

## The Second Sunday after Easter - Misericordias Domini

Hymns: 205, 355, 196, 193

The INTROIT

(Ps.33:5,6,1)

*P: The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.*

**C: By the word of the Lord were the heavens made.**

*P: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous,*

**C: for praise is comely for the upright.**

The COLLECT

God, who by the humiliation of Thy Son did raise up the fallen world, grant unto Thy faithful ones perpetual gladness, and those whom Thou has delivered from the danger of everlasting death do Thou make partakers of eternal joys; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

The FIRST LESSON

Ezekiel 34:11-16 (NKJV)

For thus says the Lord GOD: "Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down," says the Lord GOD. "I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment."

THE GRADUAL

(Lk.24:35, Jn.10:14)

*P: Hallelujah! Hallelujah!*

*P: Then was the Lord Jesus known of the disciples:*

**C: in the breaking of the bread.**

*P: I am the Good Shepherd:*

**C: and know my sheep and am known of mine. Hallelujah!**

The EPISTLE

1 Peter 2:21-25 (NKJV)

For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness; by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

*P: Hallelujah! Christ, our Passover:*

**C: is sacrificed for us. Hallelujah!**

**The HOLY GOSPEL**

**St. John 10:11-16 (NKJV)**

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.”

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11. I Am, the Shepherd, the Good. The Shepherd the Good the soul of Him He places over the sheep.
  14. I Am the Shepherd the Good, and I know the mine [singular] and am known by those of Me [plural].
  15. Just as knows Me the Father also I know the Father, and the soul of Me I place over the sheep.
  16. Also other sheep I have which are not from of the fold this, likewise these to Me I must lead and the voice of Me they shall hear and shall be one flock one Shepherd.
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**John 10:11-16 — “I Am the Shepherd the Good”**

INTRODUCTION

- I. I AM THE SHEPHERD THE GOOD
- II. I KNOW THE MINE AND AM KNOWN BY THOSE OF ME
- III. THE VOICE OF ME THEY SHALL HEAR

CONCLUSION

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John 10:11-16 — “I Am the Shepherd the Good”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you all from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

The appointed Gospel reading for the Second Sunday after Easter is John 10:11-16:

**“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.”**

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### INTRODUCTION

This is an amazing text. It is full of both grace and judgment. A marvelous contrast is set before us. The Shepherd is contrasted with the hireling and the flock is contrasted with the world. Two shepherds are described and two flocks of sheep. The two flocks are identified according to the shepherd to whom they gather. The one flock feeds upon the Shepherd. The other flock feeds their shepherd.

#### I. I AM THE SHEPHERD THE GOOD

**“I am the good shepherd.”** This is how our translations go. But the actual order of the words recorded by John say, **“I Am the Shepherd the Good.”** According to the word order recorded by St. John, we meet a trinity of names for God. *I Am* is the name by which the LORD revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush and by which the one true God was known by His people throughout the ages. By this name the LORD distinguished Himself from all the other gods which were conjured up within the hearts and minds of people throughout the ages. When the LORD chose Moses, Moses asked,

**Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?**

**And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. (Exod 3:13-14)**

Secondly Jesus identifies *the Shepherd*. Immediately Psalm 23 comes to the attention of our hearts and minds. **“The LORD is my Shepherd. I shall not want.”**

Thirdly Jesus identifies *the Good*. There is only One who is Good, as Jesus reminds us in Matthew 19:17, reflecting upon Nahum 1:7 and the many other places that speak of the LORD as Good.

So Jesus identifies Himself to us as “I AM” as “The Shepherd” and as “The Good” all in one person. As this ever-present overseer and provider of good, He says,

**The Shepherd the Good, the soul of Him He places over the sheep.**

A different word is used from the word ordinarily translated as *give*. John records Jesus as saying something more profound than that Jesus *gives* His life for the sheep. John records Jesus saying that He *places* His *soul* over the sheep. This has a twofold meaning.

First Jesus is speaking of the love that He has that moves Him to cover us with His own soul. He places Himself over us to protect us from the harm that would otherwise come upon us. He covers us with His own Good soul, so that no evil may overtake us. He places Himself over us to rule over us in mercy so that the consequences of our sin come upon Him rather than upon us. He protects us with His righteousness, because we have no righteousness of our own. Our souls have no power to resist or fight off the evil one. Our souls have no power to survive the attacks and temptations of the world. Our souls cannot even prevent the evil nature of our own flesh from destroying us. We stand condemned and without life, and so Jesus places His soul over us.

The second meaning is really the same as the first, only extended. Jesus calls and ordains His chosen soul to be placed over us to be a shepherd with the authority of the true Shepherd. Through this soul of His, He places His own soul over us. Such a soul or shepherd speaks and acts in accord with what he has been called to say and do in the name of the Shepherd the Good. And so it is in fact Jesus who is over us, keeping us in His grace, mercy, and peace.

In contrast is the hireling.

**But the hireling, also not being a shepherd, whose not are the sheep, himself sees the wolf coming and forsakes the sheep and flees, and the wolf seizes them and scatters the sheep. Now the hireling flees because a hireling he is and is not concerned himself regarding the sheep.**

This one does not place his soul over the sheep, but applies for a job from the sheep. The sheep themselves hire for themselves someone to gather them into the fold. They hire him to give them what they believe that they need. This is their hireling. He takes orders from the flock. He seeks their will and serves them according to what keeps him in his position. He models his leadership according to how they express that they want to be led. Thereby he continues to be employed in good standing. The sheep praise his leadership and count themselves as blessed. They gather in the assurance of their hireling that they are safe and secure. But their security is only an illusion which they have created for themselves by hiring someone to tell them that they are safe. Such a hireling uses the words of safety and security, even pointing to the Shepherd the Good, assuring the people that they have done right for themselves in gathering in the name of the Good Shepherd.

But this hireling is not the Shepherd. He speaks the words but does not place the soul of the Shepherd the Good over the sheep. He is only the hireling of the sheep. When he sees the wolf coming, he has no love for the sheep. He has no power to defeat the wolf. He has only the authority of the sheep to hold up against the wolf. Thus the hireling flees, seeking new employment, forsaking the sheep and leaving them to stand by the authority by which they hired him. Having lost their shepherd, their hireling, the sheep are scattered by the wolf.

## II. I KNOW THE MINE AND AM KNOWN BY THOSE OF ME

Not so with those who are safely under the soul of *I Am, the Shepherd, the Good*. Nothing can scatter the sheep over whom He has placed His soul.

**I Am the Shepherd the Good, and I know the mine [singular] and am known by those of Me [plural]. Just as knows Me the Father also I know the Father, and the soul of Me I place over the sheep.**

What a blessed distinction our Lord Jesus makes concerning the true Church gathered under the LORD's soul, and those who gather to shepherds whom they have hired and placed over themselves. **"I Am the Shepherd the Good, and I know the mine and am known by those of Me"**

Jesus says that He knows His congregation, saying, **"I know the mine."** There is only one communion of the saints, only one holy catholic and apostolic Church. Jesus says, **"I know the mine."** This is singular. He specifically shifts from speaking of the sheep in the plural and simply says *the mine*. The Shepherd knows His flock. He knows the gathering that is truly gathered into His name through Baptism and that pastures upon His body and blood. He has covered them with His soul through Baptism. They are marked with His righteousness, renewed again and again through the holy absolution and the blood of the New Testament. He sees His blood upon their house and knows them as His own body.

And because of this, those gathered all know the one who has placed His soul over them. Here the LORD speaks of those of Me in the plural. We all know Him because He has placed His soul over us. This is the oneness and unity of the body of Christ. **"Just as knows Me the Father also I know the Father, and the soul of Me I place over the sheep."**

Those whom the Shepherd has placed His soul over do not scatter. When the wolf comes, whether the wolf be the devil himself, or whether the wolf be some hireling coming with praise bands and charisma and a large following, the sheep over whom the LORD has placed His soul know the One to whom they belong and remain gathered into His congregation. If their pasture becomes overrun by the wolf and the sheep who follow him, the LORD's sheep do not know the voice of the wolf and so they follow the voice of the Shepherd the Good to new pasture. They only gather where they hear the voice of the one by whom they are known and therefore they know Him.

## III. THE VOICE OF ME THEY SHALL HEAR

**Also other sheep I have which are not from of the fold this, likewise these to Me I must lead and the voice of Me they shall hear and shall be one flock one Shepherd.**

There is only one fold, one household of God. But the Lord Jesus has other sheep whom He has purchased as well. They have not yet heard His voice and so they have not yet been gathered into the safety of the Shepherd's fold.

The fold is the place where the sheep gather for safety. In olden times the fold often was a place surrounded by a hedge of thorny bushes. It could also have actual walls of stone or clay. Whichever construction of the walls, there was a gate to which the shepherd would lead the sheep, calling them by the sound of his voice. He would lead the flock out of the fold to pasture and then back again to the fold. When a sheep would go missing, the shepherd would lead the flock to the safety of the fold and then go out calling for the lost sheep.

Notice that Jesus does not say that He will send the sheep out from the fold to seek the lost sheep. Rather, Jesus says that He has sheep that He has purchased who are not of the fold, sheep whom He must lead to the fold where the flock is kept safe. His constant promise is that those who are His shall hear His voice and shall be gathered as one flock.

The one flock is easy to recognize for it is gathered to the one Shepherd. Jesus says, **“likewise these to Me I must lead and the voice of Me they shall hear and shall be one flock one Shepherd.”**

Only one identity is given. The flock and the Shepherd are one. There is only one voice. The sound heard within the flock is the sound of the voice of the Shepherd. The sheep do not bleat with their own voices, but rather, they sing out with the Shepherd's voice.

This is what we have inherited from the Church of former years. The flock of old heard the liturgy served to them and sang that same liturgy in response to the grace of their Shepherd. We have the same Shepherd. We have heard His voice and have been gathered into the same sheep pen and have been made part of the same flock. The same voice serves us in the divine service today as served the sheep of old. We are truly one flock gathered into one fold, gathered by the same familiar voice of the *I AM, the Shepherd, the Good*. He has placed His soul over us and has gathered us as the flock of His fold.

## CONCLUSION

The world is full of sheep, but very few belong to the LORD. How do we know this? We know this because there are many flocks and many folds. They hire for themselves many shepherds who gather many to themselves. These hirelings give the sheep what they pay them to give. These hirelings praise the faithfulness of the sheep. These hirelings point to other sheep and other shepherds as false or as less blessed. The one thing that these hirelings never do is to place their own souls over the sheep to protect them.

There is One who is the Shepherd the Good. He is also the *I AM*. He placed His soul over the sheep in His body lifted up on the cross on Golgotha. He placed His soul over the sheep in the grave that they provided for Him. He placed His soul over the sheep as He descended to hell and proclaimed the judgment to be final. He placed His soul over the sheep when He raised His body from the dead and showed Himself alive and ascended to the right hand of God. He continues to place His soul over the sheep as He intercedes for us before the judgment seat and as He Himself sits as Judge, judging on our behalf with mercy. He continues to place His soul over us as He ordains shepherds to give Him to us in the administration of the pure Gospel and Sacraments.

He is, *I Am, the Shepherd, the Good*, and He places His soul over the sheep. Let us follow His voice to the safe pasture of His Holy Table and partake of His Goodness together. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.