

"I came that they may have life abundantly"

Reading 1: Acts 2: 14a, 36-41
Reading 2: 1 Pt 2: 20b – 25

Responsorial Psalm Ps: 23:1-3a, 3b4, 5, 6
Gospel Reading: John 10: 1 – 10

Scripture: *John 10:1-10*

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way that man is a thief and a robber; but he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens; the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." This figure Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not heed them. I am the door; if any one enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

Meditation: Do you know the peace and security of the Good Shepherd who watches over his own? The Old Testament often speaks of God as shepherd of his people, Israel. *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.* The Messiah is also pictured as the shepherd of God's people: *He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms.* Jesus says he is the *Good Shepherd* who will risk his life to seek out and save the stray sheep. He is the *Shepherd and Guardian of our souls*.

The Good Shepherd and Guardian of our souls

what can shepherding teach us about God and our relationship with him? At the end of each day the shepherd brought his sheep into shelter. They knew the voice of their shepherd and came at his beckoning. So familiar was the shepherd and his sheep, that each was called by a distinct name. In the winter the sheep were usually brought to a communal village shelter which was locked and kept secure by a guardian. In the summer months the sheep were usually kept out in the fields and then gathered into a fold at night which was guarded by a shepherd throughout the night. He was literally the *door* through which the sheep had to pass.

The Scriptures describe God as a shepherd who brings security and peace to his people. *The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and for evermore.* Even the leaders of God's people are called shepherds: *they shall lead them out and bring them in; that the congregation of the Lord may not be as sheep which have no shepherd.* Just as a shepherd kept watch over his sheep and protected them from danger, so Jesus stands watch over his people as the *Shepherd and Guardian of our souls*. Do you know the peace and security of a life fully submitted to God?

Jesus willingly laid down his life for us - the sheep he ransomed with his own blood

St. Augustine of Hippo writes: "He has accomplished what he taught us: He has shown us what He commanded us to do. He laid down his own life for his sheep, that within our mystery he might change his body and blood into food, and nourish the sheep he had redeemed with the food of his own flesh. He has shown us the way we must follow, despite fear of death. He has laid down the pattern to which we must conform ourselves. The first duty laid on us is to use our material goods in mercy for the needs of his sheep, and then, if necessary, give even our lives for them. He that will not give of his substance for his sheep, how shall he lay down his life for them?" Do you look to Jesus the Good Shepherd, to receive the strength and courage you need to live and serve as his disciple?

Questions for Community Faith Sharing:

1. During Easter we hear a lot of Shepherding, how can you listen attentively to the voice of Good Shepherd and obey his word?
2. How can we shepherd one another knowing free and faithful to come closer and to accept Jesus Christ in our life?
3. Through Jesus how can you have life and have it more abundantly?

"Lord Jesus, you always lead me in the way of true peace and safety. May I never doubt your care nor stray from your ways. Keep me safe in the shelter of your presence."