

April 30, 2023

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:14a, 36-41

1 Pt 2:20b-25

Jn 10:1-10

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

GROW: There is much we could ponder in today's Scriptures, but the verses that stood out for me are these: "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." I have a hard enough time keeping my inner child under wraps when I suffer due to my own sinfulness or incompetence, and Peter is telling me to be patient when I suffer for *doing what is good*? Well, yes – "because Christ also suffered for [us], leaving an example that [we] should follow in his footsteps." And the clarity of this truth hits me smack in the face. Doing what is good means we are loving another, in some way; we are doing good, *for good*. We are engaging in self-sacrifice, and some form of suffering is inherent to that. But here's the thing: it's an oddly joyful kind of suffering because it produces good fruit and directs our thoughts and vision to the one who is present among us as "the shepherd and guardian of [our] souls." Let us pray for the ability to see each moment of suffering for doing good as "a grace before God."

GO EVANGELIZE | PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

GO: At this point in the Easter season, we might think, "Why can't we focus more on the joy of Jesus' resurrection and less on the suffering that preceded it?" Well, we certainly can ... but we would lose a great part of the Paschal Mystery. We don't embrace the cross for the sake of suffering in itself. We come to the crucifixion to pass *through* it. We are an Easter people living in a Good Friday world. There's no avoiding suffering in our lives, but the Good News of Jesus Christ is that he has redeemed that suffering. He has given us victory over death and is – quite literally – the way to eternal life. In the Gospel Jesus says, "Whoever enters through me will be saved ... I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly." He is our shepherd and we know his voice. During this Eastertide we have an extraordinary opportunity to attend to that voice in a particular way, and to think about how we might be hearing it in a new way this year.

ACT: Is there a charity you have been meaning to call to volunteer your time? Is there a neighbor who might be able to use a helping hand? Is there a friend or family member who has fallen out of favor and you just know it's the right thing to do to get in touch? Act this week. Sacrifice just a bit for the sake of good.