

First Reading: Acts 13:14,43-52

Response: **"We are his people, the sheep of his flock"** (Ps.99:3)

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 99:1-3,5

Second Reading: Apocalypse 7:9,14-17

Gospel: John 10:27-30

The Risen Lord is with us in many ways. We see him as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep. In the Apocalypse, he is the Lamb that was slain. With him we are one with the Father, Yahweh our God.

Being with Christ is the greatest experience of life. Paul and Barnabas urge the Christians **"to remain faithful to the grace that God has given them"** (Acts 13:43) and to be **"a light for the nations"** (Acts 13:47), **lumen gentium, φως εθνων (phos ethnon)**. Phos (light) is origin of the word photo. A Christian being a light of the nations is like a photo-copy of Christ.

Their light shone so that **"almost the whole town gathered to hear the word of God"** (Acts 13:44). Opposition is mentioned, such as rejection by Jews but it was great success with the gentiles and **"the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit"** (Acts13:52).

In your prayer of thanksgiving, for what are you most grateful? **"Indeed how good is the Lord, eternal his merciful love"** (Ps.99:5). Israel recognizes God in its history for his *Hesed we'Emeth, חַסֵּד וְאֱמֶת*, his steadfast love and faithfulness, from generation to generation.

The relationship of Israel with God is to be for all people. **"Cry out with joy to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness"** (Ps.99:1). All are called to be **"his people, the sheep of his flock"** (Ps.99:3) but it has special meaning for the Christian, by Baptism, bound to the Trinity, made **"a chosen race, a holy nation, people of his own"** (1Pt.2:9).

We see the People of God, facing great trials and temptations, and being cleansed by the blood of the Lamb. **"The One who sits on the throne will spread his tent (miShekano) over them"** (Apoc.7:15), i.e. the **Shekinah**, powerful presence of God is with them.

There will be no more trials, weeping and suffering. Jesus Christ, **"the Lamb will be their shepherd and he will lead them to springs of living water"** (Apoc.7:17), eternal life.

In the Gospel, the Good Shepherd's name is *ישוע*, Yeshua', salvation, Jesus, who gives us eternal life. **"I give eternal life to the sheep that belong to me"** (Jn.10:28). And **"the sheep that belong to me listen to my voice (oves meae vocem meam audiunt)"** (Jn. 10:27).

Being with the Good Shepherd is to be with God. **"The Father and I are one"** (Jn. 10:30).

Reflect upon how the Lamb of God is the Good Shepherd. (**Gospel: John 10:27-30**).

When we "behold the **Lamb of God**" at the altar, we see the good shepherd who died for us.

The Gospel **Teaching** is that the Good Shepherd is God's gift to us. We the sheep are God's gift to the Shepherd. **"The Father gave them to me"** (Jn. 10:29).

As Christ, the Good Shepherd laid down his life for us, we are to shepherd one another and guard each other from contemporary wolves. (**Witness**)

FOR THE CHILDREN

Read and discuss the Gospel with the children about the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10:27-30).

At which parts of the Mass do we call Jesus the Lamb of God? (Liturgy)

Explain why Jesus, the Good Shepherd, is also called the Lamb of God. (Teaching)

The Good Shepherd made sacrifices. **What are your sacrifices, especially during Lent?**

FOR TEENAGERS (*Christian Praxis*)

Name the Present Action: **What does Jesus as Good Shepherd and Lamb mean?**

Your Story and Vision: In what ways have you experienced Christ in your life?

Church's Story and Vision: Give Church teaching on the roles of Christ as Saviour as Good Shepherd and sacrificial Lamb.

Church's and Your Vision: **How to work with the Lord in the building of his Kingdom?**

RCIA

Sheep know the shepherd by his voice. The voice of the Good Shepherd is the word of God. **"And the Word was made flesh"** (Jn. 1:14). In some African languages such as Zulu, 'voice' and 'word' is the same thing 'izwi.' The word identifies with the living voice of the one who speaks it. "*Ngijezwa izwi likaNkulunkulu*" i.e. "I hear the Word of God" is exactly the same as saying "I am listening to God's voice." This is what happens when we read the **Scriptures**, celebrate **liturgy**, study Church's **Teaching**, and see Christ in others, **Witness**.

LIFE EXPERIENCE

Someone passed this poem onto me:

I was shocked, confused and bewildered
As I entered Heaven's door,
Not by the beauty of its all,
Nor the lights of its décor.

But it was the folks in Heaven
Who made me sputter and gasp—
The thieves, the liars, the sinners,
The alcoholics and the trash.

There stood the kid from seventh grade
Who swiped my lunch money twice.
Next to him was my old neighbor
Who never said anything nice.

Herb, who I always thought
Was rotting away in hell,
Was sitting pretty on cloud nine,
Looking incredibly well.

I nudged Jesus, 'What's the deal?
I would love to hear your take.
How'd all these sinners get up here?
God must've made a mistake.'

'And why's everyone so quiet,
So sombre – give me a clue.'
'Hush, child,' He said, 'they're all in shock.
No one thought they'd be seeing you...'

LITTLE ANGELINA

"What was God doing at the throne?" Angelina asked me when I walked in the door. I scratched my head for a theological answer. "He sat on it," was her answer. It seems common sense can be more practical than theology.

IMPORTANT: Paul's early apostolic ministry.

The first reading portrays Paul, on his first missionary journey, entering a synagogue. What happens in a synagogue service, *shul*? The *Shema* is recited (*Deut.6:4*), then certain prayers follow, after which are readings, first from the Law (*Torah*), then from the Prophets, and finally a sermon. It is the synagogue leader who decides who is to lead the service and give the sermon. Paul was initially well-received with his background and experience. Soon however, the Jews began closing the doors to him because he spoke of Jesus as the Messiah. In fact, they ended up hating him and throwing him out of town. It became clear to Paul to focus more on his mission to the gentiles.

Watchword: "*The disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit*" (*Acts 13:52*).

Hebrew: והתלמידים מלאו שמחה ורוח הקודש

Vehatalmidim mal'u simḥah veRuah haQodesh.

Greek: Οι τε μαθηται επληρουντο χαρας και πνευματος Αγιου.

Hoi te mathetai eplerounto charas kai Pneumatos Hagiou.

Latin: Discipuli quoque replebantur gaudium, et Spiritu Sancto.

Portuguese: E os discipulos estavam cheios de alegria e do Espirito Santo.

Spanish: Y los discipulos estaban llenos de gozo y del Espirito Santo.

French: Les disciples, etaient remplis de joie et du Saint-Esprit.

German: Die Jünger aber wurden erfüllt von Freude und Heiligem Geist.

Afrikaans: Die gelowiges was vol blydschap en vol van die Heilige Gees.

Zulu: Abafundi kodwa bagcwala intokozo noMoya Ocwebileyo.

Xhosa: Basala abalandeli bakaYesu bezele luvuyo nanguMoya oyiNgcwele.

Sotho: Ha e le barutuwa bona ba tlala thabo le Moya o Halalelang.

Irish: Agus lionadh na deisceabail le hathas, agus leis an Spiorad Naomh.