

Your Lourdes Sunday Liturgy at Home
SIXTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE CHURCH YEAR
July 18, 2021

“they need no longer fear and tremble...”
– Jeremiah 23:4

“he is our peace...”
– Ephesians 2:14

“his heart was moved with pity for them...”
– Mark 6:34

Mark opens today’s episode with the apostles reporting back to Jesus about their missionary exploits. He’d sent them out two by two and they’d just returned brimming with news of their journeys. Just as he himself was accustomed to slip away for time in private prayer (Mark 1:35), he wanted his disciples to do the same. They needed rest and he wanted to be with them – by themselves and in a deserted place.

But.....a vast crowd saw them slip away and tracked them down. They were seekers of wisdom, of healing, of comfort from burdens of sadness and guilt. And Jesus could sense their needs and was “moved with pity.” He then proceeded to teach them about “many things.” What can we be taught? Are we as hungry for Jesus’ presence as this “vast crowd”? Would we track him down to the deserted places of our world?

Today’s Gospel opens right after a period of great activity and ominous events. Jesus had rejected at home, so he went to other places and sent his disciples to preach in his name. They came back successful, but they were also burdened and frightened by the martyrdom of John the Baptist. It was time for Jesus and his friends to regroup and discern God’s will for them.

Unfortunately, not every retreat plan works out the way one would hope – not even for Jesus. God’s will became clear the moment Jesus understood the people’s need. No matter how much he would have liked time to relax, to hash it all out with his companions and to listen to them, the people’s hunger trumped his preferences.

St. Louise de Marillac, foundress of the Daughters of Charity, taught her sisters to be willing to leave their prayer to serve the poor, conscious that they were leaving God for God. Such was Jesus' intuition in this case. He had wanted to go away to discern God's will and teach his disciples; the reality was that the people's hunger revealed God's will and Jesus' response was the teaching that his disciples needed most.

Jesus looked at the crowd who had come after him and saw people who had not found what they needed in the temple or synagogue. They were hungry for more than the religious leaders of the day were offering them, and they were willing to go to great lengths to find it. No wonder he responded to them! They wanted what he had and wished to share.

On that day in Israel, Jesus received the people who came after him as sheep without a shepherd. Who are those people today? It is fairly common knowledge that the largest denomination in the United States is the Roman Catholic Church and that the second largest "religious" group in the country consists of people who have left the Catholic church. If we look at that reality in the light of today's scriptures, it will light a fire under us to reach out to those the Church has alienated – the masses of people who remain hungry in every sense of the word? Are we responding to them?

Pope Francis prophetically names some of the hungers of our world when he says:

We cannot ignore the fact that in cities human trafficking ... narcotics ... abuse ... of minors ... abandonment of the elderly ... various forms of corruption ... take place. ...What could be significant places of encounter and solidarity often become places of isolation and mutual distrust. Houses and neighborhoods ... isolate and protect [rather] than ... connect and integrate. The proclamation of the Gospel will be a basis for restoring the dignity of human life in these contexts, for Jesus desires to pour out an abundance of life upon our cities. ("Joy of the Gospel" #75)

Then, warning us against complacency, he says:

Today we are seeing in many pastoral workers, including consecrated men and women, an inordinate concern for their

personal freedom and relaxation, which leads them to see their work as a mere appendage to their life ... not part of their very identity ... the spiritual life comes to be identified with a few religious exercises which can offer a certain comfort but which do not encourage encounter with others, engagement with the world or a passion for evangelization. As a result, one can observe in many agents of evangelization, even though they pray;

- a heightened individualism,
- a crisis of identity
- and a cooling of fervor.

These are three evils which fuel one another. (“Joy of the Gospel” #78)

At the end of that paragraph Francis, could just as well have said, “These are three hallmarks of inadequate shepherds.”

So, what are we to do? First of all, pray; pray for good shepherds and for the grace and personal generosity to do our part. Then, like the daughters of Louise de Marillac, we must stand up, ready for God to send us to the hungry. Additionally, it’s time to encourage others to respond to God’s call for shepherds, to invite gifted women and men to be pastoral workers, religious or priests. We need full-time shepherds. We also need every baptized person to take part in continuing the mission of Jesus, advocating for the restoration of human dignity in our own desperately needy contexts. This will require lots of activity and trigger some ominous events, but the more we serve, the better we will get to know the Good Shepherd among us.

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Prelude: Center yourselves first by singing along with “Come and Go with Me to My Father’s House” presented by Dorothy Love Coates & The Gospel Harmonettes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9C2V7KSCVVU>

Leader: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: And with your spirit.

Penitential Act

Lord Jesus, you are the true shepherd, calling us to follow you:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you are the loving shepherd, calling us to care for others:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are the good shepherd, calling us to a life of holiness:

Lord, have mercy.

Opening Prayer

Compassionate God,

from far and near you gather your Church into one.

Safeguard the unity of your flock
through the teaching of Christ the Shepherd,
that all your scattered children may find in him
the guidance and nourishment they seek.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God forever and ever.

LET THE CHURCH SAY – AMEN.

First, listen to “Shepherd Me O God” by Marty Haugen:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QP_GA0mwggQ

Then move on to this Sunday’s readings:

Readings for the Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time July 18, 2021

1st Reading – Book of the Prophet Jeremiah (23:1-6)

¹ Woe to the shepherds who mislead and scatter the flock of my pasture,
says the LORD.

² Therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, against the shepherds
who shepherd my people: You have scattered my sheep and driven them
away. You have not cared for them, but I will take care to punish your evil
deeds.

³ I myself will gather the remnant of my flock from all the lands to which I have driven them and bring them back to their meadow; there they shall increase and multiply.

⁴ I will appoint shepherds for them who will shepherd them so that they need no longer fear and tremble; and none shall be missing, says the LORD.

⁵ Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up a righteous shoot to David; as king he shall reign and govern wisely, he shall do what is just and right in the land.

⁶ In his days Judah shall be saved, Israel shall dwell in security. This is the name they give him: “The LORD our justice.”

The Word of the Lord.....Thanks be to God.

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

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

¹ The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

² In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
beside restful waters he leads me;

^{3A} he refreshes my soul.

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

^{3B} He guides me in right paths
for his name’s sake.

⁴ Even though I walk in the dark valley
I fear no evil; for you are at my side
with your rod and your staff
that give me courage.

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

⁵ You spread the table before me
in the sight of my foes;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

⁶ Only goodness and kindness follow me
all the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
for years to come.

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

2nd Reading – Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians (2:13-18)

¹³ Brothers and sisters: In Christ Jesus you who once were far off have become near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For he is our peace, he who made both one and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through his flesh,

¹⁵ abolishing the law with its commandments and legal claims, that he might create in himself one new person in place of the two, thus establishing peace,

¹⁶ and might reconcile both with God, in one body, through the cross, putting that enmity to death by it.

¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near,

¹⁸ for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

The Word of the Lord.....Thanks be to God.

Gospel – Mark (6:30-34)

³⁰ The apostles gathered together with Jesus and reported all they had done and taught.

³¹ He said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.” People were coming and going in great numbers, and they had no opportunity even to eat.

³² So they went off in the boat by themselves to a deserted place.

³³ People saw them leaving and many came to know about it. They hastened there on foot from all the towns and arrived at the place before them.

³⁴ When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for 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.

Reflection Prompts:

The vast crowd raced ahead of Jesus and the Twelve Apostles and beat them to the deserted place of retreat. Jesus responded calmly and bodily, he felt their needs in his inmost being. And took the time to teach them about God and the new Covenant.

- When you are interrupted from your plans, how do you respond? What do you do if the home-bound neighbor asks you to go to Walgreen's for him? Or the co-worker asks you to take her to the auto repair shop? Or the homeless person asks for spare change?
- Paul speaks of a "dividing wall of enmity" between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians that is being broken down. What "dividing walls" are you willing to cross to build peace in the church, in our community, in our world?

Meditation Prompts:

- The Twenty-third Psalm which we sing today is much beloved. Read it reflectively and observe how you feel and what images are vivid.
- Some would argue that divine compassion is the source of any mission of the church. Imagine yourself as someone who glows with the compassion of Jesus.

Then, enjoy "God Has Smiled on Me" featuring The Rev. James Cleveland, from the Greatest Hits of the Gospel Music Workshop of America

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=aqXwgextvhM>

Then move into this week's prayers of the faithful.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS – July 18, 2021 SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Presider: Let us pray for the needs of this gathered community and for our world.

Worship Leader

1. For the ability to imitate the good Shepherd and seek the lost and cry out for justice. We pray: **Shepherd us, O God.** (RESPOND: **Shepherd us, O God.**)

2. For the ability to serve those most in need — to shelter the homeless, to welcome the stranger, to encourage the prisoner. We pray: **Shepherd us, O God.**
3. For successful rehab treatments for Pope Francis to enable him to resume active ministry. We pray: **Shepherd us, O God.**
4. For victims of discrimination, gun violence, trafficking, payday loans and other means of exploitation. We pray: **Shepherd us, O God.**
5. For the success of our Moving Forward in Faith campaign to build a new spiritual home. We pray: **Shepherd us, O God.**
6. For any immigrant children still separated from their families, that they be located and reunited. We pray: **Shepherd us, O God.**
7. For compassionate care for all whose lives have been touched by the condo collapse in Surfside, Florida. We pray: **Shepherd us, O God.**
8. For the people of Haiti, Cuba and Afghanistan in these turbulent times, that the health and safety of the most vulnerable be protected. We pray: **Shepherd us, O God.**
9. For all who seek healing from substance use disorders and mental health issues, that they find help and mutual support. We pray: **Shepherd us, O God.**
10. For an end to the Death Penalty, especially in Georgia. We pray: **Shepherd us, O God.**
11. For our Muslim brothers and sisters who will observe on Tuesday the feast of Eid Al-Adha [pronounced “EED Al AD-ha”], as they recall how God prevented the sacrifice of Isaac. We pray: **Shepherd us, O God.**
12. For all those who are separated from us by infirmity, especially those afflicted by COVID-19, and for all those living with HIV and AIDS, that they know our community’s care for them. We pray: **Shepherd us, O God.**

13. For all the dead, that they see God face to face, especially Marion Chineworth and Willie Earl, for whom this Mass is being celebrated. We pray: **Shepherd us, O God.**

14. Please share any intention you have [PAUSE.....] as well as all our own needs. We pray: **Shepherd us, O God.**

Presider: Shepherd of souls, in a world sorely in need of your peace, we ask you to make us instruments of your compassion and grace. Order our steps in the name of Jesus, your Son. LET THE CHURCH SAY.....AMEN!

Sing or recite “The Lord’s Prayer.”

Then, luxuriate in this classic....twice:

“Safe in His Arms” – the original 1986 recording of the Rev. Milton Brunson’s song sung by the Thompson Community Singers:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6IDRc8hZYA>

“Safe in His Arms” interpreted by Vickie Winans:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUrbJRnPdQ>

Closing Prayer

Show favor to your servants, O Lord,
and shower upon us the gifts of your grace,
that, eager in faith, in hope, and in love,
we may always be watchful in keeping your commandments.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever
and ever. Let the Church say.....AMEN.

Closing Song

Israel Houghton - "I Am A Friend of God"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Warah3cS2F4>

or with lyrics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UI0cgUKMqRs>

or another version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUn5H6N2xa4>