

FIRST READING – B 4 EASTER

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

When Peter and John were speaking to the people
about the resurrection of Jesus,
the captain of the temple arrested them and placed them in custody.
The next day the rulers, elders and scribes assembled.
When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired,
“By what power or by what name did you do this?”
Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them,
“Rulers of the people and elders,
if we are questioned today
because of a good deed done to someone who was sick
and are asked how this man has been healed,
let it be known to all of you,
and to all the people of Israel,
that this man is standing before you in good health
by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,
whom you crucified,
whom God raised from the dead.
This Jesus is ‘the stone that was rejected by you, the builders;
it has become the cornerstone.’
There is salvation in no one else,
for there is no other name under heaven
given among human beings
by which we must be saved.”

Pause for **THREE** seconds
then look up at the people
and say SLOWLY:



The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING – B 4 EASTER

A reading from the first letter of Saint John.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

Beloved:

See what love the Father has given us,
that we should be called children of God;
and that is what we are.

The reason the world does not know us
is that it did not know him.

Beloved, we are God's children now;
what we will be has not yet been revealed.

What we do know is this:
when he is revealed, we will be like him,
for we will see him as he is.

Pause for **THREE** seconds
then look up at the people
and say SLOWLY:



The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING – B 4 EASTER

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord

Jesus said:

“I am the good shepherd.
The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.
The hired hand, who is not the shepherd
and does not own the sheep,
sees the wolf coming
and leaves the sheep and runs away —
and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.
The hired hand runs away
because a hired hand does not care for the sheep.
I am the good shepherd.
I know my own and my own know me,
just as the Father knows me and I know the Father.
And I lay down my life for the sheep.
I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold.
I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.
So there will be one flock, one shepherd.
For this reason the Father loves me,
because I lay down my life in order to take it up again.
No one takes it from me,
but I lay it down of my own accord.
I have power to lay it down,
and I have power to take it up again.
I have received this command from my Father.”



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURES IN DEPTH

Reading I: Acts 4:8-12

In the Book of Acts we can sometimes discern a pattern similar to that of the Fourth Gospel. A miracle takes place and is followed by a discourse expounding the theological significance of the miracle. Our present passage occurs after the healing of the crippled man in chapter 3.

Peter moves from the immediate fact of the healing to a proclamation of the thing signified, namely, the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected.

The affinity between the sign and the thing signified is more obvious in the Greek than in the RSV translation—"healed" in verse 9 and "salvation" in verse 12 come from the same Greek verb, *sothenai*, "to be saved" or "to be made whole."

Note that Luke has once more incorporated into a speech of his own composition some very primitive material.

This consists of (1) the "no-yes" interpretation of the cross and the resurrection (*you* crucified Jesus—*God* raised him); (2) the use of the passage about the stone rejected from Ps 118:22, one of the earliest pieces of Christian apologetic.

The "name" of Jesus was probably used by early Christian exorcists as a formula to heal sick people. Luke takes up this formula of exorcism and applies it to "healing" in an ultimate, salvific sense.

It is in the "name" of Jesus that eschatological salvation is made available, and in that name alone. In other words, eschatological salvation comes solely as a result of the death and resurrection of Christ.

Responsorial Psalm: 118:1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 28, 29

Selections from Psalm 118, as we have seen before, are frequently used in the Easter season. This particular selection highlights the "stone" testimony quoted in Peter's apologia in the first reading.

It has been suggested by Old Testament scholars that this psalm was originally used at the annual enthronement festival in Israel. As the king entered the temple in triumph and mounted the steps of the throne, "it was as if a new and highly decorative coping stone had been added to the cornice, which the builders had failed to beautify completely" (Barnabas Lindars).

The exaltation of Jesus is the eschatological fulfillment of the enthronement festival in ancient Israel. He is the new coping stone of the eschatological community.

Reading II: 1 John 3:1-2

In his earthly life our Lord had admitted his disciples to the privilege of calling God "Abba, Father." This same privilege was made available to those who were baptized after the resurrection ([Romans 8:15](#); [Galatians 4:6](#)). The language used here ("Father," "children of God") is derived from the same background.

The “world”—that is, human society organized in opposition to God—did not know “him,” that is, probably Christ rather than God (so Dodd). This is reminiscent of Paul’s statement that the rulers of this *world* did not know Christ, for otherwise they would not have crucified the Lord of glory ([1 Cor 2:8](#)).

In Johannine thought, the Jews who crucified Jesus similarly symbolize the unbelieving world that rejects the revelation of God in Christ. This links the second reading with the first reading, with its assertion that “you” (Israel) crucified Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Next another Johannine theme appears. As the world hated the Revealer, so it will hate the believers (see [John 15:18](#)). The world can see no more in the Church than one religious organization among others.

It can classify the Church sociologically, and legitimately so on the world’s own level. But it cannot perceive in the Church the eschatological community that it is. For its true character is as yet hidden: “it does not yet appear what we shall be.”

It is only when Christ appears at the parousia that we shall see him as he is—the Son of man exalted in his glory. Only then shall we be like him, transformed into the same eschatological glory that has been his since his resurrection.

Gospel: John 10:11-18

In series A, B, and C we read an excerpt from the good shepherd discourse (John 10) on the fourth Sunday of Easter, which replaces the old Good Shepherd Sunday (second Sunday after Easter). The present passage forms the interpretation of the second of the two sheep parables (the first is John 10:1-3a; the second, that interpreted here, is 10:3b-5).

Two applications of this second parable are given (vv. 11-13, 14-18), each headed by the same declaration, “I am the good shepherd” (vv. 11, 14). Each interpretation makes the basic point that the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep (vv. 11b, 15b), and then proceeds to give this point a different actualization in the life of the Church.

The first application connects this with the defense of the sheep against “wolves,” a traditional image for false teachers, which the evangelist probably applies to the Gnostics.

The second application speaks first of the inner life of the Church (the shepherd knows the sheep by name) and then of the Church’s missionary outreach; the other sheep would be the Gentiles.

The same themes, as we have seen, recur in the final paragraph of the reading from Acts. Clearly we have here a theological concern of Luke.

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