



# LIVING THE GOSPEL



**4th Sunday of Easter  
April 26, 2026**

**Theme: "The sheep follow Him, for they know His voice."**

---

## **Gathering Prayer**

**Facilitator:** 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.

**All:** Amen.

## **Exploring the Word**

### **Gospel Reading: John 10:1-10**

<sup>1</sup> Jesus said: 'I tell you most solemnly, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate, but gets in some other way is a thief and a brigand. <sup>2</sup> The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock; <sup>3</sup> the gatekeeper lets him in, the sheep hear his voice, one by one he calls his own sheep and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> When he has brought out his flock, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> They never follow a stranger but run away from him: they do not recognize the voice of strangers.'

<sup>6</sup> Jesus told them this parable but they failed to understand what he meant by telling it to them. <sup>7</sup> So Jesus spoke to them again: 'I tell you most solemnly, I am the gate of the sheepfold. <sup>8</sup> All others who have come are thieves and brigands; but the sheep took no notice of them. <sup>9</sup> I am the gate. Anyone who enters through me will be safe: he will go freely in and out and be sure of finding pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full.'

### **Gospel Focus**

In one of his seven "I am" statements in John's Gospel, Jesus asserts that he alone is the gate and the shepherd. In this extended metaphor, Jesus speaks of a gatekeeper and a shepherd in contrast to thieves and robbers—a dichotomy characteristic of Jesus' teaching in John. The imagery of "strangers" and bad shepherds is taken up from the prophetic tradition, as Jeremiah and others condemn the wayward kings of Judah. The Pharisees present do not understand what Jesus is saying, perhaps because it's at least partially directed at them and not their religious leadership. In contrast, the good shepherd leads his sheep to pasture, away from those robbers and thieves who would harm them. Jesus' way is not among many, but it is *the way*. Those who recognize the voice of Jesus and follow through the gate will find the promised pasture—eternal life in communion with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

## **Gospel Reflection**

On an old television quiz show called, *Let's Make a Deal*, contestants could choose to trade a modest prize for a chance at a grand prize. Suspense built as they picked door number one, door number two, or door number three. Only one door had the big prize—a trip, a car, or a bunch of money. The other two concealed a “zonk,” or gag prize. Sometimes a contestant gets lucky and choose the door with a big prize.

In today's gospel, Jesus speaks of himself as the door that leads to the most desirable gifts. Unlike the quiz designers, who for their own gain might deliberately try to mask the location of the grand prize, Jesus shows himself openly to be the gateway, and declares his desire for all to choose this door.

At the beginning of the reading, Jesus speaks about himself as the shepherd of the sheep who enters the sheepfold properly, through the gate. He contrasts himself to the thief or the robber who scrambles into the sheepfold some other way, and who will have no success in getting the sheep to follow him out. The thief is a stranger and the sheep will run away from him, they do not recognize his voice. Later in this chapter of John's Gospel, Jesus elaborates further the image of himself as the Good Shepherd, but in today's gospel the focus is on himself as the gate for the sheep.

An important aspect of this image is that the gate swings in two directions. Not only do Jesus' followers come into the sheepfold through him but they are also led out by him. All who are led him by him find in the embrace of the believing community a place of refreshment and rest, a space where wounds can be healed, and where all can be nourished by the word and at the table. But whoever enters is also led out to pasture, the verdant space of mission. Jesus is the gate that opens in and out.

Later in the gospel, the image of the open gate takes another form. Jesus' open side, pierced by the soldiers lance (19:34), also beckons us to enter, so that we can then go out in the power of his risen life. All who enter into his way of life, which offers the most forgotten and downtrodden verdant pastures of plenty, risks reprisals from those who try to enter another way.

The open tomb on Easter morning completes the image. The gates of death have been breached by the One who came so that all “might have life and have it more abundantly” (10:10). The door now lies wide open for all. The invitation to enter through Jesus and his way of life is difficult for some to accept. The Pharisees, representing those who choose not to understand, do not accept Jesus' invitation to come in and go out with him and through him. They think there is another way or around the gate. But there is no trick to choosing the correct door. It stands wide open before us.

## **New Testament links**

### **First Reading — Acts 2:14, 36-41**

<sup>14</sup> On the day of Pentecost Peter stood up with the Eleven and addressed the crowd in a loud voice:

<sup>36</sup> ‘The whole House of Israel can be certain that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ.’

<sup>37</sup> Hearing this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the apostles, ‘What must we do, brothers?’ <sup>38</sup> ‘You must repent,’ Peter answered ‘and every one of you must be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> The promise that was made is for you and your children, and for all *those who are far away, for all those whom the Lord our God will call to himself.*’ <sup>40</sup> He spoke to them for a long time using many arguments, and he

urged them, 'Save yourselves from this perverse generation.' <sup>41</sup> They were convinced by his arguments, and they accepted what he said and were baptised. That very day about three thousand were added to their number.

### **Responsorial Reading — Psalm 23:1-6**

***R: The Lord is my shepherd: there is nothing I shall want.***

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.  
Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose.  
Near restful waters he leads me, to revive my drooping spirit. **(R)**

He guides me along the right path; he is true to his name.  
If I should walk in the valley of darkness no evil would I fear.  
You are there with your crook and your staff; with these you give me comfort. **(R)**

You have prepared a banquet for me in the sight of my foes.  
My head you have anointed with oil; my cup is overflowing. **(R)**

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life.  
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for ever and ever. **(R)**

### **Second Reading — 1 Peter 2:20-25**

<sup>20</sup> ...The merit, in the sight of God, is in bearing punishment patiently when you are punished after doing your duty.

<sup>21</sup> This, in fact, is what you were called to do, because Christ suffered for you and left an example for you to follow the way he took. <sup>22</sup> He had not done anything wrong, and *there had been no perjury in his mouth.* <sup>23</sup> He was insulted and did not retaliate with insults; when he was tortured he made no threats but he put his trust in the righteous judge. <sup>24</sup> He was *bearing our faults* in his own body on the cross, so that we might die to our faults and live for holiness; *through his wounds you have been healed.* <sup>25</sup> You had *gone astray like sheep* but now you have come back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

### **Catechism of the Catholic Church**

**754.** "The Church is, accordingly, a *sheepfold*, the sole and necessary gateway to which is Christ. It is also the flock of which God himself foretold that he would be the shepherd, and whose sheep, even though governed by human shepherds, are unfailingly nourished and led by Christ himself, the Good Shepherd and Prince of Shepherds, who gave his life for his sheep.(LG 6; cf. Jn 10:1-10; Isa 40:11; Ezek 34:11-31; Jn 10:11; 1 Pet 5:4; Jn 10:11-16)

**764.** "This Kingdom shines out before men in the word, in the works and in the presence of Christ."(LG 5) To welcome Jesus' word is to welcome "the Kingdom itself."(LG 5) The seed and beginning of the Kingdom are the "little flock" of those whom Jesus came to gather around him, the flock whose shepherd he is.(Lk 12:32; cf. Mt 10:16; 26:31; Jn 10:1-21) They form Jesus' true family.(Cf. Mt 12:49) To those whom he thus gathered around him, he taught a new "way of acting" and a prayer of their own.(Cf. Mt 5-6)

**2158.** God calls each one by name.(Cf. Isa 43:1; Jn 10:3) Everyone's name is sacred. The name is the icon of the person. It demands respect as a sign of the dignity of the one who bears it.

### **Sharing and Discussion**

1. What helps you recognize the voice of God in your life? What fake shepherds do you struggle to dismiss?
2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> reading encourages patience in suffering, because Christ suffered for us. Where can you grow in patience? Who (in addition to Christ himself) can you rely on in the journey of discipleship?
3. The psalmist speaks of a table spread before him and an overflowing cup, all gifts of a loving God. Where has God been generous with you? How can you be more generous with you? How can you be more generous to others.?

### **Closing Prayer**

**All:** Loving God, you shepherd us and called us into relationship with you. Hear our voice today and always as we follow you in your mission and call. We ask this through that same Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Leader:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

**All:** Amen