

# Our Sunday Readings

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 2:14a,36-41  
 PSALM 23:1-6  
 I PETER 2:20b-25  
 JOHN 10:1-10

## Hearing his Voice



by Lorenzo Veneziano

### Prayer

*adapted from St Gregory of Nyssa*

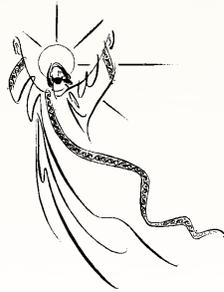
O good Shepherd,  
 it is but one sheep,  
 this entire human race,  
 whom you lift onto your shoulders.

Show me where there are green  
 pastures.

Let me know restful waters.  
 Lead me out to nourishing grass  
 and call me by name  
 so that I can hear your voice.

Through that voice calling me,  
 give me eternal life.

Amen.



Come to the aid of the afflicted,  
 pity the lowly, raise up the fallen,  
 show your face to the needy,  
 heal the sick, convert the wayward,  
 feed the hungry, deliver the captives,  
 support the weak, encourage the fainthearted.  
 Let all nations know that you alone are God,  
 Jesus Christ is your Son,  
 and we are your people and the sheep of your pasture.

— Pope St. Clement I

**ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 2:14a,36-41**

Imagine that you're in the crowd listening to Peter. He has just explained the significance of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.

1. Describe your surroundings. What do you see, hear, smell?
2. Where are you standing? Is anyone with you?
3. Do you talk privately with any of Jesus' disciples?
4. How does Peter seem to you?
5. What did you think about Jesus of Nazareth before listening to Peter?
6. What do you think of Jesus now?
7. How do the people around you react?
8. What have you wanted from God?
9. What do you hope to receive from God now?
10. What else does Peter say?
11. Do you ask any questions?
12. Do you go to be baptized? If so, what's it like? If not, why not?
13. Does everyone in the crowd choose to be baptized? Why/Why not?
14. What's the mood among those who are baptized?

**Applying the word**

15. What does this time of reflection teach you about yourself? What does it teach you about Jesus and/or God the Father?

**THE FIRST READING**

**Persuading the people**



In the passage before this one, Jews who had traveled to Jerusalem for Pentecost heard Jesus' disciples speaking in their own languages (2:5f.). Peter then proclaimed to them the

significance of Jesus' death and resurrection.

**The return of the Spirit**

Most Jews believed that God hadn't sent his people a prophet for decades, which explains the appeal of John the Baptist – at last God was speaking to his people. Peter explains that even more is happening: God is offering the Spirit to all who believe in Jesus.

Peter quotes the prophet Joel: "I will



pour out my spirit upon all mankind" and "everyone shall be rescued (i.e., saved) who calls on the name of the LORD" (Joel 3:1,5). Now at last this prophecy is being fulfilled, and those listening to Peter can share in it.

**Those far off**

In response to Peter's words, many Jews repented, that is, they completely changed what they believed about Jesus. Many were baptized, thereby becoming part of the new community that Jesus had founded during his ministry and now empowers through the gift of the Spirit.



In Genesis 12:2-3 God said to Abraham: "I will make of you a great nation... all the communities of the earth shall find blessing in you." Peter declares that this promise is fulfilled in Jesus (v.39). Now that many of Abraham's descendants

have accepted Jesus, attention will turn to the Gentiles, to *all those far off* (v.39).

**GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY**

The Gospel passage for the Fourth Sunday of Easter is always from John 10. In this chapter Jesus refers to those who believe in him as his *sheep* and calls himself the good shepherd. He declares that he protects his sheep and leads them to eternal life.



by Laura James

**THE GOSPEL READING**

**Shepherds**

In the Old Testament God's relationship to his people was readily compared to a shepherd tending his sheep (Num 27:16-17; Ps 100:3; Ez 34; Is 40:11f.). A *gatekeeper* is someone who helped watch over the sheep (Jn 10:3).

**Who's the thief?**

In the passage right before this one the Pharisees cast a blind man out of the synagogue after Jesus restores his sight. They ultimately reject Jesus, but the man who was blind believes that Jesus is from God. That man becomes one of the sheep who knows to follow Jesus.

The Pharisees turn out to be both blind and deaf to Jesus. They regard him as a thief who leads God's sheep astray. Jesus responds with imagery in which the Pharisees are the thieves. Worse, their treatment harms the sheep, whereas Jesus gives them safety, freedom, and life.

**JOHN 10:1-10**

**Reading closely**

1. What is life like for a sheep?
2. How would a thief or a robber try to steal a sheep?
3. Why might thieves want to steal a sheep?
4. How might the sheep react to a thief?
5. How do the sheep respond to the shepherd? Why?
6. How do the sheep react in the presence of strangers?
7. What's the relationship between thieves and the sheep?
8. What's the relationship between Jesus and the sheep?
9. What is life like for the sheep when they follow Jesus?
10. How is Jesus a shepherd? How is he the gate of the sheepfold?

**Applying the word**

11. What thieves and robbers have tried to steal you?
12. How do you know the difference between Jesus and a thief?
13. How have you learned to hear the voice of Jesus?
14. How readily do you follow Jesus?

