

Commentary on the Readings April 30, 2023

The Fourth Sunday of Easter

The readings for today continue to express the wonders of the whole event of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, our Redeemer. Have you gotten over that already? Hope-fully, you are still thinking about those events that happened more than 2000 years ago but still amaze us even today – as they should; and we should not let them slip into the background of our daily lives ***because they are the source of eternal life***. As St. Paul tells us, “If the Resurrection had not happened, we would still be in our sins and our faith would be worthless.” (See 1st Cor: 15:17)

The **First Reading** is from the ***Acts of the Apostles (2:14a, 36–41)***. St. Peter, now emboldened by the Holy Spirit and renewed by the forgiveness of Christ, stands before a crowd and explains the meaning of what they have done in crucifying their Messiah and what must now be done to gain forgiveness. That basic truth has not changed – even in our modern “tech” age: Forgiveness is available “to all those whom-ever the Lord our God will call.” Are you being called?

The **Responsorial Psalm (23:1–6)**. This is the familiar Psalm that we call ***The Lord is My Shepherd*** from its opening line. Now you might wonder “why is this here, what has it got to do with the Resurrection?” Let me answer that by asking you a question: Have you ever wondered why God didn’t get angry with the Jews or the Romans who put Jesus to death? He could have slaughtered them all with one swoop, but didn’t. That is not His way. He leads them rather than forces them, and He will lead us if we follow His voice as He tells us in the Gospel Reading.

The **Second Reading** is from the ***First Letter of St. Peter (2:20 -25)***. This passage might be a confirmation of my explanation of the use of the 23rd Psalm above. Jesus was divinely patient when suffering for the love of all mankind to be the instrument of salvation. This was His purpose and mission; and He fulfilled it in the manner He would like us to do when we are hit with suffering of any kind because, when we offer our sufferings to God in the form of patience, it is accepted as grace.

The **Gospel Reading** is from the ***Gospel of John (10:1-10)***. Here we have another strange reading within the Easter Time but it follows along with the theme of the 23rd Psalm. Here, Jesus is telling us that He is the sheep-gate and if we are to enter heaven, we must enter through Him. For those of you who might not be aware, shepherds of that time period would corral their sheep at night for protection and they would station themselves in the gateway to prevent wolves or thieves from entering. Thus, the shepherd would put himself at risk to protect his sheep. This is an act of love of the highest kind. We are being asked to look upon Jesus as our Divine Shepherd and to follow Him is to be led to eternal life.

So, the wonders of the Easter event continue, as they should, and we should remind ourselves daily that the Divine Shepherd is calling us to be His disciple, follower or servant. Are you listening for His voice? Something to think about during your prayer time this week. **MFB**