, he said, by having a stranger ride at full gallop into town. The peaceful life of the settlement is going to be disturbed by this stranger. The townspeople don’t know who he is; they don’t know where he’s coming from; they have no idea why he is in such a hurry. And why here? For Ford, all these questions were provoked by a stranger whose arrival kicked up so much dust. The life of the settlement was then primed for conflict.

In the familiar life of the small town, strangers are often regarded with suspicion and resentment. Sometimes new arrivals have to wait years before they feel accepted as part of the community. Some always feel the outsider, no matter how long they stay and strive for approval. When it comes to voting for leaders in the community well, those who can be judged worthy of trust. They’re not going to place their trust in someone they know nothing about. In that sense people are like sheep. As Jesus says in today’s Gospel: “They never follow a stranger but run away from him: they do not recognise the voice of strangers.”

One of the central beliefs of our faith is that Jesus was no stranger to our humanity. He was fully human. We believe that he was not an alien from outer space who arrived in our midst as a totally formed package of difference. As John announces in the prologue of his Gospel:

He came to his own domain,

And his own people did not accept him. (1:11)

Born and brought up as member of the chosen people, Jesus was to become the stranger because of the way he was alienated by his own people. Others, however, did accept him because for them he spoke with the voice of authenticity. They could see how he always paid attention to the real condition of the people he encountered.

There are some voices we recognise as real because we believe that the speaker is trying to face the complexity of life with honesty and courage.

There are other speakers we suspect are just prattling on, tuned to making the right noise in an everlasting effort to be elected the official voice. In the end they just fleece people: they steal their hope to secure their own power. Today's Gospel gives us an image of Jesus as someone who hopes that people will come to recognise his voice as the one that does address who they are and where they are, one that leads them without disguise and without pretence. The first letter of Peter makes the same point when it speaks to Jesus: "He had not done anything wrong, and there had been no perjury in his mouth. "

Clearly, many people do not want to hear the truth from Jesus; but if a price is demanded for ignoring his truth, Jesus does not exact it. "He was insulted and did not retaliate with insults; when he was tortured he made no threats but he put his trust in the righteous judge." Jesus places everything in the hands of his Father. In spite of the treatment he received, he always refuses to give back as he has received. That doesn't make him into superhuman; it speaks to us of his way of being human.

To be a human being does not mean the same as being human. In virtue of our birth we are all human beings; but we have to learn what it means to be truly human in our world. Jesus teaches us that. He takes our inhumanity on his back and carries it to the cross. His way of the cross is his most authentic voice: it speaks of the shepherd willing to die for his sheep. He dies for what he believes in. He is his word.