

4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER A - GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY



I am the gate for the sheep. Whoever enters through me will be saved.

He walks ahead of them and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice. (John: 10, 4)

The
shepherd
knows his sheep.
And the sheep know him.
He calls each of them by name.

O Christ,
we cry out for you to shepherd us this day.

We long to hear you call our names, to
listen to your gentle voice, and follow you out of this violent
world to a safe place.

Please, walk ahead of us and we will follow you.
Let us offer to one another your abounding life
and love.



THE FIRST READING. Acts 2:14a, 36-41

Repent and be baptized, every one of you.

Cut to the heart, they were baptized.
Three thousand followed him,
just as sheep follow
a shepherd.

Dear
Shepherd Lord,
open up our hearts to you.
Let us listen as your Spirit speaks in us.
Bring all your children, near and far, to live in your
love.

THE SECOND READING 1 Peter 2:20b-45

By his wounds you have been healed.

Christ, we stray like sheep.

And you, Good Shepherd,
you gather us lost ones.

We so need your shepherding now.
No more wars, trafficking,
No more hunger
Never again.

Let our hearts follow
your healing. (Anne Osdieck)

Reflection: Why does Jesus use sheep imagery in this Gospel? I suppose it is obvious but, if you will pardon the comparison, you and I are a lot like sheep. The shepherd calls us each by name—the utter God of the universe (of the galaxy, infinity, etc.) does this. God is great enough that in Jesus he knows each and every one of us better than we know ourselves. The name he uses for each of us reaches way down into the full potential of our souls, calling us to be most truly who we are in ourselves and in the Lord. An intimate recognition within each of us responds.

And, like the sheep, each of us knows by heart the sound of God's voice. Alright, we may misunderstand it, ignore it, resist it, close all our gateways shut to it, but in our moments of sane and solitary wholeness our spirits know the sound of that voice. It resonates within us.

Whichever ones of us are free hearken and follow. The call is safe, in spite of wolves and wildness all around. The call lets our fear drop away so that we can follow our master and friend over rocks and even through dark valleys.

Often people insult the human race by calling it a bunch of sheep. But this Sunday it is the greatest compliment we could get. (John Foley SJ)



