

Saints Philip And James, Apostles

May 3

Call Philip the gospel's "Answer Man." "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Nathaniel asked Philip, who had proclaimed Jesus "the one about whom Moses wrote in the law, and also the prophets" (John 1:45). Jesus asked Philip, "Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?" (John 6:5). Greeks brought Philip their request: "We would like to see Jesus" (John 12:21). Philip's answer to each question: bring people to Jesus! At the Last Supper, finally, Philip had a request of his own: "Show us the Father!" (John 14:8). Jesus had three last questions for Philip: "You still don't know me? How can you ask that? Don't you believe?" And an answer: "I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (John 14:10). Today's James is not John's brother, Zebedee's son, but, tradition says, author of the New Testament Letter of James, who died praying for his murderers in Jesus' words: "Forgive them, for they know not what they do." Few historical details for either saint, but lessons aplenty: Bring every question we have and everybody we meet to Jesus; be, as James' letter challenges, "doers of the word and not hearers only" (James 1:22).

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In Need Of A Shepherd

For a while it was very fashionable to own pigs as pets. The publicity surrounding these creatures informed us that they were—contrary to their popular image—very clean animals, and also quite smart. Sad to say, sheep will most likely never enjoy this sort of domestic vogue. They are neither clean nor smart and are largely defenseless when left on their own, even in large numbers. The biblical image of us as the flock of sheep is not a particularly flattering one. Sheep without a shepherd are truly sad, because they most likely will perish either from their inability to fend for themselves or from their lack of defenses against predators. Placing ourselves in the heart of this unflattering image can reinforce our faith. Until we come to a profound realization of how much we need a shepherd, we cannot appreciate how deeply blessed we are to have been given a Shepherd, one who laid down his life for us and was raised to life eternal in the Spirit, so he might guide us and we might follow him in faith forever. Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Readings for the Week

Monday:	Acts 11:1-18; Ps 42:2-3; 43:3, 4; Jn 10:11-18
Tuesday:	Acts 11:19-26; Ps 87:1b-7; Jn 10:22-30
Wednesday:	Acts 12:24 — 13:5a; Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8; Jn 12:44-50
Thursday:	Acts 13:13-25; Ps 89:2-3, 21-22, 25, 27; Jn 13:16-20
Friday:	Acts 13:26-33; Ps 2:6-11ab; Jn 14:1-6
Saturday:	Acts 13:44-52; Ps 98:1-4; Jn 14:7-14
Sunday:	Acts 6:1-7; Ps 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19; 1 Pt 2:4-9; Jn 14:1-12

Saints and Special Observances

Sunday:	Fourth Sunday of Easter; World Day of Prayer for Vocations
Tuesday:	Cinco de Mayo
Thursday:	National Day of Prayer

saint snippets

May 5
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"Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity."
—1 Timothy 4:12

St. Nunzio Sulprizio
19th-century Italian who lived a brief life filled with faith and piety, even in the midst of very poor health. He was canonized in 2018.

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Today's Readings

First Reading — All peoples called by God will receive the gift of the Spirit if they repent and are baptized (Acts 2:14a, 36-41).

Psalm — The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want (Psalm 23).

Second Reading — Once we were like straying sheep; but now we have been returned to the shepherd, our guardian (1 Peter 2:20b-25).

Gospel — The shepherd leads the sheep out into pastures of abundant life (John 10:1-10).

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Treasures From Our Tradition

Especially during the Easter season, we are very conscious of the communal nature of baptism. We stand witness to the baptism of adults at the Easter Vigil in many parishes, and countless parishes celebrate festive baptisms for infants. The rule for celebrating baptism is that it be only once a day in any parish church, a sign of the Church's desire that baptism be the work of the gathered community. "Private baptism" is therefore a misnomer, since all baptisms, even emergency baptisms for infants in danger of death, are a public act of entrance in to the Body of Christ, the Church.

In an emergency, and providing the parents desire it, anyone can baptize by pouring water and saying, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." But then afterward the Church is encouraged to supply what is missing: the gathered assembly to proclaim and hear God's word, the promises, the naming, the anointing's, the clothing with a white garment, the candle, the Lord's Prayer, and the solemn blessing of the parents at the altar.

Wonderfully, this ritual often provides the opportunity for great rejoicing at the recovery of an infant who had been in danger.

—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Entrance

How else but through a broken heart
May the Lord Christ enter in?

—Oscar Wilde

Much-Needed Love

No one needs love more than someone who doesn't
deserve it.

—Anonymous

Today's readings invite us to recognize our need for one who ensures our safety, nourishes us, and leads us to peace and security, like sheep who rest in the care of a good shepherd. Such a shepherd will protect and save the sheep, even from the most deadly of predators. Today, we ponder the incredible news that Jesus accepted death on the cross in order to open the gates of eternal life with God for us. Through his resurrection, Jesus protects and saves us from the power of sin and death. We need only accept his love and live as God's people in this life, relying on the Lord who is the door to new life for us and for all.

Good News!

When Peter faced the crowds on Pentecost, he was emboldened by the Holy Spirit and proclaimed the truth of Jesus Christ passionately to those who gathered to hear him. There was likely part of him that was not quite sure what to expect, knowing that a few weeks prior, crowds of people had chanted "Crucify him!" as Jesus was sentenced to a cruel and unjust death. The people who heard Peter were moved by his witness, compelled to acknowledge their sinfulness and to accept the news of salvation through Jesus Christ as good news, the gospel that changes everything.

Jesus Saves

Be honest with yourself. Have you ever gone astray? Have you ever given in to temptation or weakness? Do you sometimes feel that you need someone to help you get your life on back on track? Most people could answer yes to any of these questions. As people of faith, we know that Jesus understands the struggles we face and gave his life to save us from our human frailty. The Lord knows that we need help in order to live as God's people in the world. There are people and powers that seek to mislead us, who offer a way that may for a time be appealing, even though it does not lead to the true way of life, love, and peace. We can be readily dissuaded and distracted from the ways of holiness. We easily lose our way, lured by the trappings of material possessions, wealth, or social status. Jesus is our only real way, the door that leads to meaning and peace in this earthly time, and to life everlasting.

Today's Readings: Acts 2:14a, 36–41; Ps 23:1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6; 1 Peter 2:20b–25; John 10:1–10

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Sunday Readings

May 3, 2020

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Reading 1

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.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 23: 1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6

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

or:

R. Alleluia.

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.

or:

R. Alleluia.

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.

or:

R. Alleluia.

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.

or:

R. Alleluia.

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.
or:

R. Alleluia.

Reading 2

1 Pt 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.

Gospel

Jn 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.”

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Prayer of the Faithful

May 3, 2020
Fourth Sunday of Easter

Let us lay the cares and needs of our pandemic-weary world at the feet of the Lord, who is our Good Shepherd.

For shepherds in our Church who will listen to those in their flock and guide them with humility and grace, let us pray to the Lord.

For governmental leaders to recognize their roles of responsibility in caring for and guiding the people entrusted to their care, especially in the midst of this pandemic, let us pray to the Lord.

For scientists and researchers, and their assistants and sponsors who are working to develop tests, treatments, and vaccines for COVID-19, let us pray to the Lord.

For the young people of our community, especially those who are celebrating their confirmation this year, let us pray to the Lord.

For men and women of all ages to heed the Good Shepherd calling them into ordained and lay ministries, let us pray to the Lord.

For all those who are sick, for all who suffer from the Coronavirus, and for all who have died, especially N., N., and N., let us pray to the Lord.

For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord.

O loving God,
you nurture and care for us
and guide us along the right paths.
Hear these our prayers
that we make on behalf of all in need,
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord.

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