

Order for Liturgy of the Word

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Entrance Antiphon: Leader

The merciful love of the Lord fills the earth; by the word of the Lord the heavens were made, alleluia.

Cf. Ps 33 (32): 5-6



In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Sisters and Brothers, God invites us to hear his Word. Let us bless him for his goodness. Blessed be God forever. **Response:** Blessed be God forever.

Introduction: Leader

We gather today to celebrate the Lord's Day. One with our sisters and brothers and with the entire Church, we will listen to God's Word and join in prayer. As we prepare to hear of God's love in Christ, let us acknowledge that the Lord is the source of pardon and strength.

All: *The Confiteor*

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

The Gloria

Glory to God in the highest. And on earth peace to men of good will. We praise You. We bless You. We adore you. We glorify You. We give You thanks for Your great glory. Lord God, heavenly King, O God the almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only-begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have

mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Leader: Let us pray

Almighty ever-living God, lead us to a share in the joys of heaven, so that the humble flock may reach where the brave Shepherd has gone before. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

For today's scriptural readings go to: usccb.org or cut and paste:

<http://cms.usccb.org/calendar/index.cfm?showLit=1&action=month>

First reading

Responsorial Psalm

Second reading

Gospel acclamation:

R. Alleluia, alleluia

I am the good shepherd, says the Lord; I know my sheep, and mine know me.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel proclamation

All—Profession of Faith:

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit
was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified
under Pontius Pilate, he suffered
death and was buried, and rose
again on the third day in accord-
ance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated
at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the
giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the
Son,

Who with the Father and the Son is
adored and glorified, who has spoken
through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism
for the forgiveness of sins and I look
forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of the Faithful—Leader

Introduction: Confident that God hears the prayers of those who cry out in faith, we offer our prayers:

Intentions: For government leaders: that God will give them insight and courage as they develop plans to preserve the health, wealth, and safety of society; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For a listening heart: that we, who have been called by name, may hear the voice of the Good Shepherd and respond confidently to God's invitations; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who are unemployed: that God will help them to find the resources they need and open new opportunities for them to use their gifts; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who have strayed from the Good Shepherd; may they recognize and respond to the beauty and goodness of Jesus during this extraordinary time and so return to him with thankful hearts; we pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

For the sick: may they experience relief as we lift them up on the shoulders of the good and faithful Shepherd; and may those who have died - be carried home to rest in the peace of Christ; we pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Prayer: Loving Father, from all useless anxiety set us free and give us the joy and peace of knowing that your Son is with us always; leading, protecting, and shepherding us home. Sustain us in our resolve to follow him; for this and all our prayers we ask of you, through Christ our Lord, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer:

Leader: Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us:

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Leader: In the love of Christ, let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Leader: Communion Antiphon: The Good Shepherd has risen, who laid down his life for his sheep and willingly died for this flock, alleluia.

All—Spiritual Communion:

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

Leader: Prayer After Communion

Look upon your flock, kind Shepherd, and be pleased to settle in eternal pastures the sheep you have redeemed by the Precious Blood of your Son. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Blessing—making the sign of the cross:

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us, and bring us to everlasting life.

Response: Amen.

Leader: Let us go in peace, alleluia, alleluia.

Response: Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia.

On Hearing The Voice That Soothes

Inside each of us there is a deep, congenital restlessness. We are not restful beings who sometimes get restless, but restless beings who occasionally experience rest. Well-known theologian, Karl Rahner, had it right when he said that we do not have souls that get restless, but that our souls themselves are lonely caverns thirsting for the infinite, deep wells of restlessness.

Because of this we can find it difficult to concentrate during the day and to sleep at night. We go through life feeling like we are missing out on something, that life is more exciting and fulfilling for others than it is for us. Our achievements rarely satisfy us because we are always aware of what we haven't achieved, of missed chances and failed possibilities.

An analogy might help us here: we can learn something valuable, I believe, by comparing these feelings to what a baby feels, at a certain moment, in the presence of a baby-sitter in the absence of its mother. As many a frustrated baby-sitter has learned, there can come a moment, usually later in the evening, when the baby grows tired of being titillated by flashy toys, extra sweets, and the continued cooing of the baby-sitter. The baby becomes irritated, cranky, weepy, and finally disconsolate. At this point nothing will soothe its aches, except the voice and the touch of the mother herself. The baby needs to hear the mother's voice and the mother's voice alone. No attempt by the baby-sitter to replace the mother or even to imitate the mother are of much avail. The baby will not be fooled, there comes a moment when only the mother can soothe and comfort. The baby's disquiet will disappear only when she again hears the mother lovingly call her name.

It's no different for us really, as adults, in trying to come to grips with our congenital restlessness. We can distract ourselves for awhile, be titillated by flashy toys, be soothed and lulled by sympathetic voices, and momentarily even be content in the absence of our real mother. But there will come a time, usually a little later on in the proceedings when we are a bit more tired and cranky, when these things will soothe no more. We will begin to miss, in the very depths of our souls, the one voice and one presence that can ultimately bring us rest.

Of course the one voice that can soothe, the one voice that we search for among all the others, is the voice of God, the primordial Mother. Ultimately we reach a point in life when there is an ache and a sadness inside us that no one can still and comfort, other than the one who ultimately brought us to birth. Like the baby frustrated with its baby-sitter, we too need to hear our mother lovingly pronounce our names.

On the morning of the resurrection, Mary Magdala meets the newly-risen Jesus, but she doesn't recognize him. He approaches her and asks: "What are you searching for?" She explains that she is searching for the body, the dead body, of Jesus. He says just one word to her in response: "Mary." He calls her by name and, in that, she not only recognizes him, but she hears precisely what a disconsolate baby cannot hear in the voice of her baby-sitter, the voice of the mother, lovingly pronouncing her name.

In Jesus' response to Mary Magdala, we learn the answer to life's most fundamental question: what do we ache for? Ultimately all our aching is for one thing, to hear God call us by name, lovingly and individually. There comes a moment in the night for each of us when nothing will console us other than this, hearing our names pronounced by the mouth of God.

Ron Rolheiser, President, Oblate School of Theology