

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Year A

The Collect of the Day

O God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your people: Grant that when we hear his voice we may know him who calls us each by name, and follow where he leads; who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles 7:2-8,44-60

Stephen said: "Brethren and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran,³ and said to him, 'Depart from your land and from your kindred and go into the land which I will show you.'⁴ Then he departed from the land of the Chaldeans, and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living;⁵ yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him in possession and to his posterity after him, though he had no child.⁶ And God spoke to this effect, that his posterity would be aliens in a land belonging to others, who would enslave them and ill-treat them four hundred years.⁷ 'But I will judge the nation which they serve,' said God, 'and after that they shall come out and worship me in this place.'⁸ And he gave him the covenant of circumcision. And so Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs.

⁴⁴ "Our fathers had the tent of witness in the wilderness, even as he who spoke to Moses directed him to make it, according to the pattern that he had seen.⁴⁵ Our fathers in turn brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations which God thrust out before our fathers. So it was until the days of David,⁴⁶ who found favor in the sight of God and asked leave to find a habitation for the God of Jacob.⁴⁷ But it was Solomon who built a house for him.

⁴⁸ Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands; as the prophet says, ⁴⁹ `Heaven is my throne, and earth my footstool. What house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? ⁵⁰ Did not my hand make all these things?' ⁵¹ "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. ⁵² Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, ⁵³ you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it." ⁵⁴ Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth against him. ⁵⁵ But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; ⁵⁶ and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God." ⁵⁷ But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together upon him. ⁵⁸ Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ And as they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." ⁶⁰ And he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Psalm 23

Dominus regit me

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd; * I shall not be in want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures * and leads me beside still waters.
- 3 He revives my soul * and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake.
- 4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; * for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

5 You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; * you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

6 Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, * and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

A Reading from the first Letter of Peter 2:11-25

Beloved, I beseech you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh that wage war against your soul. ¹² Maintain good conduct among the Gentiles, so that in case they speak against you as wrongdoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. ¹³ Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. ¹⁵ For it is God's will that by doing right you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. ¹⁶ Live as free men, yet without using your freedom as a pretext for evil; but live as servants of God. ¹⁷ Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. ¹⁸ Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to the kind and gentle but also to the overbearing. ¹⁹ For one is approved if, mindful of God, he endures pain while suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is it, if when you do wrong and are beaten for it you take it patiently? But if when you do right and suffer for it you take it patiently, you have God's approval. ²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. ²² He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he trusted to him who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St. John 10:1-10

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber; ² but he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the gatekeeper opens; the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶ This figure Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷ So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not heed them. ⁹ I am the door; if any one enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.