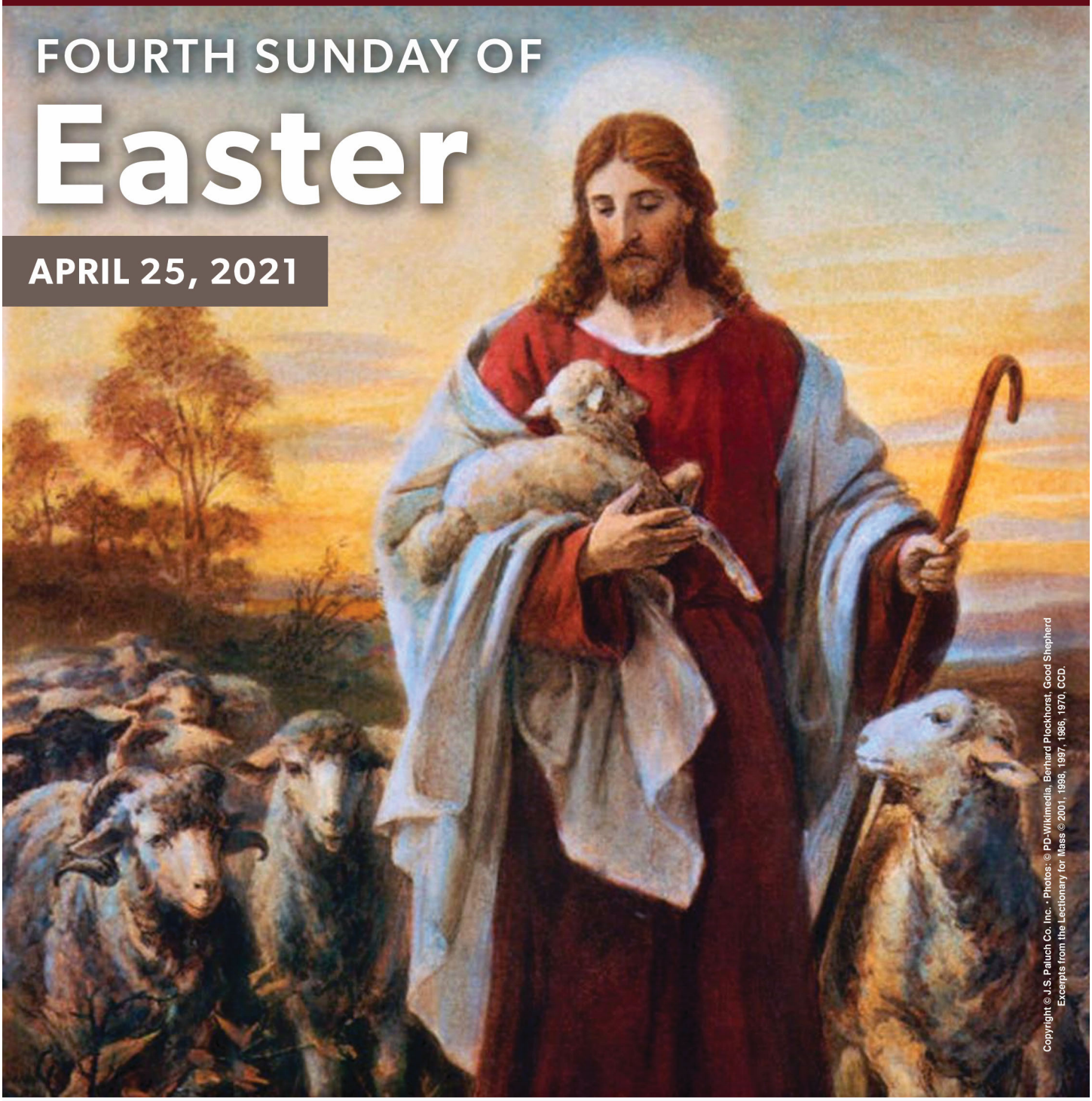
FOURTH SUNDAY OF Easter

APRIL 25, 2021



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I am the good shepherd.
A good shepherd lays down
his life for the sheep.

John 10:11

Feast of Faith

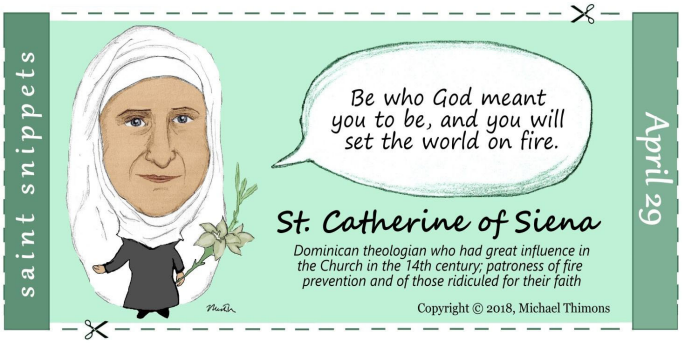
The Gospel Reading

The climax of the Liturgy of the Word comes with the proclamation of the Gospel. Everything tells us that something important is happening. We stand. We sing special acclamations. Servers with candles and sometimes incense lead the deacon or priest to the ambo, where the reading is proclaimed from a special book.

All of the readings are important, but the liturgy directs special attention to the Gospel for a reason. "[A]mong all the inspired writings, even among those of the New Testament, the Gospels have a special place, and rightly so, because they are our principal source for the life and teaching of the Incarnate Word, our Saviour" (Dei Verbum, the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation of the Second Vatican Council, 18). In the Gospels, the narrative of Christ's saving life, death, and resurrection continues to be proclaimed in our midst.

Our Sunday Lectionary is structured so as to allow us to hear as much of the Gospels as possible. The readings are arranged in a three-year cycle. In Year A, the Gospel readings are taken mainly from Matthew; in Year B, from Mark and John; and in Year C, from Luke. In this way, over the course of three years, we hear a substantial portion of all four Gospels.

—Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.



Responding To The Call

Do we truly know the voice of Christ? Do we truly respond to the voice of our shepherd with our own distinctive voice? How often we attempt to imitate those around us, appropriating the response of another member of the flock to Christ. Perhaps we need to balance the image of being sheep of one flock with the image from the second reading, which tells us that we are all children of God. What child has precisely the same interaction with parents as his or her siblings? Instead, they frequently do and say things to distinguish themselves in the eyes of their parents.

Whether we use the image of children or of sheep to understand our relationship with Christ, we believe that we are all known and called by name. With this great gift comes a responsibility: to respond to the call with our own distinctive voice, to take time to discern exactly what our call is, to determine precisely what the will of the Father is for each of us.

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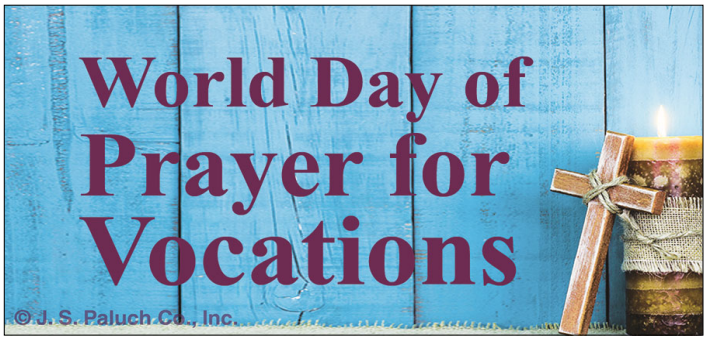
Readings for the Week

Monday:	Acts 11:1-18; Ps 42:2-3; 43:3, 4; Jn 10:1-10
Tuesday:	Acts 11:19-26; Ps 87:1b-7; Jn 10:22-30
Wednesday:	Acts 12:24 — 13:5a; Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8; Jn 12:44-50
Thursday:	Acts 13:13-25: Ps 89:2-3, 21-22, 25, 27; Jn 13:16-20
Friday:	Acts 13:26-33; Ps 2:6-11ab; Jn 14:1-6
Saturday:	Acts 13:44-52; Ps 98:1-4; Jn 14:7-14 or (for the memorial) Gn 1:26 — 2:3 or Col 3:14-15, 17, 23-24; Ps 90:2-4, 12-14, 16; Mt 13:54-58
Sunday:	Acts 9:26-31; Ps 22:26-28, 30-32; 1 Jn 3:18-24; Jn 15:1-8



Saints and Special Observances

Sunday:	Fourth Sunday of Easter; World Day of Prayer for Vocations
Wednesday:	St. Peter Chanel; St. Louis Grignion de Montfort
Thursday:	St. Catherine of Siena
Friday:	St. Pius V; National Arbor Day
Saturday:	St. Joseph the Worker; First Saturday

Today's Readings

First Reading — There is no salvation through anyone else (Acts 4:8-12).

Psalm — The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone (Psalm 118).

Second Reading — See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God (1 John 3:1-2).

Gospel — The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11-18).

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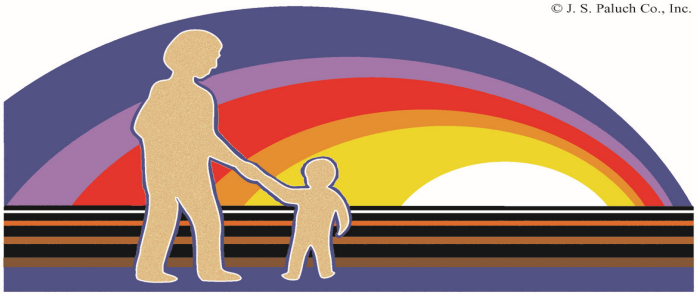

Fourth Sunday of Easter
April 25, 2021

See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God.
—1 John 3:1

Treasures From Our Tradition

There are few openings for “Shepherds” in the classified ads today, but few occupations are as dear to the Christian heart. Most of us tenderly place shepherds by our Christmas cribs, name the Twenty-third Psalm as our favorite, and recognize “Good Shepherd” as a title of Jesus. Bishops carry a staff, called a crozier, modeled after the shepherd’s walking staff. Long before Christian artists painted Jesus on the cross, they traced on the walls of their worship places images of a strong young shepherd, shouldering a lost sheep and bringing it to safety. Springtime is the season of lambing, a time when the shepherd not only learns the faces of the new arrivals, but also when the newborn sheep become attuned to the voice of the shepherd. This is exactly what we do as a community in Easter as we shelter and guide the newly received Christians, and also put our Lenten muscles to good use: listening more attentively to God’s Word, and responding with springtime vigor to God’s call.
—James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

On Wealth

Nothing is more fallacious than wealth. It is a hostile comrade, a domestic enemy.

—St. John Chrysostom

The Glory Of God

The glory of God is humanity fully alive.

—St. Irenaeus

The Rejected Savior

In the reading from Acts, Peter explains to the leaders of Israel how they cured a crippled man. They probably expected Peter to take credit for the cure, so they were waiting for him to hang himself by his words. Peter, of course, gives the credit to Jesus and then makes two important points.

First he calls Jesus the "stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone." This quote from Psalm 118 was used often by the early Christians to show that Jesus was rejected by fellow Jews when he was crucified, but was actually doing God's will when he gave his life on the cross. Thus he became not just a martyr, but the savior of the world. This gave comfort to those who had expected the leaders of Israel to follow Jesus and recognize him as the Messiah. It also told those leaders that they could be forgiven for crucifying Jesus if they would simply repent.

The second point made by Peter was that Jesus is the one and only savior of the world. In those days, the Roman emperor was considered to be a god and was called a savior. Peter says this to the leaders because they had to obey the emperor and his appointed rulers over Israel. While we no longer look to politicians to be saviors, we need to remember that Jesus is the Savior: he forgives our sins, shows us how to love God and our neighbors, and hears our prayers. He lives in us to support us when the answer to our prayers is "no." And in the end, he is with us when we die to bring us to eternal life. When we love others (and are loved by others) we experience a taste of God's love. Now the choice is yours: to reject the Savior or make Him the cornerstone of your life.

Tom Schmidt, Copyright (c) J. S. Paluch Co.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF Easter

APRIL 25, 2021

I am the good shepherd.
A good shepherd lays down
his life for the sheep.
John 10:11

BELONGING

There is nothing like belonging. Many of our deepest experiences in life are of the belonging we feel among family or close friends. We may experience belonging within our parish, even saying we are "at home" in our faith community. Sometimes, we say we belong to a school alumni association or social club. Our deepest belonging, however, is in the heart of God. We are God's children, precious in God's sight. We are so treasured that Jesus laid down his life for us. Knowing that we belong to God in Jesus Christ gives us a new, eternal perspective on life. Peter understood this when he explained that his healing of the man who had been disabled from birth had been accomplished through Christ. Jesus describes the relationship between him and those who believe in him in intimate terms—we who are in relationship with Christ know that our very lives depend upon him.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

The difference between the good shepherd and the hired hand is the difference between life and death. Unlike a hired hand who only works for pay and would run away at the first sign of difficulty, Jesus is a good shepherd who willingly lays down his life for his sheep. The good shepherd draws the sheep near to him. They belong to him—not as a possession that can be discarded, but as precious ones who are assured that they can rely on his care and protection. The sheep owe their very lives to the shepherd. Without him, they will be scattered and left on their own in what is often a dangerous world.

BECOMING GOOD SHEEP

No sheep with any sense would wander off and leave the fold. The shepherd provides food and safety. Away from the fold, the sheep risks death in the jaws of wolves or starvation in the desert. Jesus is the Good Shepherd and invites us to be good sheep. Jesus has experienced the best and the worst of all that life has in store. He has known the simple joys and the deep disappointments of life; he has known temptation, anxiety, and fatigue. Jesus walks ahead of us, leading the way. We may be tempted to wander away, lured by temporary pleasures and tempted by the illusion of something better over the horizon. In the noise of daily life, surrounded by messages that compete with God and God's ways, it is easy to become distracted from what is important and lasting. Jesus, our Good Shepherd, invites us to be good sheep who are so close to him that we hear and recognize his voice. As good sheep, we are called to follow the voice of the Shepherd, trusting that he will guide us to the best pasture, where we can thrive.

TODAY'S READINGS

Acts 4:8–12
Psalm 118:1, 8–9, 21–23, 26, 28, 29
1 John 3:1–2
John 10:11–18

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Joseph von Führich:
Der Gang nach Emmaus
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Prayer of the Faithful

We are called children of God, and so we bring to God the needs of all the world.

For all those who have been good shepherds in our lives, as they strive to hear the voice of the One Shepherd and lead us in his ways, let us pray to the Lord.

For leaders of nations, for regional leaders, and for all those in authority, that they may guide those in their care with integrity, let us pray to the Lord.

For ranchers, farmers, and workers who raise and care for the livestock that nourishes and sustains us, let us pray to the Lord.

For the young people of our community, especially those who are celebrating their confirmation this Easter season, let us pray to the Lord.

For men and women of all ages to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd calling them into ordained and lay ministries, let us pray to the Lord.

For all those who are sick, for all who suffer from COVID-19, and for all who have died, let us pray to the Lord.

For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord.

O loving God,
you have given your only Son to us
to be our Good Shepherd.
Grant us the grace to always know the sound of his voice
and follow the path he has shown.
We ask this and all good things in his name, who is our Risen Lord.

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The Little Ones

Jim Burrows

I am the good shepherd, and I know my own and my own know me,
even as the Father knows me and I know the Father;
and I lay down my life for the sheep. Jn 10:14-15

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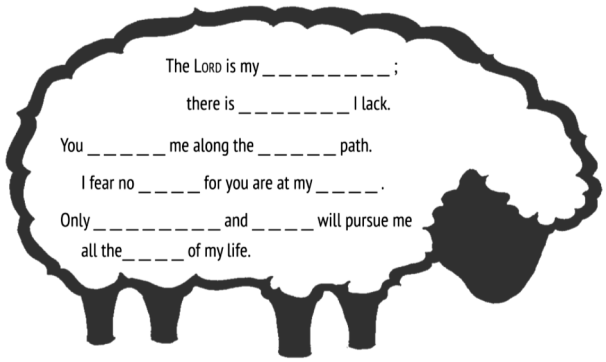
CATHOLIC CORNER

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

The scriptures of the Fourth Sunday of Easter present images of Jesus as the Good Shepherd.
Many people think the most beautiful psalm in the entire Bible is Psalm 23,
the psalm about God as a loving shepherd.
The words comfort us and remind us that God takes care of us,
gives us courage, and promises us joy.

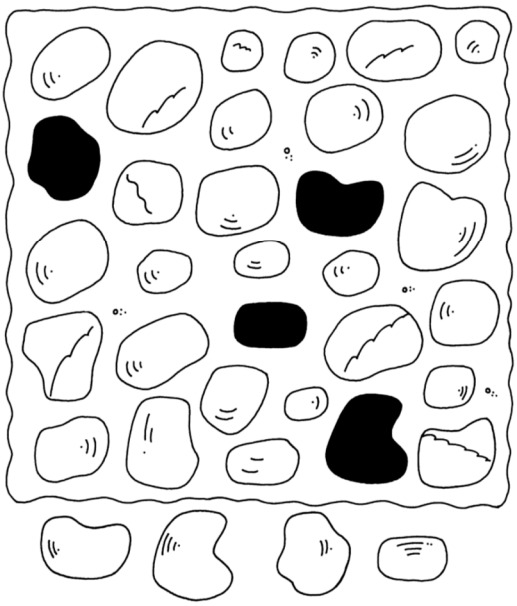
Inside this sheep are some verses from Psalm 23 (23:1, 3b, 4b, 6ab).
Choose from the list below to fill in the missing words.
Each line stands for a letter, so you can use that as a clue.

Which words comfort you most?
Try to learn some of the verses of this psalm by heart
so you can pray them when you need them.



guide goodness days shepherd harm nothing side right love

While Jesus was alive people didn't realize
that he would be the one to save them.
Peter told them that Jesus was like a stone rejected by builders.
But in the end, Jesus became the cornerstone!
Look at this stone wall.
Draw a line from each black hole to the stone that will fit in that space.



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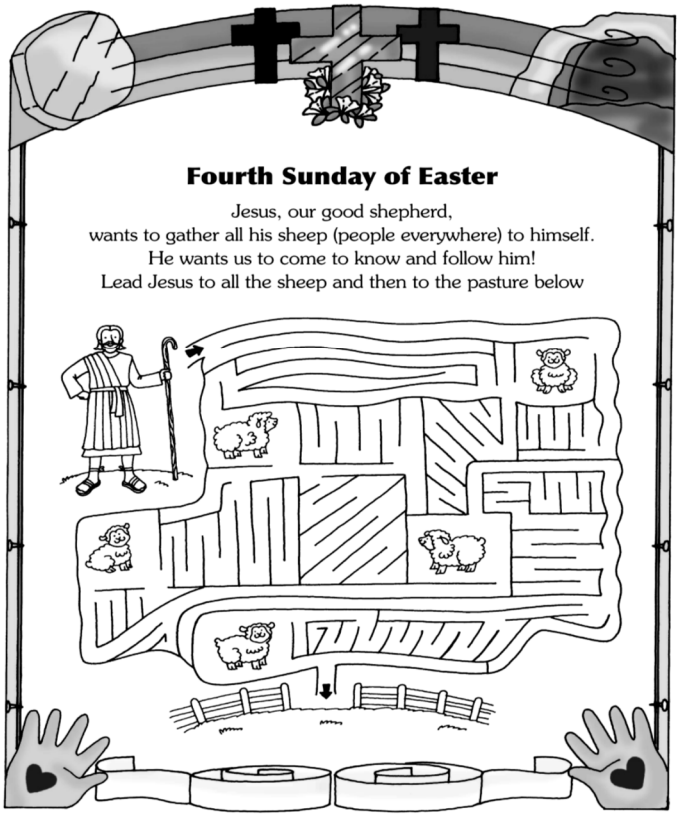
God's Word for Children



Fourth Sunday of Easter

Jesus, our good shepherd,
wants to gather all his sheep (people everywhere) to himself.
He wants us to come to know and follow him!
Lead Jesus to all the sheep and then to the pasture below

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