

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

### LECTIONARY #49

READING I Acts of the Apostles 2:14a, 36–41

#### A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

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.

Proclaim Peter's words with authority and good volume.

Pause and read with energy. Take your time and be articulate with your words.

#### READING I

Peter's speech on Pentecost, like all the speeches in the Acts of the Apostles, centers on Jesus being raised from the dead. At the conclusion of this first discourse, Peter announces that the crucified and risen Jesus is both Lord and Christ. As Lord, Jesus shares divine authority with the Lord God. As Christ, he is the long-awaited anointed descendant of David. After Peter's proclamation, the audience asking "What are we to do?" shows that Peter has imparted more than information, but has joined the hearers to an active response. In

telling them to repent, Peter calls for conversion of mind, heart, behavior, and relationships, as had Israel's prophets, John the Baptist, and Jesus himself, who had specifically instructed his followers "that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47).

Baptism in the name of Jesus is a sign of repentance that brings about the forgiveness that Jesus announced and also imparts the gift of the Holy Spirit to each of the baptized. The apostolic mission that begins in Jerusalem will extend to the descendants of

those baptized and even to *those far off*, implying inclusion of Gentiles. When Peter declares "save yourselves," the passive verb form does not imply that the believers' own actions will save them, but that they will be saved by God's action, as announced by Joel and cited by Peter (Acts 2:21).

The final verse in today's reading notes the numerical increase of believers that will continue as the Lord adds to their number through the power of the Word and gift of the Holy Spirit (2:47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1, 7).

For meditation and context:

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 23:1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6 (1)

R. 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.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.You spread the table before me  
in the sight of my foes;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.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.

## READING II 1 Peter 2:20b–25

## A reading from the first Letter of Saint Peter

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**.Peter is teaching us how to live—with Christ  
as an example. Speak with purpose and  
intent. Use eye contact to connect with the  
assembly.

Pause after the commas.

Proclaim this line slowly.

## READING II

The first letter attributed to Peter is one of seven New Testament writings commonly designated as “catholic epistles” because they have a catholic, or universal, message. Much of the letter (1:3–4:11) appears to be baptismal catechesis, hymns, and preaching that combine teaching with exhortation, inspiration and encouragement for believers. What Peter (or one of his disciples) says to the baptized community of the first century is applicable to the baptized in every time and place. Christ is always the foundation

for belief and behavior, a model for how to live as well as being the source of salvation.

In today’s reading, Peter uses a Christological hymn to connect believers’ suffering “for doing what is good” with Christ’s own suffering. As it portrays Christ’s unjust suffering, the hymn alludes extensively to a poem of the prophet Isaiah that describes a suffering servant (Isaiah 53:4–12). Christ who suffered “for you” provides an example (*hypogrammos*), a term used in the first-century milieu for a pattern to be copied in writing or drawing. Those who are baptized should also follow in

Christ’s footsteps, meaning that they must walk the path of suffering that he walked. Like Christ, they do not return insult for insult, or threaten those who cause them to suffer.

Example and pattern that Christ is, the self-giving suffering that he endured is much more than a model to follow. On the cross, he bore our sins in his own body so that we might be free from sin. By his wounds we are healed. Besides being a servant who saves, Christ is also a shepherd. As shepherd of the flock, he protects,