

TO ACHE WITH COMPASSION

MARK 6:30-34



Today's Gospel describes the return of the Twelve whom Jesus sent out on mission. After they return, Jesus suggests they go away to a deserted place to recover, reflect and pray. Time apart in a deserted place will help the Twelve to understand more fully the mission they now share with him.

So Jesus and his disciples set out across the Sea of Galilee by boat. But the plan fails spectacularly. Seeing the boat, people recognise who the passengers are and race around the lake to meet Jesus and the disciples when they reach land. Mark says that the people came "from every town" around the lake. This is his way of letting us know just how popular Jesus was.

Mark says that Jesus "took pity on them". In Greek the text reads that "he was moved with compassion for them in his inward parts". In the Hebrew way of associating feelings to parts of the body, compassion was always associated with the womb. In the case of men, it was the intestine. While that may seem strange to us, it means that when Jesus sees the people gathered, he has such compassion for them that he feels it in the pit of his stomach. It's a really strong statement of the degree of feeling Jesus has for the people.

His reason for such a strong feeling is that the people "were like sheep without a shepherd". This phrase is used in the Old Testament to describe the people of Israel whenever they suffered from failed or negligent leadership. But Jesus will not fail and he will not neglect God's people. He will be the true shepherd. ■

SAY

"Lord, help me to be compassionate as you are compassionate. Amen."

PRAY

The biblical phrase "like sheep without a shepherd" describes those suffering from ineffective or defective leadership. Pray for those in authority in our Church, that they will be the kind of leaders we need.

LEARN

The Church teaches that action for justice is a constitutive part of living the Gospel. It is integral to the Christian way of life. Sharing God's vision, we confront injustice wherever we encounter it. We defend those who are poor and voiceless. We always work for the good of all.

DO

Visit (or FaceTime) someone who is sick this week, or in need of a kind word or support.



REFLECT

Care for people who were poor and oppressed was central to Jesus' life and ministry. He identified with them. He was born in poverty in an obscure town of a colonised country. He mixed with those on the margins – sinners, prostitutes, sick people, outcasts – to stress that nobody was excluded from God's love. He washed feet, a demeaning task reserved for servants and slaves. He died a failure. All Jesus said and did pointed to a new way of living in accord with God's vision of a kingdom of justice, love and peace. To act justly is key to Jesus' vision.

It's unfortunate that Catholics and non-Catholics alike tend to be more familiar with what the Church teaches about sex

than with what it teaches about social justice. But the Church has formulated a wonderful body of teaching on social justice, stretching back to Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in 1891. This teaching embraces issues from workers' rights to the dangers of unregulated capitalism, from care for the politically and economically oppressed to opposition to capital punishment. In 2015, Pope Francis published the first papal encyclical devoted to the environment, *Laudato Si'*, placing care for the earth as a central tenet of the Church's mission.

The biblical emphasis on God's care for the poor and for all creation is the basis for the Church's focus on social issues and for its pro-life stance. In

his letter *Gaudete et Exsultate*, Pope Francis stresses the need to protect the unborn. He goes on to say: "Equally sacred, however, are the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned and the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm and elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection." What Pope Francis is saying is that God's justice and compassion extends from womb to tomb. Jesus ached with compassion for all who suffered. Following the example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, we also look with compassion on those who need our help. We seek to ease their burdens. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

See, I have God for my help.
The Lord sustains my soul.
I will sacrifice to you with willing heart,
and praise your name, O Lord, for it is good.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Show favour, O Lord, to your servants
and mercifully increase the gifts of your
grace,
that, made fervent in hope, faith and charity,
they may be ever watchful in keeping your
commands.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 23:1-6

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah.

“Doom for the shepherds who allow the
flock of my pasture to be destroyed and
scattered – it is the Lord who speaks! This,
therefore, is what the Lord, the God of Israel
says about the shepherds in charge of my
people: You have let my flock be scattered
and go wandering and have not taken care
of them. Right, I will take care of you for
your misdeeds – it is the Lord who speaks!
But the remnant of my flock I myself will
gather from all the countries where I have
dispersed them, and will bring them back
to their pastures: they shall be fruitful and
increase in numbers. I will raise up shepherds
to look after them and pasture them; no fear,
no terror for them any more; not one shall be
lost – it is the Lord who speaks!

“See, the days are coming – it is the Lord
who speaks –
when I will raise a virtuous Branch for David,
who will reign as true king and be wise,
practising honesty and integrity in the land.
In his days Judah will be saved
and Israel dwell in confidence.
And this is the name he will be called:
The Lord-our-integrity.”

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 22

Response:

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

1. The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit. (R.)
2. He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name.
If I should walk in the valley of darkness
no evil would I fear.
You are there with your crook and your
staff;
with these you give me comfort. (R.)
3. You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing. (R.)
4. Surely goodness and kindness shall
follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever. (R.)

SECOND READING

Ephesians 2:13-18

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the
Ephesians.

In Christ Jesus, you that used to be so far
apart from us have been brought very close,
by the blood of Christ. For he is the peace
between us, and has made the two into one
and broken down the barrier which used to
keep them apart, actually destroying in his
own person the hostility caused by the rules
and decrees of the Law. This was to create
one single New Man in himself out of the two
of them and by restoring peace through the
cross, to unite them both in a single Body
and reconcile them with God. In his own
person he killed the hostility. Later he came
to bring the good news of peace, peace to
you who were far away and peace to those
who were near at hand. Through him, both
of us have in the one Spirit our way to come to
the Father.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
The sheep that belong to me listen to my
voice
says the Lord,
I know them and they follow me.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mark 6:30-34

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Mark.

The apostles rejoined Jesus and told him
all they had done and taught. Then he said
to them, “You must come away to some
lonely place all by yourselves and rest for a
while”; for there were so many coming and
going that the apostles had no time even to
eat. So they went off in a boat to a lonely
place where they could be by themselves.
But people saw them going, and many could
guess where; and from every town they all
hurried to the place on foot and reached it
before them. So as he stepped ashore he

saw a large crowd; and he took pity on them
because they were like sheep without a
shepherd, and he set himself to teach them at
some length.

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

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
(all bow during the next three lines)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

O God, who in the one perfect sacrifice
brought to completion varied offerings of the
law,
accept, we pray, this sacrifice from your
faithful servants
and make it holy, as you blessed the gifts of
Abel,
so that what each has offered to the honour
of your majesty
may benefit the salvation of all.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The Lord, the gracious, the merciful,
has made a memorial of his wonders;
he gives food to those who fear him.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Graciously be present to your people, we
pray, O Lord,
and lead those you have imbued with
heavenly mysteries
to pass from former ways to newness of life.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.