

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

Pause - and look up at the assembly

“Woe to the shepherds
who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!”
says the Lord.

“Therefore,” thus says the Lord, the God of Israel,
“concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people:
It is you who have scattered my flock,
and have driven them away,
and you have not attended to them.

“So I will attend to you for your evil doings,”
says the Lord.

“Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock
out of all the lands where I have driven them,
and I will bring them back to their fold,
and they shall be fruitful and multiply.

I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them,
and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed,
nor shall any be missing,” says the Lord.

“The days are surely coming,” says the Lord,
“when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch,
and he shall reign as king and deal wisely,
and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety.

And this is the name by which he will be called:

“The Lord is our righteousness.”

PAUSE for **THREE** seconds

then look up at the people

and say SLOWLY:



The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING – 16 B

A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

Brothers and sisters:

Now in Christ Jesus

you who once were far off have been brought near
by the blood of Christ.

For he is our peace;

in his flesh he has made both Jews and Gentiles into one
and has broken down the dividing wall,
that is, the hostility between us.

He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances,
that he might create in himself

one New Man in place of the two, thus making peace,
and might reconcile both groups to God in one body
through the Cross,
thus putting to death that hostility through it.

So Christ Jesus came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off
and peace to those who were near;
for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father.

Pause for **THREE** seconds

then look up at the people

and say SLOWLY:



The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING – 16 B

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 returned from their mission.

They gathered around Jesus,
and told him all that they had done and taught.

He said to them,

“Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.”

For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat.

And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves.

Now many saw them going and recognized them,
and they hurried there on foot from all the towns
and arrived ahead of them.

As Jesus went ashore, he saw a great crowd;
and he had compassion for them,
because they were like sheep without a shepherd;
and he began to teach them many things.



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURES IN DEPTH

Reading I: Jeremiah 23:1-6

The first reading is suggested by the observation in today's gospel that Jesus had compassion on the multitude "because they were like sheep without a shepherd."

In ancient Israel, as in other cultures of the ancient Near East, the figures of king and shepherd were very closely associated. David the shepherd boy was taken from among the flock to be king over the united kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

Although we should not sentimentalize the idea of shepherding (as talk of the "gentle Shepherd" might tempt us to do, although the Hebrew word for "shepherd" also means "to rule"), it is still true that the image of shepherd contains within it the notion of feeding and providing for the flock—in fact, much of what we associate with pastoral care.

Jeremiah, writing toward the end of the reign of Zedekiah just before the final captivity in 587, looks back over recent reigns and condemns the last kings of Judah as shepherds who have misgoverned their flock.

The denunciation concludes with the promise of a "righteous Branch" ("The Lord is our righteousness" is a play on the name Zedekiah). This scion of the house of David will be the Messiah, the ideal king.

Jeremiah, of course, was thinking purely in historical terms—of the restoration of the Davidic monarchy after a period of exile. But his words kindled a hope in Israel which, in the perspective of Christian faith, finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus the Christ.

Responsorial Psalm: 23:1-3, 3-4, 5, 6

The first two stanzas of this psalm, the most familiar in the psalter, picture YHWH as shepherd, while the third and fourth stanzas portray him as host at a banquet in the temple.

The royal theology of Judah found no contradiction between the notion that both YHWH and the king were Israel's shepherd, for the king was the sacramental embodiment of YHWH's kingship and shepherdhood.

Christian faith sees the same dual notion fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

He is the one through whom God exercises his eschatological rule and shepherds his people. The second stanza suggests that it is particularly at the Eucharistic banquet that Christ exercises his shepherding function.

Reading II: Ephesians 2:13-18

This passage is the theological core of the letter to the Ephesians. Looking back over the career of Paul, the Deutero-Pauline writer contemplates the results of the Apostle's work.

Jew and Gentile have been brought together into a single community, the body of Christ. Christ on the cross (that is, by his death as the event of salvation) has fulfilled and abolished the law, not as moral demand, but as the way of salvation. Christians now keep the law *because* they have been saved by grace, not *in order* to earn salvation.

Now both Jew and Gentile have access in one body to the Father. “Access” is a liturgical term denoting the approach to God in worship.

Note the Trinitarian character of the final sentence: through Christ in one Spirit to the Father. Note, too, that verse 13 alludes to [Isaiah 57:19](#), while verse 17 cites and provides its Christian application. This indicates the sermonic quality of Ephesians.

Gospel: Mark 6:30-34

This excerpt is highly composite. Verses 30-33 form a link between the mission of the disciples and the feeding of the multitude. They bear clear signs of Mark’s editorial work.

Verse 30 points back to the mission of the Twelve (here only in Mark are the Twelve called “apostles,” a term that was not originally a title but functional). Verse 31, often used in connection with retreats, points forward to the feeding. Verse 32 introduces a favorite theme of Mark’s—teaching given in secrecy to the Twelve, though the fulfillment of this intention is delayed until chapter 8 (Caesarea Philippi).

Verse 34 is the beginning of a new pericope, the feeding of the multitude (cf. the variant in [8:2](#)). The reference to the shepherd motif is probably pre-Markan and gives a special emphasis to the miraculous feeding. But the note about teaching looks redactional; Mark frequently emphasizes Jesus’ teaching activity without giving the content of his teaching.

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