

## Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

### Reading 1

[Jer 23:1-6](#)

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

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

### Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 23:1-3, 3-4, 5, 6](#)

**R. (1) The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;  
beside restful waters he leads me;  
he refreshes my soul.

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

He guides me in right paths  
for his name's sake.  
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.**

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.**

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.**

## **Reading II**

[Eph 2:13-18](#)

Brothers and sisters:

In Christ Jesus you who once were far off  
have become near by the blood of Christ.

For he is our peace, he who made both one  
and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through his flesh,  
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,  
and might reconcile both with God,  
in one body, through the cross,  
putting that enmity to death by it.  
He came and preached peace to you who were far off  
and peace to those who were near,  
for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

## **Gospel**

[Mk 6:30-34](#)

The apostles gathered together with Jesus  
and reported all they had done and taught.  
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.  
So they went off in the boat by themselves to a deserted place.  
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.

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.

## HOMILY

We heard in the Gospel last Sunday how Jesus sent the Twelve Apostles with a message of repentance. For those who accepted the message and began to pray, it opened the floodgates of God's grace. The hearers received two great blessings: physical healing (by anointing with oil) and liberation from demons.

Today we see the Apostles returning to Jesus with reports about what happened. After listening to them, Jesus does something beautiful. He takes them apart to "rest a while." When Jesus speaks about resting a while, he doesn't mean, turn into a couch potato. To rest with Jesus is dynamic. It can of course include some sleep. Sleep is God's gift to restore our minds, our bodies and our emotions.

Sleep, rest, is a marvelous gift from God. But, after resting, a follower of Jesus does not go looking for distractions. Rather we return to Jesus, to reflect on what happened and to ask, What next?

The answer comes quickly. If you do the job well, you will be rewarded with more work! What we see today is a vast crowd coming to Jesus. You can imagine how the Apostles might have felt: at first the sight might have thrilled them, but very quickly they also might have gotten scared - What are we going to do with all these people?

Well, we will find out next Sunday. Today's Gospel sets the stage for Jesus' greatest revelation. It is so important that we will spend five Sundays on it. Please do not miss a single Sunday.

In today's Gospel account we find Jesus taking His apostles to a leadership-training seminar. By taking them out into a deserted place, He removes His apostles from the distractions and concerns they've been experiencing. They needed a break. They needed to reflect. Were people being spiritually healed or only physically healed? Were people being in fact drawn closer to God or were they only being dazzled by miraculous healings?

When one goes out into a deserted place and stays there long enough, one begins to see what really matters and what doesn't. Eventually, when all of the ordinary routines and supports have been removed from one's life, we can begin to experience reliance on God, on God's loving care. We can begin to realize that the most important gift we need is the recognition of and experience of God's care for us.

Jesus undoubtedly was equally as tired as the disciples, yet we see him caring for both their needs and the needs of the crowd. He is the promised Good Shepherd, caring for their needs wisely, so that they can live securely. As this week's second reading indicates, "He is our peace," and only as we are in close harmony with Him will we be able to experience the peace He offers.

It is essential for life and ministry that we, too, take advantage of opportunities to refill our spiritual reservoir with His presence and the peace He offers. Obviously, the first place to do this is by regular and meaningful participation in Mass and Eucharist. However, with our often somewhat hectic, fast-paced lifestyles we should also take advantage of regularly reading sacred

Scripture and prayer. In addition, we have possible opportunities through personal retreats to also withdraw into a lonely place to rest and renew our soul for an extended period of time.

A question that we might ask ourselves to day is, will we take some time out to reflect on the Good Shepherd whose care is there for us? Will we take some time to listen to him that we might be drawn to grow in closer harmony with Jesus and the experience of peace and love that He offers us?

*Henry Ormond, O.Carm.*