

May 3, 2020 + 4th Sunday of Easter Reflection

Peter presents a testimony of two worlds – one corrupt and doomed and a second, which is saved.

The passage describes the crowd as being “cut to the heart” by Peter’s preaching the Good News of Salvation.

The path to salvation is clear:

- 1) Repent = change your life
- 2) Be Baptized = put on Christ and live in the Gospel

- In what ways does the message of Jesus burn in your life?
- Is your faith “on fire” or are you a “lukewarm” follower?
- Do you see the world as saved or damned?
- Can the world be saved? How?
- Peter proclaims: “Save yourselves...” but we believe that only Jesus can save. What do you think?

Peter Challenges us to take Jesus as a complete example: Bearing suffering without complaint; refraining from lying or scheming to get out of difficulties. He offers the example of Jesus to us as we face the pain and insults of the world. He challenges us to be like Jesus, not giving pain or insults.

- What causes you the greatest suffering right now?
- Does your suffering bring pain to others?
- When was the last time you were insulted? How did you respond?
- Have you ever been tempted to escape a difficult situation by using underhanded means?
- Is it right to do evil so that a good outcome will emerge?

First Reading – Acts 2: 14, 36-41

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed:

"Let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

Now when they heard this, **they were cut to the heart**, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, "What are we to do, my brothers?"

Peter said to them, "**Repent and be baptized**, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

For the promise is made to you and to your children and to all those far off, whomever the Lord our God will call."

He testified with many other arguments, and was exhorting them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added that day.

Second Reading – 1st Peter 2: 20-25

Beloved:

If you are patient when you suffer for doing what is good, this is a grace before God.

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps.

He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.

When he was insulted, he returned no insult; when he suffered, he did not threaten; instead, he handed himself over to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness.

**By his wounds you have been healed.
For you had gone astray like sheep,
but you have now returned to the shepherd
and guardian of your souls.**

This passage is a direct challenge to the Pharisees and to the common notion/idea that the rich and powerful are the ones blessed and approved by God. It is filled with cultural conflict: in Jesus' time, shepherds were despised or, at best, seen as bad people and, in the Tradition of the People, leaders never came from lower classes.

- How is this passage still relevant?
 - Are there times you are tempted to wander away from Jesus' flock?
 - What or who keeps you in the Lord's flock
 - What helps you recognize the "thieves"?
 - How do you show your trust in Jesus
 - How do you share that trust with others?
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Responsorial Psalm – Psalm 23: 1-6

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. In verdant pastures he gives me repose; beside restful waters he leads me; he refreshes my soul.

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

He guides me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; for you are at my side. With your rod and your staff that give me courage.

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

You spread the table before me in the sight of my foes; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

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

Only goodness and kindness follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for years to come.

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

Gospel – John 10: 1-10

Jesus Said:

"Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate but climbs over elsewhere is a thief and a robber.

But whoever enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.

The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice, as the shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them, and **the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice.**

But they will not follow a stranger; they will run away from him, because they do not recognize the voice of strangers."

Although Jesus used this figure of speech, the Pharisees did not realize what he was trying to tell them.

So Jesus said again, "Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep.

All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.

I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture.

A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; **I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly."**