

THEME Sheep wander all over a hillside and easily become lost. As God's flock we are guided not by fear of a sheepdog but by the loving hand of a Shepherd, who leads us on our way.

PENITENTIAL RITE

- Forgive us Lord, when we have not allowed you, the Good Shepherd, to guide us along the right path. **Lord have mercy**
- Forgive us Lord, when we say 'no' to you and do not take up the challenge. **Christ have mercy.**
- Forgive us Lord, for not rejoicing enough in God our Saviour. **Lord have mercy.**

OPENING PRAYER - *Let us pray that Christ our Shepherd will lead us through the difficulties of this life.*

Almighty and ever-living God, give us new strength from the courage of Christ our Shepherd and lead us to join the saints in heaven, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

LITURGY OF THE WORD OF GOD

First Reading – Acts 2 v. 14, 36-41. *Peter's audience is moved when they hear that God has made the crucified one both Lord and Messiah. As a sign of their repentance they are all baptised in the name of Jesus.*

'On the day of Pentecost Peter stood up with the Eleven and addressed the crowd in a loud voice: 'The whole House of Israel can be certain that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ.'

Hearing this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the apostles, 'What must we do, brothers?' '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. 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.' He spoke to them for a long time using many arguments, and he urged them, 'Save yourselves from this perverse generation.' 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 Psalm - Psalm 23 (22) © 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. ©

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.

©The Lord is my Shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

You have prepared a banquet for me in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil, my cup is overflowing. ©

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

Second Reading – 1 Peter 2 v. 20-25. *This passage praises Christ as the innocent sufferer – the one who does not meet violence with violence. Through his wounds we have been healed.*

'The merit, in the sight of God, is in bearing punishment patiently when you are punished after doing your duty.

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. He had not done anything wrong, and there had been no perjury in his mouth. 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. 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. You had gone astray like sheep but now you have come back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.'

Gospel – John 10 v. 1-10 *Jesus speaks of himself as the good shepherd who knows his sheep by name and leads them to safety. He then speaks of himself as the gate: anyone who enters through will be safe.*

'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. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock; the gatekeeper lets him in, the sheep hear his voice, one by one he calls his own sheep and leads them out. When he has brought out his flock, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know his voice. They never follow a stranger but run away from him: they do not recognise the voice of strangers.'

Jesus told them this parable but they failed to understand what he meant by telling it to them.

So Jesus spoke to them again: 'I tell you most solemnly, I am the gate of the sheepfold. All others who have come are thieves and brigands; but the sheep took no notice of them. 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.

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.'

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrant: Today's Gospel shows Jesus as our Shepherd. Let us ask the help of our Lord for all who lead, protect or guide others.

Reader: Let us pray for our Bishops, who have been given the responsibility of being shepherds and for parents, teachers, priests and other leaders, that they may remember that they lead others to God by the example of their lives as much as by what they say.

We pray for Adrian & Liz Palfrey celebrating 40 years of marriage today. May they continue to grow in love and reflect that love in their family life and service of others.

We pray for all who have wandered far from the flock of God, whether through hurt or apathy. May they rediscover their faith and experience again the power of the Good News in their lives.

Let us pray for all those who hold public office: that they may not be mere hirelings who put their salaries before service to others and for doctors, nurses, healthcare workers and all key workers that the Good Shepherd may protect them from harm.

Let us pray for vocations to the priesthood: that more people may hear the call to become shepherds to the flock of Christ.

Let us pray for all who suffer in mind or body that they may know God's love for them, We pray for all suffering in the current pandemic and also for Peter Wyatt, Billy Carter, Michael Denny, Janice Ross, Jessica Mercer, Nichola Berry, Joan Hill, Elizabeth Routledge, baby Ryan and Kathleen Hales. We give thanks for the great improvement in Jenny Mayes, Rebecca Pipe and Keith Warner and pray for their continued healing.

Let us pray for all who have died in the hope of resurrection, especially those dear to us, that the Lord will welcome them into His presence. We pray for Roger Keeble and Joan Blacklock, recently departed, and Stephen Crysell, Norman Giraud-Saunders, Dulcibel Brown, Herbert Pedlar, Ruth Hamilton, Olive Footer, Fred Green, Beryl Donze and Betsy Colchester, whose anniversaries fall at this time.

Let us ask Mary who had the responsibility and joy of bringing up God's Son to pray with us for all who depend on us - **Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.**

SILENCE

All: Almighty God, we bless you for giving us your Son to be Shepherd of your people. Grant that we who are strengthened by His risen presence may follow him in our daily life. This we ask for your glory's sake. Amen.

ACT OF SPIRITUAL HOLY COMMUNION

Dear Lord, since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart. Let nothing ever separate me from you.

EASTER ANGELUS (Regina Coeli).

Joy to thee O Queen of Heaven. Alleluia!

He whom thou wast meet to bear. Alleluia!

As he promised hath arisen. Alleluia!

Pour for us to God thy prayer. Alleluia!

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary. Alleluia!

R. for the Lord has risen indeed. Alleluia! +

Fr Philip Writes: A Thought for this Week:

In what ways am I asked to serve Jesus' flock? Am I aware that Jesus has called me by name? How is Christ asking me to follow him today?

Prayer: Father, help me to remain faithful to you and to Jesus the Good Shepherd and to bring others to know and love you. Amen.

Mass Readings this week

(Divine Office – Psalter Week 4)

MONDAY: ENGLISH MARTYRS (Feast) Acts 7 v 55-60. Matt 10 v 17-20.

Intention: Persecuted Christians

TUESDAY: Acts 11 v 19-26. John 10 v 22-30. Int: Additional Curates Society

WED: Acts 12 v 24-13 v 5. John 12 v 44-50. Int: the departed (May anniversaries)

THUR: Acts 13 v 13-25. John 13 v 16-20. Int: the mission of the Church

FRI: Acts 13 v 26-33. John 14 v 1-6. Intention: the bereaved.

SAT. Acts 13 v 44-52. John 14 v 7-14, 22. Int: all suffering from coronavirus/Covid-19

Next Sunday: FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 6 v.1-7; 1 Peter 2 v.4-9; John 14 v 1-12

Although there is no Mendlesham newsletter this month, 'Fr Philip Writes' for May is available as usual on the church website at:

<https://www.stmarysmendlesham.org.uk/father-philip-writesthis-month.html> ... and as I wasn't tied by space, I have been able to include slightly more. Please note what I have written about

Christian Aid week, which starts next Sunday. I will mention that again in the next bulletin.

In the meantime, please continue to pray for one another, as I do for you – and continue to contact me about any requests for prayer or pastoral need. Tel: 01449 766359