

READINGS AND REFLECTION FOR THE 16th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME.

A READING FROM THE PROPHET JEREMIAH 23:1-6

'Doom for the shepherds who allow the flock of my pasture to be destroyed and scattered - it is the Lord who speaks! This, therefore, is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says about the shepherds in charge of my people: You have let my flock be scattered and go wandering and have not taken care of them. Right, I will take care of you for your misdeeds - it is the Lord who speaks! But **the remnant of my flock I myself will gather from all the countries where I have dispersed them, and will bring them back to their pastures:** they shall be fruitful and increase in numbers. I will raise up shepherds to look after them and pasture them; no fear, no terror for them anymore; not one shall be lost - it is the Lord who speaks!

'See the days are coming - it is the Lord who speaks -
when I will raise a virtuous Branch for David,
who will reign as true king and be wise,
practising honesty and integrity in the land.
In his days Judah will be saved and Israel dwell in confidence.
and this is the name he will be called: The Lord-our-integrity.'

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 22(23)

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

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

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

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF ST PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS 2:13-18

In Christ Jesus, you that used to be so far from us have been brought very close, by the blood of Christ. For he is the peace between us, and has made the two into one and broken down the barrier which used to keep them apart, actually destroying in his own person the hostility caused by the rules and decrees of the Law. This was to create one single New Man in himself out of the two of them and by restoring peace through the cross, to unite them both in a single Body and reconcile them with God. In his own person he killed the hostility. Later he came to bring the good news of peace, peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near at hand. Through him, both of us have in the one Spirit our way to come to the Father.

The Word of the Lord

My sheep listen to my voice, says the Lord;
I know them, and they follow me. John 10:27

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK 6:30 - 34

The apostles rejoined Jesus and told him all they had done and taught. Then he said to them, 'You must come away to some lonely place all by yourselves and rest for a while'; for there were so many coming and going that the apostles had no time even to eat. So they went off in a boat to a lonely place where they could be by themselves. But people saw them going, and many could guess where; and from every town they all hurried to the place on foot and reached it before them. So as he stepped ashore he saw a large crowd; and he took pity on them because **they were like sheep without a shepherd**, and he set himself to teach them at some length.

The Gospel of the Lord.

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REFLECTION

Many of us in the 21st Century feel we are time-poor. What makes it like that for us? We feel its consequences for our own and others' wellbeing. The Japanese word corresponding to our English expression 'too busy' has two characters. One represents the heart; the other, destruction! Surely the intentions, initiatives and power of God are not limited by our shenanigans. We have the problem. As people of faith, our human need is to grow through God's gifts in both our consciousness and in our loving response to God, others and all creation through what we spend our time doing. May we end up responding to our ongoing discernment of God's will for us. It might not be for us to go off 'in a boat to a lonely place' to learn the good news of peace. However, somewhere, somehow, we all need to find a place to be 'with him'. Too many suffer when we are like 'sheep without a shepherd'.

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