

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) See, I have God for my help. The Lord sustains my soul. I will sacrifice to you with willing heart, and praise your name, O Lord, for it is good.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** (Ps 22)

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

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

**LECTOR:** 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.**

**LECTOR:** 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.**

**LECTOR:** 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.**

**LECTOR:** 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.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** Alleluia, alleluia! My sheep listen to my voice, says the Lord; I know them, and they follow me. Alleluia!

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) The Lord, the gracious, the merciful, has made a memorial of his wonders; he gives food to those who fear him.

Or

Behold, I stand at the door and knock, says the Lord. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door to me, I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me.

**TODAY'S READINGS** Jeremiah 23:1-6; Ephesians 2:13-18; Mark 6:30-34

**NEXT WEEK** (17th Sunday of Year B) 2 Kings 4:42-44; Psalm 144; Ephesians 4:1-6; John 6:1-15

A friend  
in God

**Prayer is Life**

In the podcast Prayer and Friendship, Redemptorist priest David Hore CSsR reflects on the wisdom of St Alphonsus Liguori and St Teresa of Avila. As Fr David eloquently puts it, "Prayer is not just a practice but a sharing of our innermost thoughts and fears with a friend who accepts us unconditionally". To listen go to [media/prayer-is-life-podcast/](https://www.majellan.media/prayer-is-life-podcast/)



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The call to  
be good  
shepherds



21 July 2024 16th Sunday Year B

Two common images presented to us in the Scriptures are those of shepherds and banquets. First and foremost, God shepherds his people Israel by caring for them like sheep, keeping them from danger, and preparing a banquet for them.

Many key biblical figures were originally shepherds such as the prophets Moses and Amos, patriarchs Abraham and Jacob, and it was the young shepherd, David, whom God called to be king of his people Israel. Moreover, it was this same King David who wrote today's wonderful psalm acclaiming "The Lord is my shepherd".

Unfortunately, the rulers of Israel ceased to act like shepherds turning to idolatry and resulting in all kinds of hostility among the different tribes. Eventually, this led to the annihilation of Israel by the Assyrians and the captivity of the people of Judah by the Babylonians.

The prophet Micah laments that he saw "Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd" (I Kings 22:17). Today, we hear God speaking through the prophet Jeremiah pronouncing "doom for the shepherds who allow the flock of my pasture to be destroyed and scattered" (Jer. 23:1).

Two further promises are made: God will punish the misdeeds of the unfaithful leaders who do not act like shepherds; and God will bring back the scattered flock under the guidance of new shepherds who will feed and care for them (Jer. 23:3-4). God also goes a step further announcing He will shepherd Israel by "gathering

the lambs in his arms and carrying them close to his heart" (Isaiah 40:11).

It is Jesus who most perfectly enacts this prophecy of the shepherd leader through his ministry of teaching and healing, his call to discipleship and communion, sharing bread with the hungry, dining with sinners and being the "Good Shepherd (who) lays down his life for his sheep" (Jn. 10:11). So, Jesus the Good Shepherd is also "the Lamb of God" giving his very life that we may live.

Much of Jesus' ministry is expressed through parables and events that emphasise table-fellowship: God's reign is likened to a great banquet where all are invited; Jesus feeds the five-thousand through the miracle of loaves and fish, and the Prodigal Son is greeted on his return with a mighty feast. We also know that Jesus provides his disciples at the Last Supper with a ritual of remembrance and thanksgiving that we re-enact when we celebrate the Eucharist.

Pope Francis consistently speaks of Christ the Good Shepherd as the model of Christian service and leadership. In particular, he calls on priests and pastors to be "shepherds living with the smell of the sheep". We need to heed St Paul who warned Christians to overcome division and hostility, repent of sinfulness, and receive the Good News of grace and peace.

All Christians are called to be shepherds of God's mercy.