

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



Shepherd and Sheepgate

O God and Father of the Good Shepherd,
we pass through the gate and into the sheepfold
to the loving embrace of the Shepherd,
who is the guardian of our souls.
When we stray from the fold,
the true Shepherd comes and leads us in right paths.
Protect us, Good Shepherd, and do not let us be led astray
by the world's thieves and robbers.
Lead us from death into life.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
your Son, who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Sunday, May 11, 2014
Shepherd and Guardian

Today's Readings: Acts 2:14a, 36–41; Psalm 23:1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6 (1); 1 Peter 2:20b–25; John 10:1–10. As members of the household of God, we do not want to stray from the fold, but only want to be with our Shepherd and Guardian, the Christ. Jesus leads us in the right paths, but those who do not speak in the name of Jesus can lead the sheep astray. Jesus is at the gate, offering us abundant life, filling our hearts with warmth, rekindling our faith, and leading us on the path to the heavenly banquet.

Spring has sprung in the Northern Hemisphere, and we are wrapped in buds and flowers, surrounded by the humming bees. Sun shines out in regal splendor, praising our

God and maker, Christ our Shepherd and the Spirit of everlasting life. Seize the opportunity to gather flowers and buds, and bring them to homebound parishioners, care centers, or hospitals to be given to residents who need signs of new life in the midst of sickness and suffering.

Be assured that Jesus is the Good Shepherd because he knows us and we know him. In our homes and in the workplace let us proclaim, in word or action, Christ's Resurrection, and pray in our hearts the words of Psalm 23, so that we may bring the peace and comfort of the Good Shepherd into all the situations that need him. This is a good psalm to learn by heart so that it is always available to you.



Monday, May 12

Saints Nereus and Achilleus; Saint Pancras

These martyrs of the early Church suffered persecution and death for the sake of the Gospel. Even in the Church today, people lay down their life for the sake of the Gospel. In March 1996, the Cistercian monks of Tibhirine (Algeria) were assassinated. Their inspiring story is told in the documentary film, *Of Gods and Men*, which includes their beautiful liturgical chant. Today's Readings: Acts 11:1-18; Psalm 42:2-3; 43:3, 4 (see 3a); John 10:11-18.

Tuesday, May 13

Our Lady of Fatima

Celebrations of the appearance of Our Lady of Fatima have been part of our devotion to Mary since the apparitions took place in Portugal in 1917. No matter what title is given to our Blessed Lady, when we pray, it should always be "through" her—asking her to intercede for us with her Son. We love and esteem her both because she is the mother of Christ, but also because, as Pope Paul VI affirms in his document, *For the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary (Marialis cultus)*, she is "the first and the most perfect of Christ's disciples" (35). In today's reading from the Acts of the Apostles, the disciples are given the name "Christians" by the church in Antioch. Today's Readings: Acts 11:19-26; Psalm 87:1b-3, 4-5, 6-7 (117:1a); John 10:22-30.

Wednesday, May 14

Saint Matthias

After the betrayal of Judas, the Apostles chose Matthias to take his place. He is not mentioned in Scripture again. In the Gospel for today's feast, Jesus poses the simple command, "Love one another," and challenges us to lay down our lives for our friends. What would give you the courage and capability to do this? Today's Readings: Acts 1:15-17, 20-26; Psalm 113:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 (8); John 15:9-17.

Thursday, May 15

Saint Isidore

Isidore the Farmer is the patron saint of Madrid, Spain, and the United States National Catholic Rural Life Conference (NCRLC) <http://www.ncrlc.com/page.aspx?ID=7>. Isidore's wife, Maria de la Cabeza, also became a saint. The NCRLC works for social, economic, and spiritual development in rural America, through prayer, education, and advocacy. NCRLC assists rural people in shaping their futures and leading lives of dignity. Today's Gospel recalls Jesus, who washed the feet of his disciples. NCRLC does the same amidst the very particular challenges and opportunities facing the people of rural America. Today's Readings: Acts 13:13-25; Psalm 89:2-3, 21-22, 25 and 27 (2); John 13:16-20.

Friday, May 16

I Am the Way

We can take great comfort in the opening words of today's Gospel: "Do not let your hearts be troubled." Jesus is helping his disciples and the Church to understand that his departure does not involve a physical journey. The reference to "many dwelling places" draws on familiar Old Testament imagery about heaven, and Jesus stresses that the "way" is not a physical road, but is Jesus himself. By knowing him, they will know the Father. For the disciples and for us, the focus is no longer on physical presence, but on a more fulfilling spiritual experience of the person, Jesus Christ. Through Jesus alone do we receive our salvation. Today's Readings: Acts 13:26-33; Psalm 2:6-7, 8-9, 10-11ab (7bc); John 14:1-6.

Saturday, May 17

Light for the Gentiles

In the reading from Acts, when Paul and Barnabas boldly proclaim salvation in Christ, they are rejected by their fellow Jews, but welcomed by Gentiles. The divisions with the Jews were painful, but the growing numbers of believers among the Gentiles gave the disciples joy. Today's Readings: Acts 13:44-52; Psalm 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4 (3cd); John 14:7-14.



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Keeping the Seasons

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