

“I am the Gate”

4th Sunday of Easter
Cycle A | April 26, 2026

WISDOM FROM THE CELLS

I remember how much the life of violence and gangs has affected me. It really did take over my life. I let myself get so involved with that lifestyle that I failed to see how much I was hurting my family and myself. What kind of life was I living? I don't know why I let myself live that life or why I wanted to live that lifestyle. I was so lost, and now I'm in prison.

Throughout my life, I've learned about Jesus and all the good he has done for us. But I turned my back on him for so long and did not listen to his word. Now I understand even more how wonderful he is; so much so that I want to spread his word even more, especially to those who are uninterested, so that they can't say they never knew or that no one has ever stretched a hand to help them out.

Jesus was good to everyone equally. So I want to do the same. I can do this by telling everyone the good I get from following God and that they, too, can feel the same way as me. Everyone gets to a dark place in life and needs help at some point. So we should never be ashamed to ask for help if we need it or help others who are in need of help. It's ok to be vulnerable at times. God will always be by our side.

-Ismael, who is in a California State Prison.



Drawing by Elaine Golden

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,

You know each of us by name and you invite us to follow you. Show us today the truth of your ways, so that we may find deep joy and lasting peace.

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



LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: Acts 2: 14a, 36-41

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed: "Let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, "What are we to do, my brothers?" Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is made to you and to your children and to all those far off, whomever the Lord our God will call." He testified with many other arguments, and was exhorting them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added that day.

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

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 23: 1-3a, 3b-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.

Second Reading: 1 Peter 2: 20b-25

Beloved: If you are patient when you suffer for doing what is good, this is a grace before God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps. *He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.* When he was insulted, he returned no insult; when he suffered, he did not threaten; instead, he handed himself over to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you had gone astray like sheep, but you have now returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

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

Gospel: John 10: 1-10

Jesus said: "Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate but climbs over elsewhere is a thief and a robber. But whoever enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice, as the shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice. But they will not follow a stranger; they will run away from him, because they do not recognize the voice of strangers." Although Jesus used this figure of speech, the Pharisees did not realize what he was trying to tell them. So Jesus said again, "Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

The Gospel of the Lord.
R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



MEDITATION: I AM WITH YOU

maria had six children
one of them was
on a scholarship after
receiving straight a's
in high school

her other two daughters
taught religious education
classes with her at church

her second oldest son
jaime had been arrested
for attempted murder
even though he was
not a gang member
he had been in the car
when someone fired
at an enemy gang

everyone at school
could not understand
how he could be involved
in such a serious crime

at first
there was an outpouring
of sympathy
but as time went on
people slowly forgot him
no letters or phone calls
but maria never missed
a visit with jaime

her friends would
say to her
why do you waste
your time with this son?
he will never amount
to anything
i see how wonderful
your other children are
sometimes
her other children
would even ask her
why are you going
to see jaime again?
he is never going
to change
he is always getting
into trouble
ever since he was young
he has always made

bad choices

maria was reflecting
on the incarceration
of her son
it has not been easy
and it has radically changed
her life and her routine
her husband was
so angry at jaime
that he would only visit him
occasionally

on the sunday of
the week that
jaime was going to court
he sat across from his mom
in the visiting room

jaime took his mom's hand
and said
i am nervous about
going to court on tuesday
i cannot sleep at night
my whole life could be
taken away from me

mom
i have never been
honest with you
but mom
when i was twelve
i really did get jumped
into a gang

maria just said
i know that hijo

mom
you never gave up on me
you have never
stopped caring for me
and visiting me
i know i am loved by you
no matter what
i have done

mom
i want to tell you something
i have changed my life

hijo

this is the thing
i have prayed
for every day
i cannot tell you what
that means to me
everyone told me
to give up on you
that you are nothing
but the lost sheep
of the family

but hijo let me tell
you something
ever since i first
held you in my arms
after you were born
i knew you were special
when you started
getting into trouble
i knew one day
you would return
to who you were
growing up to be
i know that god will
hear our prayers and
you will be home soon

as jaime spoke
with his mother
it was as if no one else
was in the visiting room

a week later
maria had arrived early
to be at his court hearing
she was there
sitting with the whole family
and watched as
the bailiff brought jaime
through the doors
shackled in
his orange jump suit

she reflected on jaime
her son of
seventeen years
so many memories
of him
playing soccer
with his friends
she will never understand
how he got lost

and why he joined a gang
when he had everything
at home

but this morning
maria noticed
something different
about her son
since he had told her
he wanted to change
there was almost a glow
about his face
there was not
that empty look
that he had carried
around for so long

finally the trial was over
it had lasted three weeks
jaime's face was peaceful
and then the words
hung jury
maria knew
god had blessed
this young sheep
who was lost
but now found

she knew
maybe not today
maybe not tomorrow
but some day soon
jaime would be
home again

maria prayed
silently within
giving thanks to god
with large warm tears
flowing down her face

as jaime left
the court room
he turned around
and smiled at her
that was her son jaime
who was lost
but now is found



REFLECTION: Jesus, I remember a time when you tried to show me your way, but I did not listen. I remember this is what happened.... 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:

God our Father,

Through your Son Jesus, you have shown us that
love is everlasting. Help us to be like Jesus, who
had a heart for people, and reflect on the love he
has shown us through others. May we let Jesus
inspire us and lead us on a path to you.

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

