

Prayer at Home



Fourth Sunday of Easter
(Yr A)

Gather with family or on your own. Place an opened Bible on a table. Light a candle, white if possible, and place a crucifix and some flowers beside it and a bowl of water.

Begin with:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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

Let us prepare ourselves to hear God's Word:

Risen Lord, you are the good shepherd. **LORD, HAVE MERCY.**

Paschal Lamb, you are the gate of the sheepfold. **CHRIST, HAVE MERCY.**

Lord of life, one by one you call your own sheep. **LORD, HAVE MERCY.**

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

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

O God,
You never cease to call even those far away,
for it is your will
that all be drawn into one fold.

Attune our ears to the voice of the Good Shepherd,
who leads us always to you,
that we may find under your tender protection
life in all its fullness.

Through Jesus Christ, the Resurrection and the life, who lives and reigns
with you in unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever.

Amen.

First Reading

Acts 2:14, 36-41

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ.

On the day of Pentecost Peter stood up with the eleven and addressed the crowd with 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.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 22:1-6

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

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. **R.**

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. **R.**

You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing. **R.**

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. **R.**

Second Reading

1 Peter 2:20-25

A reading from the first letter of St. Peter

You had gone astray but now you have come back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

The merit, in the sight of God, is in bearing punishment 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.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the good shepherd, says the Lord;

I know my sheep, and mine know me.

Alleluia!

Gospel

John 10:1-10

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

I am the gate of the sheepfold.

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 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.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily

This Sunday goes by a number of different names: the Fourth Sunday of Easter; Good Shepherd Sunday; and the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. For many of us, the daily rhythm of our vocation has changed, even if our fundamental vocation has not. As we live and work differently, we are reminded that we don't "have" a vocation, we *are* a vocation.

In these passed months, we have needed to learn new things: parents have become teachers in the home; pastors have become "performers" on the live stream; grand-parents have adapted to "drive-by" visitations; friends have become virtual companions; our community service has been curtailed; simple tasks have become more complex; all our weekly distractions, like sport or entertainment or going out for a meal, have disappeared; and our prayers have become more personal and domestic even as we pray together.

Even as we miss the simple joys of life, and learn to adjust to new circumstances, we remain committed to the vision of new life that Easter promises. Pope Francis own words on this World Day of Prayer for Vocations are an encouragement to us:

The Gospel tells us that in the midst of this challenging journey we are not alone. Like the first ray of dawn in the heart of the night, the Lord comes walking on the troubled waters to join the disciples... The first word of vocation is gratitude. Taking the right course is not something we do on our own, nor does it depend solely on the road we choose to travel. How we find fulfilment in life is more than a decision we make as isolated individuals; above all else, it is a response to a call from on high. The Lord points out our destination on the opposite shore and he grants us the courage to board the boat. In calling us, he becomes our helmsman; he accompanies and guides us; he prevents us from running aground on the shoals of indecision and even enables us to walk on surging waters.

Every vocation is born of that gaze of love with which the Lord came to meet us, perhaps even at a time when our boat was being battered by the storm. Vocation, more than our own choice, is a response to the Lord's unmerited call. We will succeed in discovering and embracing our vocation once we open our hearts in gratitude and perceive the passage of God in our lives.

Our vocation is not only about what we do in life; it is also about who we are in life. Even as we live our vocations differently, we remain called to lives of gratitude, faith and trust. This is how we discover life and live it to the full.

Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
At the words that follow, up to and including 'the Virgin Mary', all bow.
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.

Bless yourself making a cross with some water from the bowl.

Prayers of Intercession

INTRODUCTION: Christ the Good Shepherd is the Supreme example of faithfulness. May we show this same faithfulness as we place our trust in God Almighty.

For the Church separated in this Easter season; that we might be inspired to be visible signs of Christ's presence, leading many to believe in the hope of the Resurrection. **RISEN LORD, HEAR US.**

For our Church leaders in this Easter Season; that they may be strengthened and grow in their calling as good shepherds. **RISEN LORD, HEAR US.**

For those who struggle to hear the voice of Jesus calling them; that they may open to the invitation of Christ amid this world's confusion. **RISEN LORD, HEAR US.**

For our dispersed communities during this Easter Season; that we will discover a renewed sense of connection and communion with one another. **RISEN LORD, HEAR US.**

For those suffering in mind or body during this Easter Season, particularly those affected in any way by the coronavirus; that the Resurrected Christ, who bore the wounds of all humanity, may touch their lives with renewed courage and hope. **RISEN LORD, HEAR US.**

For those who have died, especially those who are dying alone or without medical care this Easter Season; that they may come to know the joy of the Easter feast. **RISEN LORD, HEAR US.**

Almighty and all-merciful God,
lover of the human race, healer of all our wounds,
in whom there is no shadow of death,
save us in this time of crisis;
grant wisdom and courage to our leaders;
watch over all medical people
as they tend the sick and work for a cure;
stir in us a sense of solidarity beyond all isolation;
if our doors are closed, let our hearts be open.
By the power of your love destroy the virus of fear,
that hope may never die
and the light of Easter, the triumph of life,
may shine upon us and the whole world.
Through Jesus Christ, the Lord risen from the dead,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

***Holy Mary, health of the sick, pray for us.
St Joseph, guardian of us all, pray for us.***

Placing our faith in the power of the cross and trusting that we are united to all Christians, in all times and in all places, on this sacred day we dare to pray:

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
graciously grant peace in our days,
that, by the help of your mercy,
we may be always free from sin
and safe from all distress,
as we await the blessed hope
and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

For the kingdom,
the power and the glory are yours
now and for ever.

Pause for quiet prayer. Suggested prayer: "Come into my heart, Lord Jesus"

Let us pray.

Look upon your flock, kind Shepherd,
and be pleased to settle in eternal pastures
the sheep you have redeemed
by the Precious Blood of your Son.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Lord God,
Strength of the weary, medicine of the weak,
Be near to us as we call on you.
May you be our nourishment during this time
and renew us daily in your love.

May God bless us, keep us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.