

## Commentary on the Readings for April 21, 2024

### The Fourth Sunday of Easter

The Readings for the Fourth Sunday of the Easter Season give us a little more insight as to why Jesus went through such a horrific passion and death when, as God, He could have accomplished His mission in some other way. To see this, we must first step back and accept the fact that God is so far above our understanding that we must not compare Him to anything that mankind has or can do. With this in mind, we must admit that mankind could never fully repair the damage done by sin or disobedience, but God can give us what we are lacking in this regard.

The **First Reading** is from the *Acts of the Apostles (4:8-12)*. In this passage, Peter is explaining how he could heal a cripple in such a miraculous way. It was not by his own power, but by the power he was given from God through Jesus Christ. Peter then quotes from Psalm 118, the same Psalm as in today's Responsorial (below). He talks about Jesus being the cornerstone or keystone necessary to bring a foundation or arch together. But this is the One the Jews rejected, and their faith and teaching cannot stand without Him.

The **Responsorial Psalm (118:1. 8-29)**. By now, this Psalm should be familiar to all because it is used so much during the Easter Season. It continually praises God for giving us so great a gift as His only Son, Our Lord, who steps in to rescue us from a spiritual wandering where there is no return without the divine Shepherd; but the Jews rejected this divine Shepherd and lost their way.

The **Second Reading** is from the *First Letter of John (1 John 3:1-2)*. Here, John the Evangelist is telling us that God looks upon every man, woman and child as His own children, and what Father would not love His own children or would deny them the most important part of their life, life itself? In this passage, "life" is taken to mean eternal life; and when we reach that stage, we will be like the glorified Jesus after His Resurrection. Wow! What a gift!

The **Gospel Reading** from *John (10:11-18)* is often referred to as the "Good Shepherd" Gospel; but there is another theme within this passage that we should look at today. It is the theme of divine love (God the Father) giving us someone (Jesus) who will step into our place of punishment and accept what we could never endure. This is not unlike the good shepherd who will go to any length to save a lost sheep. Here the two themes come together in this Gospel passage. Jesus' suffering and death were not the result of getting "caught up" in a bad situation. The Father sent Him here to take our place, and He did it willingly, knowing what it would involve. This is the divine act of Love that surpasses all our understanding.

Isn't it comforting to know that we have someone who will look out for us and come after us if we get lost or misguided? But we must do something to make that connection. We must know His voice in prayer and be obedient to it. So you are hereby challenged to spend some time in

private prayer in an attempt to get to know or recognize the voice of the divine Shepherd when He calls to you. Something to think about during your prayer time this week!

**MFB**