

ST. THOMAS INDIAN MISSION

4th Sunday of Easter
Year B
April 25, 2021

Fort Yuma, California | P. O. Box 1176, Winterhaven, CA 92283

Website: www.stthomasindianmission.org

Email: saintthomasindianmission@gmail.com

Tel: 760-572-0283

Fr. George "of the desert" Decasa
Pastor

Our Sunday Masses are now held inside the Church, on Saturdays at 4:30 PM and on Sundays at 8:30 AM.
Please come in a face mask and observe social distancing.

1st Reading: Acts 4:8-12

Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said: "Leaders of the people and elders: If we are being examined today about a good deed done to a cripple, namely, by what means he was saved, then all of you and all the people of Israel should know that it was in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead; in his name this man stands before you healed. He is *the stone rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone*. There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved."

The Word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm:

"The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone."

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes.

R.

I will give thanks to you, for you have answered me and have been my savior. The

stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. By the Lord has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes.

R.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; we bless you from the house of the Lord. I will give thanks to you, for you have answered me and have been my savior. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his kindness endures forever.

R.

2nd Reading: 1 John 3:1-2

Beloved: See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so 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 shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

The Word of the Lord.

LECTOR: Gospel Acclamation:

ALL: Alleluia, Alleluia.

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

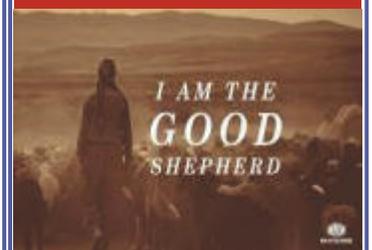
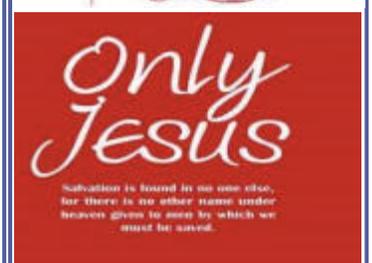
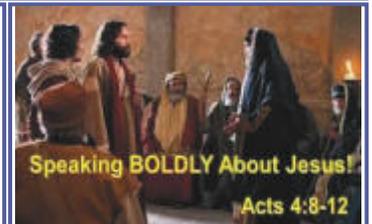
ALL: Alleluia, Alleluia.

Gospel Reading: John 10:11-18

Jesus said: "I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. A hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters them. This is because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd. This is why 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 on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. This command I have received from my Father."

The Gospel of the Lord.

**The Mystery of Faith:
Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection, you have set us free.**



REFLECTING ON THE WORD GUIDEPOSTS

This Sunday has come to be called Good Shepherd Sunday as every year on the Fourth Sunday of Easter we hear a Gospel story in which Jesus proclaims that he is the Good Shepherd.

Today is also the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. As we worship today, let us pray in gratitude for all the good shepherds in our lives, and pray as well for all those who are discerning their vocations.

A Synopsis of the message of today's readings:

The message we hear from today's readings reflects on both the *active* and *contemplative* dimensions of our Christian life, helping us to remember that the two always go together. The more we "see what love the Father has bestowed on us," the more we will be able to believe in Jesus as the Shepherd who ushers us into sharing the life of God. The more we share mind and heart with Christ, the more we will want to act in his name to make Christ and the reign of God more present in our world. Finally, realizing that the life of God that we are seeking and being offered is with the Christ who was crucified, we'll be as prepared as humanly possible for the rejection and even persecution that will surely come our way when we live a life that "chooses God and not men."

Re: Today's First Reading

Today's first reading is Peter's defense before the Sanhedrin who were upset that he was preaching that Jesus was raised from the dead. This takes place one day after Peter healed a man in the temple area who had been paralyzed from birth. (See the whole account in Acts chapter 3 to chapter 4 verse 30).

As the story goes, Peter's responses culminate with the question of choosing whether to obey God or men. As we listen to Peter defending his good deed, he says that he carried it out in the power of the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean. In other words, Peter is claiming that Christ is living and acting in him.

When Peter told the beggar, "In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean, rise and walk" (Acts 3:36), Peter put himself totally at Christ's disposal, allowing Christ to accomplish his mission through him. **The same is asked of each one of us, Christians of today, that we live a life that allows ourselves to be used by Christ to accomplish his mission.**

We remember that not long before his defense before the Sanhedrin, three times Peter had denied having anything to do with Jesus. But this time Peter does not back down. Not only does he passionately testify that the man was healed in Jesus' name, he accuses them of crucifying the Messiah, the Christ. What gave Peter the boldness he so sorely lacked on Good Friday? The first line of today's first reading gives us a clue. He was filled with the Holy Spirit who strengthened him. **The same Holy Spirit will strengthen us now in proclaiming our faith, even when it is not easy to do so.**

Re: Today's Second Reading

Today's second reading is an invitation to walk down memory lane with God. We are asked to contemplate, to take time to cherish the signs we have seen of God's love in our own lives like the religious poem "Footprints in the Sand." Doing that will lead us to the marvelous realization that we are God's beloved ones. Believing that is one of the greatest and most important acts of faith we can make.

Re: Today's Gospel Reading

To help us understand Jesus' parable of the Good Shepherd, let us look back in the Old Testament to the Book of Ezekiel. God condemned the kings and priests at the time of the prophet Ezekiel (almost 600 years before Christ) because they had no concern for the sheep, the people; they used the people only to enrich themselves. Ezekiel tells these wicked leaders: "Thus says the Lord God: I myself will look after and tend my sheep. In good pastures will I pasture them. I will give them rest, the lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal shepherding them rightly." (Ezekiel 34:11).

Jesus is the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy.

When Jesus talks about himself and the sheep, he describes the intimacy with the words – ***"I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father."*** My homily at our Mass today will focus on the intimate relationship between the Good Shepherd and his sheep.

When the Risen Lord Jesus breathes his Spirit into his disciples on Easter Sunday, Christianity is inaugurated, that is to say, **the Lord Jesus continues the task of shepherding not anymore by his physical presence in the form of a human being but by his presence in each individual person who allows the Lord's Spirit into his being.**

At our baptism we allowed the Spirit of the Risen Lord into ourselves, and we pronounced our baptismal promise to allow this Spirit to use us. Today, it is good to reflect, to ask ourselves if listening to the Holy Spirit really defines our day-to-day life, that we can honestly say that the way we live is really a proclamation that, to use the words of St. Paul: "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; in so far as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me" (Gal 2:20).

The following anecdotes may help us understand better and put into an existential reality our mission to make Christ and the reign of God more present in our world:

Once when reporters encircled Mother Teresa, one called out, "Mother, you are seventy years old! When you die, the world will be the same as it was before. What has changed after all your effort?"

Mother Teresa smiled brightly and responded, "Well, I never thought I would be able to change the world! I have only tried to be a drop of clean water in which God's love could sparkle. Does that seem little?" An attentive and emotional silence had fallen among the reporters.

She started to speak again and asked the cheeky reporter, "Why don't you try to be a drop of clean water, and then there will be two of us. Are you married?"

"Yes, Mother."

"Tell your wife as well and then there will be three of us. Have you any children?"

"Three children, Mother."

"Tell your children too and then there will be six of us. . . ."

A Jew and a Christian were arguing about the way of their religion. The Jewish man said, "You people have been taking things from us for thousands of years. The Ten Commandments, for instance."

The Christian replied, "Well, it's true that we took the Ten Commandments from you, but you can't actually say that we've kept them."

St. Francis is known to have said, "Preach Jesus, and **if necessary, use words**" or, "Witness for Christ each day, and **if necessary, use words.**" Both Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI often reminded us of this, emphasizing that "we will not argue people into following the way of Christ. Only by living it ourselves can we hope to convince people that it is the way."

**Our Bishop — Robert McElroy, invites us all to
THE DIOCESAN CELEBRATION —
A PENTECOST FOR ALL PEOPLE**

The Celebration will be held at Good Shepherd Parish (8200 Gold Coast Drive, San Diego, CA 92126) on Saturday, May 22. The outdoor Mass begins at 11 am.

Bishop McElroy with Auxiliary Bishops John Dolan and Ramón Bejarano and clergy will concelebrate this annual Mass with the diverse communities and cultures of the diocese, invoking the Holy Spirit to renew us by building unity, justice and mercy in the Body of Christ.

Everyone is welcome to this extraordinary celebration of our universal Catholic family.

This year's beautiful Pentecost celebration begins the "re-set" of our diocese and parishes as we re-engage our communities as Covid-19 restrictions continue to ease.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

CELEBRANT:

We turn now to our heavenly Father with our needs and concerns, assured that we will be heard.

LECTOR:

1) For the Church, that we may always look to Christ as the cornerstone of our faith, our world, and our lives as we live out the gospel he preached, let us pray to the Lord.

2) For bishops and pastors and all who shepherd the Church through the challenges and difficulties of the twenty-first century, that they may exercise good judgment and wisdom as they care for their flock, let us pray to the Lord.

3) For increased respect for all of God's creation, that we may treat the earth and all that is on it with love and care, let us pray to the Lord.

4) That we may all be attentive to the voice of the Good Shepherd calling us to be shepherds of the flock through ordained or lay ministry, let us pray to the Lord.

5) For those who have wandered away from the flock, for those who have been hurt, for those who cannot find a way back, that they may come to know the Good Shepherd through our compassion, let us pray to the Lord.

6) For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord.

CELEBRANT:

Loving Father, we are your children, each of us a sacred part of your family. Listen to the prayers we make through your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

A Message from Bishop McElroy:

It is vitally important that all of us receive the Covid vaccine. The Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson are safe and effective. They are fully approved for use at this moment by the teachings of our Church. And as Pope Francis has so clearly taught, receiving the vaccine is not only for ourselves as individuals. It is for everyone that we treasure, to keep them safe and healthy and bring back the joy of life to us all.

... The sooner we are all vaccinated, the sooner we will be able to return to the many joys of our lives that we have missed during this past year of suffering. The vaccines, with our continued masking and social distancing during the coming months, will bring this hateful pandemic to an end."



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\$ 887.00
Via Online: April 14 to April 20:
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