

Suggested Opening Song: Crown Him with Many Crowns, #178

Today we hear Jesus make a wonderful promise to us and all those who follow him. He promises that we “might have life and have it more abundantly.” This is why he came, he tells the crowds. Since we know now that Jesus came to bring salvation to the world, we realize he was speaking of eternal life with God as the more abundant life we can have. Let us listen for the call of the Good Shepherd so we might follow him to the verdant pastures of abundance.

As we gather let us begin our service by professing what we believe.

Profession of Faith p. 22

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, (*bow as we say*) and by the Holy Spirit he 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.

Introductory Rite:

Greeting:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
Blessed be God forever. **Blessed be God forever.**

Penitential Rite: p. 8

Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to participate in this sacred celebration.

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. **Amen**

Opening Prayer:

Almighty ever-living God, lead us to a share in the joys of heaven, so that the humble flock may reach where the brave Shepherd has gone before.

Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Liturgy of the Word:

First Reading p. 200

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Acts 2:14A, 36-41

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.

Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm

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

R/. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

R/. 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/.**

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/.**

You spread the table before me in the sight of my foes;

you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. **R/.**

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/.**

Second Reading

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Peter

1 Peter 2:20B-25

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.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

John 10:1-10

Glory to you, O Lord

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.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection on the Word:

- Though phrases like “verdant pastures” and “restful waters” are figurative more than literal (Psalm 23:2), they suggest that following the Lord as our shepherd brings comfort and peace. However, the psalmist admits that sometimes the “right paths” lead to “dark valleys” (23:3–4). The first letter of Peter echoes this aspect, speaking of suffering when doing the right thing. For an example of coping with this, we need look no further than the Good Shepherd himself, who suffered more than can scarcely be imagined: an innocent man tortured, nailed to a cross, and left to die. From the garden of Gethsemane to the hill on Calvary, Jesus realized that the Father was by his side, giving him the courage to face the darkest of valleys. May we bear our sufferings as he did, knowing that God is always with us.
- A sheepfold in the Ancient Near East generally consisted of a low stone wall with an opening through which sheep could leave to go out to pasture or be returned to spend the night. A shepherd would lie down across the opening, acting as a gate in order to keep the sheep inside and to keep them safe from predators during the night, whether from wolves or thieves. Jesus took this one step further in calling himself the Good Shepherd and the gate itself. He not only lays down to protect his sheep like a dedicated shepherd, he will go on to fulfill his mission as our Savior by laying down his life to save his sheep.
- In our consumerist culture, having life more abundantly is interpreted as having more material goods: a bigger house, another car, a larger wardrobe, the latest and most advanced tech, and so on. But Jesus never talked about accumulating things. In fact, he told his disciples to leave their things behind. He spoke of abundance differently. He told them about God’s abundant mercy, abundant grace, and abundant love. These spiritual goods are the goods that God provides in abundance. Spiritual goods are goods that last. They cannot be lost in a natural disaster or with the loss of a job or economic fortune. They cannot be taken by a thief or a robber. Moreover, unlike material goods, spiritual goods increase when we share them with others. Forgiving someone who has hurt us does not leave us with less forgiveness to give later on. No, it can even spread through that person who has felt its power. Loving someone does not entail taking some of our love away from someone else. And loving someone may inspire that person to love more themselves. To live a life more abundantly is to recognize God’s generosity and to pass that mercy and love on to everyone we can.

Question of the Week

How can I live my life more abundantly? What specific things can I do this week to increase the love and mercy in my life?

Prayer of the Faithful:

Placing our trust in the Good Shepherd, we turn to the Father—in whom Jesus always placed his trust—to listen to our needs and the needs of the world.

- For our Holy Father, Pope Leo, and all the bishops, that they may shepherd the Church with wisdom and mercy as we all strive to hear and respond to the call of the Good Shepherd, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- That our country’s leaders may follow the example of the Good Shepherd in protecting those entrusted to their care and leading us all to a better future, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For protection from the violent storms of the season and for all those who risk their well-being to aid in rescue and recovery efforts, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For those walking through the dark valleys of addiction and for their families, that they may find the courage to place their trust in the Lord, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For women and men in our faith community who may hear the voice of the Lord calling them to be shepherds for his flock, that they may discern the kind of ministry they are being called to do, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For what else should we pray? Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- 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. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Nurturing God, you guide us on right paths, leading us to verdant pastures and restful waters. Help us to follow you and guide others to the goodness and kindness we have found in you. Grant this and all our prayers through your Son and our Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer: p. 54

Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

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; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Rite of Peace:

The sign of peace outwardly expresses a deep spiritual reality; through this sign we acknowledge Christ's presence in each other and share the peace we have received from Him. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Communion:

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The body of Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion:

Look upon your flock, kind shepherd, and be pleased to settle in eternal pastures the sheep you have redeemed by the Precious Blood of your Son.

Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Concluding Rite:

Final Blessing:

May the Lord bless us, ✠ protect us from all evil and lead us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Go in peace! **Thanks be to God.**

Suggested Closing Song: Amazing Grace, #262