

2020 May 03

*Fourth Sunday of Easter*

**Readings:**

*First: Acts 2.14a, 36b-41, "God has made him both Lord and Christ." (36b)*

*Psalm: 23, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies." (5a)*

*Second: 1 Peter 2.20b-25, "Now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls." (25)*

*Gospel: John 10.1-10, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate of the sheep." (7)*

*Acceptance Terms*

St. Peter's exhortation on the day of Pentecost was to repent and to accept Jesus and the Spirit Jesus sends to them. Repentance simply means here rethinking about your current beliefs, perceptions, practices, phobias, infatuations and pursuits and to look differently from the point of view of the good news proclaimed by Jesus. St. Peter in his letter adds that our acceptance of the good news also includes suffering as part of our association with Jesus who walked before us in his suffering and death.

Willingly accepting suffering leads us to endurance, which means we do not return abuse for abuse, no threats and accusation to others, but open acceptance of all including those who persecute and reject us. The disciples of Jesus should keep their doors always open for everyone. It means our hearts must be open to all, irrespective of caste, creed, color, sex, nationality and personal appearances and preferences. Acceptance of the gospel has to be not according to our terms but according to those of Jesus, which alone can give us all the blessings proceeding from the acceptance.

In the gospel Jesus warns us that there are always predators around us who will try to snatch us away from our commitment to him. Our arch enemies are the world, the devil and our own body, our humanity. All the attractions of the world which prevent us from being with Jesus are the working of the devil. Our body with all its features, abilities, and inclinations is a perfect gift of God and it is his making. Every part and limb of the body is for and with a purpose. Our temptations are to use them not for the purpose for which they are made but for other purposes and those are the occasions we surrender ourselves to the devil or to the manipulations of the world.

And Jesus has a remedy to save us from our wandering away from the purpose for which we are created, namely he offers himself as our Shepherd. This Shepherd keeps himself always awake to receive us, to save us and to form and transform us, he walks before us. He keeps himself as the door, which remains always open in order that we his sheep may enter and be safe in his heart, and exit when we are safe to find good pastures, which this Shepherd himself have finds for us. What a powerful and endearing Master we have! If only we could listen to him and enter into the bliss he offers us!

*Fr. George*