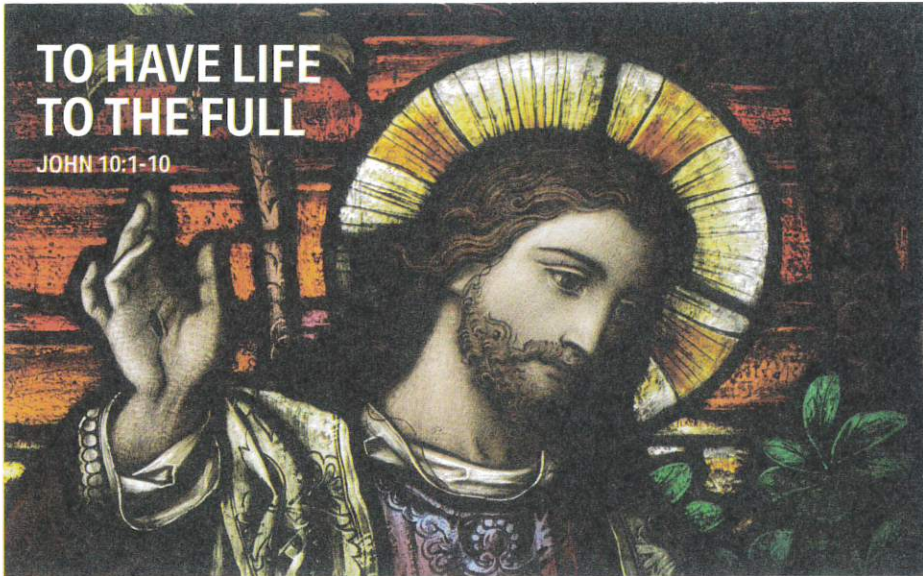


Sunday Message

4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE WORD

Year A • 26 April 2026 • Psalter Week 4



**TO HAVE LIFE
TO THE FULL**

JOHN 10:1-10

"I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full" is Jesus' promise in today's Gospel. He comes to bring us the fullness of life.

The fullness of life is something that everyone who is truly human looks for. Many of us go to great lengths to try to enjoy life to the full. We want to have the latest and the best of everything. We attend self-help classes, seek the most rewarding careers, go travelling. Yet, despite all our efforts, we can still end up dissatisfied.

The Christian believes it is only in knowing Jesus that we will find real meaning and experience true life. But very often we are not good at really believing this or putting it into practice. Very often we look every place but in the right place. We forget what Jesus told us: he alone is the answer to all that we are looking for. He is our good shepherd. Follow him, listen to his voice, and we will have the fullness of life. We will experience the joy of living. ■

REFLECT

In today's Gospel, Jesus makes clear his wish for us: he wants everyone to have life and have it to the full. He wants everyone to enjoy the fullness of life, to experience life in all its beauty and potential, to treasure and support life in every aspect, in every respect.

It means opposing abortion and euthanasia. It means doing all we can to help young couples set up home and start a family. The Christian community, Pope Francis stated in his letter for the 2025 jubilee year, should be at the forefront in pointing out the need for a social covenant to support and foster hope, one that is inclusive and not ideological, working for a future filled with the laughter of babies and children, in order to fill the empty cradles in so many parts of our world.

Pro-life also means providing adequate health care and supports for those struggling economically or who are on the fringes of society. It means promoting a healthy work/life balance, so that we can spend quality time with loved ones and have

time for ourselves to unwind, to nurture our minds and passions, and to be able to enjoy life in its extraordinary beauty and richness. It means cultivating an attitude of gratitude for all we have been given and the blessings we can take too easily for granted. It means protecting our precious planet, which is God's gift to us to respect and cherish. It means being pro-life in everything we do, in our attitudes and in our actions, from womb to tomb.

Pope Francis put it like this: "Our defence of the innocent unborn needs to be clear, firm and passionate, for at stake is the dignity of a human life, which is always sacred and demands love for each person, regardless of his or her stage of development. Equally sacred, however, are the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned, the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm and the elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection."

DO

Examine your life. Could you describe yourself as someone who is pro-life in everything you say and do?

PRAY

This is vocations Sunday. Pray for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life, and that all Christians will live out their vocation to preach the Good News. Pray also that people everywhere may experience the joy of living.

LEARN

It is through Jesus that we enter into the life of God.

Jesus is our good shepherd.

The final words of today's Gospel provide one of the shortest and most succinct statements of Jesus' mission: "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full." The chapter and verse are easy to remember: John 10:10.

SAY

**"Lord, you are my good shepherd.
Help me to follow you faithfully
always. Amen."**

He was pointing out that pro-life doesn't stop in the delivery room when a child is born. It covers the entirety of life, from beginning to end. It is to work for a world where everybody can experience the joy of living. Joy of living is the powerful phrase Pope Francis uses.

It means you cannot be pro-life and be indifferent to poverty and injustice. You cannot be pro-life and cut off money to aid organisations that help the poor. You cannot be pro-life and support the death penalty or genocide wherever it takes place or wars of conquest. You cannot be pro-life and at the same time be racist or bigoted or abusive. To be pro-life is to treasure all life as sacred.

The book of Genesis tells us that God saw all that he had made and found it very good. To have enthusiasm for life is to celebrate and delight in the gift of life God has given us. It is, in the words of Pope Francis, to recover the joy of living. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*The merciful love of the Lord fills the earth;
by the word of the Lord the heavens were made, alleluia.*

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
lead us to a share in the joys of heaven,
so that the humble flock may reach
where the brave Shepherd has gone before.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING Acts 2:14a, 36-41

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

On the day of Pentecost Peter, standing with the Eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: 'Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.'

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptised, 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 for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.' And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, 'Save yourselves from this crooked generation.' So those who received his word were baptised, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 23(22):1-3a. 3b-4. 5. 6. R. 1

R: The LORD is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.
Or *Alleluia.*

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;
he revives my soul. **R.**
2. He guides me along the right path,
for the sake of his name.
Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of death,
no evil would I fear, for you are with me.
Your crook and your staff will give me comfort. **R.**
3. You have prepared a table before me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing. **R.**
4. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the LORD's own house shall I dwell
for length of days unending. **R.**

SECOND READING 1 Peter 2:20b-25

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Peter.

Beloved: If when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL John 10:14

R: Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the good shepherd, says the Lord.

I know my sheep and my own know me.

R: Alleluia.

GOSPEL John 10:1-10

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

At that time: Jesus said, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.' This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So Jesus again said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Grant, we pray, O Lord,
that we may always find delight in these paschal mysteries,
so that the renewal constantly at work within us
may be the cause of our unending joy.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*The Good Shepherd has risen,
who laid down his life for his sheep
and willingly died for his flock, alleluia.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Look upon your flock, kind Shepherd,
and be pleased to settle in eternal pastures
the sheep you have redeemed
by the Precious Blood of your Son.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**