



**Fourth Sunday of Easter**

**17 April 2016**

**Sentence** The Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. *Revelation 7.17*

**Collect**

Eternal God,  
from whose gentle hands none can snatch us away: give us faith to believe that we are known and loved  
with a passion strong enough to bring the whole world  
back to you; through Jesus Christ, who is the source of life.

**Amen**

**A reading from the Acts of the Apostles**

*The first reading in the Easter season continues to be taken from Acts instead of from the Old Testament. Acts shows the Christian community in its earliest years and the effect of the resurrection experiences on the apostolic Church. Acts is a 'style' of writing in which events may not literally be true, where the reader is meant to understand the deeper and symbolic meaning of the various stories.*

In Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, 'Please come to us without delay.' So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, 'Tabitha, get up.' Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

*Acts 9.36-43*

Reader For the word of the Lord  
**All Thanks be to God**

**Psalm 23 at 8am APBA, page 243**

*No psalm is better known than this and its imagery of the good shepherd, though remote from our urban world, still resonates with us as it speaks of God's care and wise tending of our lives if only we will follow God's leading.*

**A reading from the book of Revelation**

*The joy of the martyrs is sorrow turned into joy. Paschal (Easter) imagery is picked up in the phrase "the blood of the Lamb" as also the image of the shepherd who will guide the martyrs to springs of living water, an image that will recur in the gospel.*

I, John, looked, and saw there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!' And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, singing, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.' Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, 'Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?' I said to him, 'Sir, you are the one that knows.' Then he said to me, 'These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'

*Revelation 7.9-17*

Reader May your word live in us,  
**ALL And bear much fruit to your glory.**

### **Gospel Acclamation**

**ALL**            **Alleluia! Alleluia!**  
My sheep hear my voice; I know them  
and they follow me.

**ALL**            **Alleluia!**

Reader        The Lord be with you

**ALL**            **And also with you**

Reader        A reading from the holy gospel according to John

**ALL**            **Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ**

*The festival Jesus was attending is also called Hanukah (still kept today by Jewish people) and recalls a time in 165 BC when the Temple was desecrated by the occupying Greco-Syrians who sacrificed a pig on its altar. Rather than renounce their faith and customs, Jews were being killed. Judah Maccabee raised an army and reclaimed the Temple and the land. There was only enough oil to rekindle the Temple light for one day but miraculously it lasted eight days. With their Temple rededicated, messianic expectations were heightened, hence the question to Jesus: how long will you keep us in suspense?*

The festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, 'How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah,\* tell us plainly.' Jesus answered, 'I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one.'

*John 10.22-30*

Reader        For the Gospel of the Lord

**ALL**            **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

**Bible Readings next week        Fifth Sunday in Easter**

Acts 11.1-18    Psalm 148    Revelation 21.1-6    John 13.31-35

**Prayer for the Week.** O God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your people: help us when we hear his voice to know him who calls us each by name, and to follow where he leads; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**Pray for the Faithful Departed**

We remember before God: Owen Fyfe, Charles Pittman, Valda Woinarski, Beverly Jocelyn Summons, Geoffrey Aitken Hall, Keith Warne Lester, Ronald Wagstaff, Gretta Hall, Dorothy Tidy, Rudolph Bailey and Kathryn Simos, *whose anniversaries occur this week.*

**Commemorations of the week.**

**April 25 Anzac Day & Mark, evangelist,** considered (not with certainty) as the author of Mark's Gospel and as the John Mark, whose mother's house was used by the apostles, and as the person mentioned in Mark 14.51. Later a disciple of Peter, Paul and Barnabas, and was with Paul in his Roman imprisonment.

**April 29 Catherine of Sienna** (1347-1389), member of the Dominican Order, spiritual writer and teacher, worker for the sick in hospitals and a woman of great sanctity and influence in the Middle Ages.

**21st April is the 90th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II .**

Her 'official' birthday will be observed at St George's on 5th June.

Bountiful God, giver of all good gifts, we give thanks for the many years and long reign of our Queen; Help us to learn from Queen Elizabeth's commitment to her people, so that our communities may be strengthened and all may flourish. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the King of love. Amen.

