

May 3, 2020

Fourth Sunday of Easter (A)

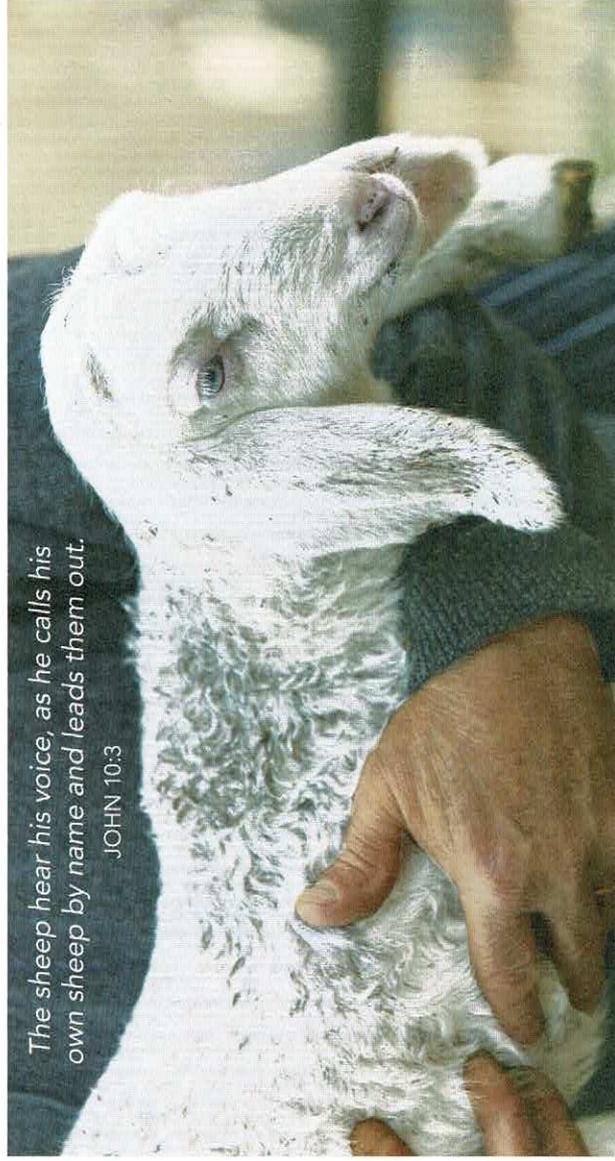
Acts 2:14a, 36–41

1 Pt 2:20b–25

In 10:1–10

The sheep hear his voice, as he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

JOHN 10:3



SPETEN/IA/SHUTTERSTOCK

## Matters of Life and Death

**S**heep are a lot smarter than some people think. They recognize the voice of their particular shepherd and follow that voice alone. However, that is not the point of Jesus' teaching today. Because most of us don't raise sheep or know much about them, we don't realize that the situation described in the Gospel passage is a matter of life and death.

It's similar to the relationship between a military squad leader and the troops he leads, another life-and-death matter. In both, unquestioning obedience is required, and absolute trust in the other is presumed.

That's what Jesus is describing. He's suggesting: "Listen to me. Follow my lead. Trust in me. I want only what is good for you, so I will be your sure protection."

It sounds so easy, as parables and metaphors usually do. What does it mean to follow this Shepherd? In the first reading, Peter announces the answer in one word: "Repent!" There is that challenging word—the word

we might associate with Lent, not with Easter. If we do so, we miss the point of following the Shepherd, for to follow him means to be like him. It means:

"Repent! Stop taking advantage of other people. Open your minds and hearts to newcomers. Respect those who observe different religious traditions. Help those less fortunate than you." All of this is captured in the final words of the Gospel reading: do what you can so that all "might have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Clearly, that's smart.

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

### FOR Reflection

- ★ On what path might the Shepherd be leading you?
- ★ In what area is he calling you to repent?

**May 3, 2020**  
**Fourth Sunday of Easter**

**Reading 1**  
**ACTS 2:14A, 36-41**

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed: "Let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, "What are we to do, my brothers?" Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is made to you and to your children and to all those far off, whomever the Lord our God will call." He testified with many other arguments, and was exhorting them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added that day.



**Responsorial Psalm**  
**23: 1-3A, 3B4, 5, 6**

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

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. In verdant pastures he gives me repose; beside restful waters he leads me; he refreshes my soul.

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

He guides me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; for you are at my side. With your rod and your staff that give me courage.

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

You spread the table before me in the sight of my foes; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

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

Only goodness and kindness follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for years to come.

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

## **Reading 2**

### **1 PT 2:20B-25**

Beloved:

If you are patient when you suffer for doing what is good, this is a grace before God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps. *He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.*

When he was insulted, he returned no insult; when he suffered, he did not threaten; instead, he handed himself over to the one who judges justly.

He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you had gone astray like sheep, but you have now returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

## **Alleluia**

### **JN 10:14**

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

I am the good shepherd, says the Lord; I know my sheep, and mine know me.

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

## **Gospel**

### **JN 10:1-10**

Jesus said:  
"Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate but climbs over elsewhere is a thief and a robber. But whoever enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice, as the shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice. But they will not follow a stranger; they will run away from him, because they do not recognize the voice of strangers."

Although Jesus used this figure of speech, the Pharisees did not realize what he was trying to tell them.

So Jesus said again, "Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

### **Gospel Reflection**

Easter's empty tomb is a call to conversion. By this tomb, we should know for certain that God has made Jesus both Lord and Messiah, as Peter preaches in today's First Reading.

He is the "Lord," the divine Son that David foresaw at God's right hand. He is the Messiah that God had promised to shepherd the scattered flock of the house of Israel.

As we hear in today's Gospel, Jesus is that Good Shepherd, sent to a people who were like sheep without a shepherd. He calls not only to the children of Israel, but to all those far off from Him—to whomever the Lord wishes to hear His voice.

The call of the Good Shepherd leads to the restful waters of Baptism, to the anointing oil of Confirmation, and to the table and overflowing cup of the Eucharist, as we sing in today's Psalm.

Again on this Sunday in Easter, we hear His voice calling us His own. He should awaken in us the response of those who heard Peter's preaching. "What are we to do?" they cried.

We have been baptized. But each of us goes astray like sheep, as we hear in today's Epistle. We still need daily to repent, to seek forgiveness of our sins, to separate ourselves further from this corrupt generation.

We are called to follow in the footsteps of the Shepherd of our souls. By His suffering He bore our sins in His body to free us from sin. But His suffering is also an example for us. From Him we should learn patience in our afflictions, to hand ourselves over to the will of God.

Jesus has gone ahead, driven us through the dark valley of evil and death. His Cross has become the narrow gate through which we must pass to reach His empty tomb—the verdant pastures of life abundant.



## PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray to end Abortion, Russell Brooks, Cassie & Clifton Centers, Maere Tekanene, Bill Moses, Jerry Roberts, Donna Blevins, Norma Wilson, Dennis Parks & Family, Erica Davis, Chris & Amanda Decker, Marian Colette, Debbie Moses Haggins, Rose Grant, Sandy Hurts, Dominic Cureton, Todd Morris, Charles Pennington (Louann Lennon's father), Alex Woods, Christopher Braden, Bonnie (Warfield) Bishop, Sister Alice, Curt and LeeAnn Hall, Jay Baird, Gary Hackler, Patricia Hernandez-Torres, loved ones who are ill, and all those of our families who are affected by Covid-19.



**Meko York**

May 5

# Dear Padre,

**How will it happen that Jesus will come again and lead us “through the gates”?**

**W**e have it from the best of authorities that the date of the world’s end is hidden. Jesus said, “But of that day and hour no one knows... but the Father alone” (Matthew 24:36). In spite of Christ’s admonition that the day of his Second Coming is known but to God, there have been countless false prophets who have confidently but incorrectly predicted a date for the end of the world. Most of these foolish forecasters based their claims on misinterpretations of the Book of Revelation.

The main purpose of the Book of Revelation is to assure us that God’s power will prevail. In the ongoing struggle between good and evil, there are times when evil seems to have the upper hand. No matter. Evil will be conquered and God’s rule will extend over all creation.

The world might end tomorrow, or next year, or in five billion years. Jesus tells us we can’t know for sure. We are sure, however, that this world will pass away. And for each one of us the world will end at the moment of death. What matters is that we should always be ready to meet Christ.

And we shall be ready if we follow Christ, our Shepherd, whom we meet in today’s Gospel. Jesus leads us safely through this life by his teaching, his example, and his grace.

—Fr. Oscar Lukefahr, CM  
[Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org](mailto:Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org)



## A WORD FROM Pope Francis

**We should never forget: the Church is not a static reality, inert, an end in herself, but is on a continual journey through history, towards that ultimate and marvelous end that is the kingdom of heaven, of which the Church on earth is the seed and the beginning.**

—GENERAL AUDIENCE, NOVEMBER 26, 2014

## Calendar

### Monday

MAY 4

Easter Weekday

Acts 11:1–18

Jn 10:11–18

### Tuesday

MAY 5

Easter Weekday

Acts 11:19–26

Jn 10:22–30

### Wednesday

MAY 6

Easter Weekday

Acts 12:24—13:5a

Jn 12:44–50

### Thursday

MAY 7

Easter Weekday

Acts 13:13–25

Jn 13:16–20

### Friday

MAY 8

Easter Weekday

Acts 13:26–33

Jn 14:1–6

### Saturday

MAY 9

Easter Weekday

Acts 13:44–52

Jn 14:7–14

### Sunday

MAY 10

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts 6:1–7

1 Pt 2:4–9

Jn 14:1–12