

E A S T E R S U N D A Y

THIS IS THE DAY THAT THE LORD HAS MADE; LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE!

We search in faith, trying to make sense and understand what we see or do not see.

Faith is like Mary Magdalene, seeking contact with God even though a situation might seem hopeless.

GOSPEL

John 20:1-9

PRAYER

Lord God, we rejoice and give thanks for this Easter day. We are grateful for our fellow community members who have accompanied us throughout this Lenten season to open our hearts to you. We pray that when we go out into the world each day, our hearts will be open and overflowing with the same love and compassion that allowed you to lay down your life for us. Amen, Alleluia!

SPIRITUAL FOCUS: Having witnessed the excruciating pain and suffering of their friend, loved one and teacher, Mary, Peter and the first followers are fearful and most of all heart broken. Gradually they piece together and understand the scripture that he had to rise from the dead; that Easter is about God's affirmation of Jesus' self-giving for our sakes. With this understanding they go from being broken hearted, to being open hearted and ready to grow gradually into a new life. The trauma of suffering and death is overcome by the promise of the Resurrection.

How has this fuller understanding brought growth of new being in you?

LIFE FOCUS: Throughout our lives, we experience this Easter movement. We too can become traumatized and broken hearted . With the gift of faith our broken hearts can gradually break open, allowing light and life to fill us again. We sing joyfully!

This is the day that the Lord had made; let us be glad and rejoice!

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION

- *How have you come to a fuller understanding of Jesus' dying and rising over the years?**
- *What in your life still needs to be broken open and exposed to God's compassionate light?**
- *Where have you seen new life breaking open in our world recently?**

RESPONSE IN ACTION SUGGESTION

As you celebrate Easter with family and friends this week, be mindful of your open heart. Feel that overflowing love of God and extend yourself to others when it might not be easy to do so.

HYMN

Jesus Christ is Risen Today, Our triumphant Holy Day, Who did once upon the cross, suffer to redeem our loss.

Hymns of praise then let us sing, unto Christ our heavenly King, Who endured the cross and grave, sinners to redeem and save.

**Sing we to our God above, praise eternal as his love, praise him, all ye heavenly host
Father, Son and Holy Ghost.**

ALLELUIA. ALLELUIA

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

The really beautiful and noble shepherd who knows his flock intimately.
We reflect on the ultimate care of the Good Shepherd and our call to share of his flock

PSALM 23:1

“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want!”

ISAIAH 40.11

“Like a shepherd he feeds his flock, in his arms he gathers the lambs, carrying them in his bosom and leading the ewes with care,”

PRAYER

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his mercy endures forever. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord, than to trust in princes
I will give thanks to you, for you have answered me and have been my savior. The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. By the Lord has this been done. It is wonderful in our eyes. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; we bless you from the house of the Lord. I will give thanks to you, for you have answered me and have been my savior.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his kindness endures forever..

GOSPEL

John10:11-18

SPIRITUAL FOCUS: Christ, the shepherd of our souls, the ideal image of a shepherd searching for lost sheep, protector not only of sheep, but of travellers offering hospitality, and safety from enemies. His rod, a defensive weapon against animals and a support, symbolizing concern and loyalty. Christ the shepherd who gave his life to and for his sheep, the object of his love and concern, unselfishly, facing any danger to his flock is truly a Gift from God.

How do you experience God's love and protection?

LIFE FOCUS: A shepherd must love the people entrusted to him, even as he loves Christ, whom he serves. Loving means giving sheep what is truly good, the nourishment of God's truth, of God's word, the nourishment of His presence, given in the Blessed Sacrament.

Pope Benedict XVI

Perhaps modern day shepherds can be any us. (clergy, parents, teachers, mentors, police soldiers, health care workers) to those who constitute our flock, such as family, children, friends, elderly, disabled neighbors, our Parish family.

What is our responsibility to our flock and to those who are not our flock?

Are you like a good shepherd? What is the most challenging for you as a modern day shepherd?

Let us become fearless. Assume responsibility. Get to know those not in our flock.

PRAYER

Let us pray for those who want to be carried and those who must, for those we never give up on, and for those who don't get a second chance. Also for those we smother and for those who will grab the hand of anyone kind enough to..offer it.

Let us be the one to offer a hand

