

Sunday Readings

21st July 2024

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/.**

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul to
the Ephesians 2:13-16

In Christ Jesus, you that used to be so far apart 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. *Thanks be to God.*

Gospel Acclamation

Jn 10:27

Alleluia, alleluia!

The sheep that belong to me listen to my voice,
says the Lord,

I know them and they follow me.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mark 6:30-34

The Lord be with you. *And with your Spirit.*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer after Communion

Graciously be present to your people, we pray, O Lord, and lead those you have imbued with heavenly mysteries to pass from former ways to newness of life. Through Christ our Lord.

Collect

Show favour, O Lord, to your servants
and mercifully increase the gifts of your grace,
that, made fervent in hope, faith and charity,
they may be ever watchful in keeping your commands.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy
Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

FIRST READING

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 any more; 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. *Thanks be to God.*

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 22. R/. v.2

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

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/.**

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/.**

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/.**

The Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary Year B

The Word of God

Saint of the Week

You and I are called to draw others to faith in Jesus Christ. You and I are expected to know what that faith means in our own lives and to let that faith touch the lives of others in such a way that they also will want to believe. This desire to share with others our faith in Jesus is at the heart of the teachings of our readings today.

The Prophet Jeremiah, in the first reading today, is clear that we must never mislead others. Perhaps this has made us not want to share our faith because of the fear of sharing incorrectly. For most of us, however, it is not this fear of sharing incorrectly that stifles our desire to share our faith. Rather, it is a lack of interest at times or a sense that religion is a truly private affair or simply that I don't have much faith.

The Letter to the Ephesians, the second reading today, reminds us that Jesus came and preached peace to those who were far off and peace to those who were Jesus is calling each one of us. Let us open our ears and our hearts and respond to Him.

The Gospel of Mark today points out that even Jesus got tired of the constant crush of people. He suggests to his close followers that they go off and pray, but when they arrived to the place where they hoped to pray, the people had arrived before them. For anyone in ministry today, this scene evokes a reality that happens regularly. Just when a person thinks that he or she will have a little time for themselves for prayer or reading or relaxing, something comes up and takes away that lovely thought and replaces it with a concrete need to minister!

Today then we want to reflect in our hearts on these realities. God calls each one of us. Some are leaders but all are called to be faithful. Following Jesus and doing His will may often take away the comfortable aspects of our lives. We are called to respond to all who ask us, not just to those who leave us comfortable in our response. How quickly our world would change if all of us who follow Christ would preach in His name and be faithful to all that He asks of us! May it be so!



Monday 22nd July 2024

St Mary Magdalene

Mary of Magdala was healed of “seven devils” by Jesus. She ministered to him in Galilee and was present at his crucifixion. She was in the group of women who were the first to discover the empty tomb, and it was to her that the risen Jesus first appeared.



The Western tradition is that Mary Magdalene is also “the woman who was a sinner” and the sister of Martha and Lazarus of Bethany. There is no evidence either way, and the tradition is tenuous enough for even such

authorities as St Ambrose to hold, with the East, that they are three different people. It seems, therefore, that although the Western tradition is to be respected and is a real inspiration, it may not necessarily be historical. This kind of ambiguity is inevitable in a religion such as Christianity, which is founded on definite historical events rather than myths which can be adjusted into logicity. We need not worry about it too much: if it had been harmful to us to celebrate the tradition of heroic penitence, the Holy Spirit would not have allowed it.

Even without the extra tradition, Mary Magdalene is a unique and important character in the story of the Resurrection, chosen by Christ as one of the first witnesses of the event that changed the world.

Prayer of the Week

Erasmus' Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ,
you have said that you are the way, the truth, and
the life.

Suffer us not to stray from you
who are the way,
nor to distrust you
who are the truth,
nor to rest in anything other than you,
who are the life

Teach us by thy Holy Spirit, what to believe, what to
do, and where to take our rest.

We ask it for Thy own Name's Sake.
Amen