

Picture a lush meadow with a large flock of sheep enjoying the fresh air and sunshine. This first Sunday in May, situated right in the middle of spring, may lend itself to such daydreams. But this is no daydream, for we indeed are part of a flock with a devoted shepherd, one who calls us each by name and invites us to have life and have it more abundantly. Let us join together today in joy and gratitude.

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

Profession of Faith: Page 102

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 for ever.

Blessed be God for ever.

Penitential Rite:

My brothers and sisters, to prepare ourselves for this celebration, let us call to mind our sins.

Lord Jesus, you are the gate for the sheep—the way to eternal life: Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you are the gate for the sheep—the way to true and lasting peace: Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are the gate for the sheep—the way to union with the Father: Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive 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, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Liturgy of the Word:

First Reading Page 32

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 Page 32

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 Page 34

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 Page 34

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:

Peter is quite blunt in addressing his audience, adding “this Jesus whom you crucified” to the end of his proclamation (Acts 2:36). Not surprisingly, they were “cut to the heart.” But Peter is able to identify with them when he instructs them to repent, for he too failed Jesus in his moment of need and then later received forgiveness. When Jesus was arrested he fled. While Jesus was being tortured and tried he denied him three times. But after the resurrection, when Jesus appeared to the apostles on the seashore, he sat Peter down and asked him if he loved him. Peter made up for the three denials with three affirmations of his devotion, at which time Jesus forgave him and gave him the responsibility of tending the flock he had gathered. Therefore, Peter knows that all the people of Jerusalem, from those who shouted “Crucify him” to the silent ones who stood mutely by, can be forgiven, for he himself has received that precious gift.

Later in this passage from John’s Gospel Jesus refers to himself as the Good Shepherd, but first he identifies himself as the gate. In that time and place villages generally had a common sheepfold with a low stone wall in which several flocks of sheep would be kept when they were not grazing. A gatekeeper would be employed to guard the sheep and monitor the shepherds. As the gate, Jesus would be able to protect all the sheep from predators and keep wayward sheep from straying. His forgiveness is the gate through which we can return to the flock, through which we can be welcomed into the pasture of eternal life.

Because sheep from several flocks were gathered in the same sheepfold, sheep had to be able to pick out the voice of their own shepherd. We sometimes struggle ourselves to distinguish the voice of the Good Shepherd from among all the voices we hear in our lives, from our friends and neighbors to those on television or online. Let us become attuned to Jesus’ voice and pray for the grace to recognize what he is calling us to do and be.

Question - How is the Good Shepherd calling me? For what do I need to seek forgiveness so I can be reunited with the flock?

Prayer of the Faithful:

Just as we know the voice of the Good Shepherd, we trust that God knows our voices and responds to our prayers, so we gather together our needs and the needs of the world.

- For the Church, that we may be a living witness to the need for repentance, individually and collectively, always returning to the Good Shepherd, who calls us each by name, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For nations at war, and for all people affected by violence, that leaders may find a way to bring justice and peace to their lands, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For those who respond to the voice of the Good Shepherd calling them to help shepherd the flock, for ordained and lay vocations among God’s people, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For all who have suffered physical, mental, or emotional trauma, that they may find relief and comfort through the assistance of others, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For all who have wandered far from the fold, that they may hear the voice of the Good Shepherd and be open to responding in hope and wonder, 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.**

Loving God, like sheep who find a home with their flock, help us to find our home in you. Grant this and all our prayers through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord.

Communion RiteThe Lord's Prayer: Page 134

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.

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 bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ! **Thanks be to God.**