

A Shepherd Who Cares

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle B | July 21, 2024

WISDOM FROM THE CELLS

I remember my friend Javier... It was only a few months ago that he arrived to our pod of men looking for a new start; a gang-free start. I remember seeing Javier walk into our little pod looking lost and scared. Seeing him made me remember my first day here. Having just made the biggest, most drastic change in my life of leaving my old way of living behind. I walked into the pod in a daze. I was feeling so many things at once: fear, relief, doubt, shame, and even anger. Turmoil is a good way to describe it.

Well, I saw all these things in Javier as he walked up the stairs and into the cell next door. I remember reaching out to him and telling him everything was going to be alright and that we were all in the same boat. He told me about his struggles and I listened to him.

As time went by, Javier grew more comfortable and is now adjusting to his new life. I realized that we can all make a difference in people's lives if we just share a little compassion. I saw someone struggling and I reached out to him. There was a time when I would have ignored the opportunity to help someone like Javier, but for some reason I felt like he needed some support and I was right. He was battling the same emotions that I once experienced. From here on out, I'm going to do more to help others.

- Jose, who is in a California State Prison.



Drawing of the "Jesus the Risen Prisoner" community at Corcoran State Prison.

PENITENTIAL RITE

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus,

You are the shepherd that cares. You were one of us, you feel with us, you see our needs, and the needs hidden in our hearts. In the same way, may we learn from you and care for one another no matter who they are or what they've done.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**



LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: Jeremiah 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."

The Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Second Reading: Ephesians 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.

The Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

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

R. 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.

Gospel: Mark 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.

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



MEDITATION: ALONE

it was time
for the disciples
to get into the boat

as they pushed out
the joy in jesus' heart
was still present

jesus was glad to be
there even though
his heart was broken
and was beginning
to bleed
why was his heart
always being
torn apart?
it would be easier
not to be surrounded
by such misery
but this was where
he was needed

a deep joy began
to sing in the space
where the blood
had drained
jesus' eyes brightened
he felt lighter
jesus was feeling joy
resonating within him

at the very center
of this joy
was the presence
of his abba
he did not need
to say one word
he just knew his abba
was playing this music
creating the chords
that were echoing

in his heart
as jesus wiped
the sweat from
an old man
as he knelt down
and ran his hand
over a woman's
paralyzed legs
he asked himself
where am i getting
such joy?

on that shore
for three hours
jesus was revived
mysteriously
his blood flowing out
onto the dry sand
he bled with
compassion

so many of these
people had been
stretched apart
they were just
trying to survive
to make it
one more day

a few hours before
his heart was
saddened by
john's death
feelings flowed
through him
while he cared for
the hundreds who
had been excluded
from medical care
sadness
compassion

love
all passed through him

the sun was setting
jesus knew
he would soon
find some time
to let out these feelings
through speaking
with his abba about
what was happening
in his life

at last
it was time to go alone
jesus assured the
whole group that next
week
he would return
he promised to meet
with them

finally
after healing for 5
hours experiencing
so many emotions
he could now walk
alone
gazing at the lake
watching the fishing
boat
as it journeyed
to the middle

tears filled jesus' eyes
the same joy
that sang in his heart
he needed to be alone
in the presence
of his abba

finally
the moon appeared
as he arrived at
the top of the mountain
soon the stars came out
silence
solitude
with his abba

jesus' mind
was suddenly
flooded with memories
of the people's faces
of bending down
of laying his hands
on them

in the still depth
of the night
jesus was telling
his abba
of his afternoon
of the death of john
it was as if
a moment passed
yet encompassed
all these feelings

in a few hours
it would be dawn
he needed to get
back to his friends
they seemed lost
these days
looking at the boat
being tossed about

soon he would leave
for the lake
comforted and
consoled by his abba



REFLECTION: I remember a time I took a step back from all my distractions and reflected on my life... This is what I realized.... I remember... I remember...

OUR FATHER

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

R. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

SIGN OF PEACE

Jesus, you said to your apostles: "I leave you peace, my peace I give you. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom where you live forever and ever. **Amen.**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
R. And with your spirit.

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
grant us peace.

This is Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are we who are called to his supper.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

COMMUNION

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray:
Lord God,
Through your Son Jesus, you were revealed to us. Help us to reflect on the compassion, forgiveness and mercy of our Lord Jesus, so that we may be moved to do the same for others.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**

