

When Jesus saw the vast crowd,
his heart was moved with pity for them,
for they were like sheep without a shepherd.

MARK 6:34



Sixteenth Sunday *in Ordinary Time*

JULY 18, 2021

Feast of Faith

The Prayer Over the Offerings

In the liturgy of the 1570 Missal, this prayer was called the “secret” prayer. It was “secret” not because its content was mysterious, but because it was prayed in silence by the priest, who only recited the conclusion aloud: . . . per omnia saecula saeculorum. With the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, we again hear these rich prayers spoken aloud. They remind us to prepare ourselves for what is to happen in the Eucharistic Prayer, for it is not only the bread and wine that will be transformed.

The Prayer Over the Offerings is a prayer for transformation, an expression, in a few words, of all that we hope that the liturgy will accomplish in our lives. We ask God to accept the gifts we present, and to change us even as God hallows the bread and wine. As we listen carefully to the Prayer Over the Offerings, we are reminded of what it is that we seek in the Eucharist: to be made holy; to be drawn closer to God; to come to eternal joy, unity, peace, and salvation.

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



The Days Are Coming

Separation, isolation, and hostility are terrible things. We are, sadly, too familiar with all of them in our modern life, whether we look at world events or events in our own neighborhoods and families. All three readings today refer to these same sad human conditions.

The prophet Jeremiah describes world conditions as if the people of his time were sheep who had been scattered by poor leadership and corrupt shepherds. But “the days are coming,” he assures us (Jeremiah 23:5), when a new shepherd, a just king, will come. We meet that king in the second reading and the Gospel. Paul reminds us in the Letter to the Ephesians that all divisions can now cease in Christ Jesus, who has brought us together through his blood. In Mark’s Gospel we see Jesus himself, looking with pity on those searching for him as if they were sheep without a shepherd.

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Readings for the Week

Monday:	Ex 14:5-18; Ex 15:1bc-6; Mt 12:38-42
Tuesday:	Ex 14:21 — 15:1; Ex 15:8-10, 12, 17; Mt 12:46-50
Wednesday:	Ex 16:1-5, 9-15; Ps 78:18-19, 23-28; Mt 13:1-9
Thursday:	Sg 3:1-4b or 2 Cor 5:14-17; Ps 63:2-6, 8-9; Jn 20:1-2, 11-18
Friday:	Ex 20:1-17; Ps 19:8-11; Mt 13:18-23
Saturday:	Ex 24:3-8; Ps 50:1b-2, 5-6, 14-15; Mt 13:24-30
Sunday:	2 Kgs 4:42-44; Ps 145:10-11, 15-18; Eph 4:1-6; Jn 6:1-15

Saints and Special Observances

Sunday:	Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Tuesday:	St. Apollinaris
Wednesday:	St. Lawrence of Brindisi
Thursday:	St. Mary Magdalene
Friday:	St. Bridget
Saturday:	St. Sharbel Makhlūf



Today's Readings

First Reading — I shall gather the remnant of my flock and bring them back to their meadow (Jeremiah 23:1-6).

Psalms — The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want (Psalm 23).

Second Reading — You who were once far off have become near by the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:13-18).

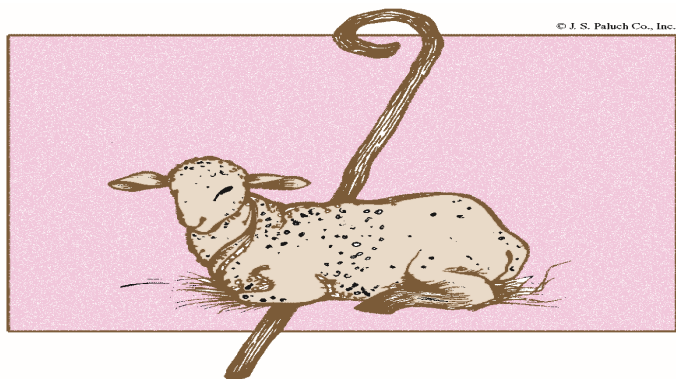
Gospel — When Jesus saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, and he began to teach them many things (Mark 6:30-34).

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**Sixteenth Sunday
In Ordinary Time
July 18, 2021**

**Behold, the days are coming,
says the Lord, when I will raise up
a righteous shoot to David.**

—Jeremiah 23:5a



Treasures From Our Tradition

“Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while” must have been chosen for this summer season by a committee eager for a vacation. For the apostles, the promise of rest was foiled by the needs of the people who discovered their hideaway and pressed them into ministry. Some people do indeed use their vacation for ministry and mission, giving an intensity of service otherwise not possible. For most of us, vacation is a time when we can grow more aware of God’s plan, and can renew the bonds of love with family and friends in times of play and leisure.

The disciples learn today that there is no place so out of the way that the life of worship and ministry is disengaged. Giving yourself to summer worship will enrich you, delight you, and give you a sense of the word of God’s progress in your heart. In today’s world, summer is the time when we are most acutely aware of the beauty of the world. Gratitude and wonder are fertile soils for God’s word to take root and prosper. Welcome the visitor today, and resolve that when you travel, you will be faithful to Sunday worship.

—James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Jesus, Our Peace

You probably know that the Jews in the first century did not particularly like the Gentiles. Some of them who became Christians still looked down on the non-Jewish Christians. In the epistle today, Paul addresses this problem by reminding them that Jesus died for all people, Jew and Gentile. And just as Jesus rose from the dead to a new life, the converts to Christianity were given a new life also. That new life of baptism joined them all to Christ, who lives in them, forgives them, and brings them peace. So why was that unity so hard to accept?

One reason is that as much as we complain about laws and regulations, many people like to live by them. We even make our own rules: "I always eat breakfast at 7:15," or "I have to read the newspaper every morning." Even though our rules may not be bad in themselves, if we get angry at anyone who interrupts our routine, those rules lead us to sin. But some of the Hebrew Christians thought that they still had to keep the laws and regulations of the old covenant. There is nothing wrong with keeping the Ten Commandments: They are simply examples of Jesus' command to love God with all your being and to love your neighbor as yourself. So why not just do that?

The problem with only keeping commandments is that we can avoid doing evil things, but still not love God or my neighbor. For example, we can avoid using God's name in vain and kick back and relax on the Sabbath, but still not really love God. We can keep from killing, robbing, or lying to our neighbor, without loving anyone. Fortunately for us, God loves us first; we need only respond to that love. And if we make the decision to love God and our neighbors, and base all our other actions on that love, we will not break any commandments, or even worry about breaking them. We will have the peace that Paul mentions in our reading, the peace that makes us all one in Christ.

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