

St. Thomas Aquinas Church
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Fourth Sunday of Easter, Year A
May 3rd, 2020
Liturgy of the Word

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

Let us begin by asking Jesus the good shepherd to look upon us with kindness and care.

All: Together we pray:

I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,
through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault;
therefore, I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.
May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to
everlasting life.

All: 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

Almighty God, during this time of homestay, as we look at Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd, may we answer his call. May we enter through his gate and celebrate the life you have given us. Open our minds to recognize you in each other. Open our hearts to see you as we serve one another. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Reading 1 [ACTS 2:14A, 36-41](#)

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

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.

The word of the Lord.

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

R. (1) 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

A reading from the First letter of Peter.

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.

The word of the Lord.

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](#)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

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.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Homily:

Today we celebrate the 4th Sunday of Easter. We also call it the Good Shepherd Sunday.

When we read the different gospels, we learn that Jesus used a lot of examples to tell people what his ministry was about. When he talked to farmers, he used the image of a sower who went out to sow seeds. He used another parable of the vine and the branches. When he talked to families, he used the parable for the prodigal son who run away from home yet came back and found a forgiving father. When he talked to fishermen, he used the parable of the fishnet that catches all kinds of fish.

In this gospel we can be sure that he was talking to a group of shepherds. By using a double metaphor, he called himself the gate and also a good shepherd. As the gate, he said, “I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture.” He is not talking about an ordinary gate. He is talking about being saved and eternal life. He is comparing himself with the gate that allows the sheep to pass through to find pasture. Here, the pasture

becomes the symbol of eternal life and the gate is the access to eternal life. Jesus is telling us that he is the way to access to eternal life.

Jesus called himself the good shepherd who calls each one of us to come to him. When we look at his ministry, we can see how his way of life fits well with the way of the authentic shepherd. He cured the sick, as a shepherd cures his animals. He fed the hungry, as a shepherd feeds his sheep. He comforted those who were in trouble, the same way a shepherd takes care of his animals. So, he is the good shepherd, and also the gatekeeper who invites us to go through him so that we can share in eternal life.

Each one of us is also called to be a shepherd in our own way. We are called every day to practice the qualities of a good shepherd. We can do this by taking care of one another. During these trying times, we are called to be shepherds to one another at home by using Jesus as our model. During the month of May that is dedicated to Mary the mother of Jesus, let us turn to her for prayers and protection. She took care of Jesus and we turn to her to take care of us as well. She is our first good shepherd because she cared for all people around her. With her intercession we trust that God will answer our prayers and give us the strength to follow in the footsteps of Jesus the good shepherd. Amen.

The Creed

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

General Intercessions

During the season of Easter, we pray that as true followers of Christ, we
may live by the standards of our Leader, Jesus Christ, and practice deeds of
kindness and compassion towards one another.

We pray to the Lord

We pray for the Leaders of all nations
-especially during these times of fear, frustration, sadness, and anger.
That our Lord the good shepherd may manifest his wisdom to those who
lead and that they may serve for the good of all people.

We pray to the Lord

For those who are severely affected by Covid-19.

-Especially the elderly and marginalized victims who are struggling with financial, emotional, and physical difficulties.

May our Lord grant them the peace and serenity that they need to cope with this virus and the path that will lead them to aid and assistance.

We pray to the Lord.

In celebration of our Earth.

-May we always find ways to practice conservation and take care of this beautiful planet that our Lord gave us.

We pray to the Lord.

Let us take a moment to offer to our Lord, who always hears us, all of our prayers and intentions.

We pray to the Lord.

Leader: United to all people who are searching for you from one end of the world to the other, as brother and sisters we pray in the words that Jesus taught us.

All: 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 Lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

(Let us take a moment for spiritual communion)

Prayer:

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Leader: May the God of all consolation bless us in every way and grant us peace all the days of our lives. May God free us from all anxiety strengthen our hearts and fill us with love.

All: Amen.

Leader: May Almighty God bless us, The Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have continued to support our church financially during this difficult time. As you may know, all of our parish staff is still working and our bills still come in. I am therefore encouraging you to please continue to support our parish financially, either by sending a check through the mail, or by donating through Faith Direct on our parish website, www.stampk.org. My sincere appreciation to you for keeping the parish running.

Fr. John Kyebasuuta.

