

## WHEN SHEPHERDS INFLICT DEEP WOUNDS

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Ancient Near Eastern texts traditionally referred to the divinity as a shepherd. The Text of the Pyramids speaks of Mekhentyirty, the blind god who watches over the stars of the night, as the shepherd of the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh himself was a shepherd who became immortal at his death. This shepherd-god gave and sustained life, and provided for the well-being of his subjects. In the Bible, the image of the shepherd is imbued with the particular relationship that binds the Lord God to his people. God declares himself the shepherd of the people (Ez 34:11-22; Ps 23; Is 40:11). The prophet Jeremiah proclaims that Yahweh will give Israel new shepherds who will pasture the people with integrity (Jer 3:15). Ezekiel later also rebukes the kings and other leaders for their neglect of the people (Ez 34:1-10). He proclaims that God will take the people, his flock, out of the charge of their human leaders. In time, God will give the people a shepherd of his own choice, another David (Ez 34:23-24). Jesus sees his relationship with the crowd that follow him as that of a shepherd and sheep (Mt 9:36-37). His compassion makes Jesus feed the crowd. Later, Jesus proclaims himself as the “Good Shepherd” who lays down his life for his flock (Jn 10). Jesus also entrusts the role of shepherding to his disciples. Jesus’ words to Peter—“Feed my lambs”—can be taken as the giving of

a solemn charge to care for and to rule the community of believers in his name. Before giving the charge, Jesus asks Peter three times, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” We see this threefold confession of love as making up for Peter’s threefold denials of Jesus during the Passion. But there is more to this: Jesus, the Chief Shepherd (1 Pt 5:4), enters into a contract with Peter as a delegated caretaker. In accordance with the Semitic form of entering an agreement (Gn 23:3-20), Jesus stresses the terms of the agreement three times in Peter’s confession of love. The apostolic tradition will later pass on this image of the shepherd who is “feeding the flock” as a metaphor for Christian leadership (1 Pt 5:1-4; Acts 20:28-29). And this has continued to our day. But as in the time of the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the shepherds have not always been faithful to their charge. Forsaking the love of the Lord, they turn into “wolves in sheep’s clothing.” In his own time, Paul warned the Christian elders of Ephesus, “Keep watch over yourselves and over the whole flock of which the holy Spirit has appointed you overseers, in which you tend the church of

God that he acquired with his own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come among you, and they will not spare the flock” (Acts 20:28-29). In our time, Pope Francis, responding to the reports of clerical abuse and the ecclesial cover-up of abuse, sent an impassioned letter to the whole People of God, calling on the Church to be close to victims in solidarity and to join in acts of prayer and fasting for such “atrocities.” It is essential—Pope Francis wrote—that we, as a Church, be able to acknowledge and condemn, with sorrow and shame, the atrocities perpetrated by consecrated persons, clerics, and all those entrusted with the mission of watching over and caring for those most vulnerable... An awareness of sin helps us to acknowledge the errors, the crimes, and the wounds caused in the past and allows us, in the present, to be more open and committed along a journey of renewed conversion.

## THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

### Entrance Antiphon (Rv 1:5-6)

*(Recited when there is no opening song.)*

**Christ loved us and washed us clean of our sins by his Blood, and made us into a kingdom, priests for his God and Father, alleluia.**

### Greeting

*(The sign of the cross is made here.)*

**P**—The Lord be with you.

**All**—And with your spirit.

### Introduction

*(These [or similar words] may be used to address the assembly.)*

**P**—Simon Peter denied Jesus three times, and now Jesus gives him a chance to redeem himself by asking him to profess his love the same number of times he had denied him. After Peter reaffirms his love for the Lord, he is given a new commission—to be a shepherd of Jesus' flock.

Like Peter, we too had denied the Lord many times. But do we choose to return to Jesus or remain far from him? Do we believe that the Lord's love is stronger than our sins?

### Penitential Act

**P**—Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. *(Pause)*

**P**—You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: Lord, have mercy.

**All**—Lord, have mercy.

**P**—You came to call sinners: Christ, have mercy.

**All**—Christ, have mercy.

**P**—You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us: Lord, have mercy.

**All**—Lord, have mercy.

**P**—May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

**All**—Amen.

### Collect

**P**—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

O God, who by the glorification of your Christ and the light of the Holy Spirit have unlocked for us

the gates of eternity, grant, we pray, that, partaking of so great a gift, our devotion may grow deeper and our faith be strengthened.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

**All**—Amen.

## LITURGY OF THE WORD



### First Reading

*(Acts 25:13b-21) (Sit)*

*The Roman custody of the apostle Paul is discussed by the new procurator, Felix, with King Agrippa who is on visit.*

### A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

KING AGRIPPA and Bernice arrived in Caesarea on a visit to Festus. Since they spent several days there, Festus referred Paul's case to the king, saying, "There is a man here left in custody by Felix. When I was in Jerusalem the chief priests and the elders of the Jews brought charges against him and demanded his condemnation. I answered them that it was not Roman practice to hand over an accused person before he has faced his accusers and had the opportunity to defend himself against their charge. So when they came together here, I made no delay; the next day I took my seat on the tribunal and ordered the man to be brought in. His accusers stood around him, but did not charge him with any of the crimes I suspected. Instead they had some issues with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus who had died but who Paul claimed was alive. Since I was at a loss how to investigate this controversy, I asked if he were willing to go to Jerusalem and there stand trial on these charges. And when Paul appealed that he be held in custody for the Emperor's decision, I ordered

him held until I could send him to Caesar."

—The word of the Lord.

**All**—Thanks be to God.

### Responsorial Psalm (Ps 103)

**R**—The Lord has established his throne in heaven.

**1.** Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all my being, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. **(R)**

**2.** For as the heavens are high above the earth, so surpassing is his kindness toward those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has he put our transgressions from us. **(R)**

**3.** The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. Bless the LORD, all you his angels, you mighty in strength, who do his bidding. **(R)**

### Alleluia (Jn 14:26) *(Stand)*

**All**—Alleluia! Alleluia! The Holy Spirit will teach you everything and remind you of all I told you. Alleluia!

### Gospel (Jn 21:15-19)

**P**—A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

**All**—Glory to you, O Lord.

AFTER JESUS had revealed himself to his disciples and eaten breakfast with them, he said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" Simon Peter answered him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." He then said to Simon Peter a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Simon Peter answered him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him,

"Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Amen, amen, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had said this, he said to him, "Follow me."

—The Gospel of the Lord.

**All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Homily** (*Sit*)

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### Prayer of the Faithful

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**P**—Let us pray to the heavenly Father that his Spirit may enkindle our hearts to love him, drawing us into the fullness of love. With humility and trust, we pray:

**R—Lord, hear our prayer.**

**C**—That the shepherds of the Church may deepen their love for the Lord, taking care and guarding the flock entrusted to them, we pray: **(R)**

**C**—That the love of the Lord may inspire our newly elected government officials to pursue programs that protect the rights and dignity of the poor and the weak, we pray: **(R)**

**C**—That like Peter, may we rise from our weaknesses and failures, and rely on the grace of the Lord more than on our personal capacities and strengths, we pray: **(R)**

**C**—That the sick and those who are burdened with trials and difficulties may know the love of Christ and unite themselves with the suffering of Jesus, we pray: **(R)**

**C**—That the dead may find eternal joy in the Heart of Jesus in heaven, we pray: **(R)**

**C**—Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (*pause*). We pray: **(R)**

**P**—Loving Father, listen to the prayers of your flock. May you give us strength to overcome our weaknesses through Christ our Lord.

**All—Amen.**

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### LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

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#### Presentation of the Gifts

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(*Stand*)

**P**—Pray, brethren...

**All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.**

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#### Prayer over the Offerings

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**P**—Look mercifully, O Lord, we pray, upon the sacrificial gifts of your people, and, that they may become acceptable to you, let the coming of the Holy Spirit cleanse our consciences.

Through Christ our Lord.

**All—Amen.**

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#### Preface (Ascension II)

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**P**—The Lord be with you.

**All—And with your spirit.**

**P**—Lift up your hearts.

**All—We lift them up to the Lord.**

**P**—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All—It is right and just.**

**P**—It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For after his Resurrection he plainly appeared to all his disciples and was taken up to heaven in their sight, that he might make us sharers in his divinity.

Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise and even the heavenly Powers, with the angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim: **All—Holy, Holy, Holy...** (*Kneel*)

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#### Acclamation (*Stand*)

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**All—Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.**

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## THE COMMUNION RITE

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### The Lord's Prayer

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**All—Our Father...**

**P**—Deliver us, Lord...

**All—For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.**

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### Invitation to Peace

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#### Invitation to Communion

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(*Kneel*)

**P**—Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

**All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

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#### Communion Antiphon

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(*Jn 16:13*)

**When the spirit of truth comes, he will teach you all truth, says the Lord, alleluia.**

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#### Prayer after Communion

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(*Stand*)

**P**—Let us pray. (*Pause*)

O God, by whose mysteries we are cleansed and nourished, grant, we pray, that this banquet which you give us may bring everlasting life.

Through Christ our Lord.

**All—Amen.**

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## THE CONCLUDING RITES

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**P**—The Lord be with you.

**All—And with your spirit.**

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#### Prayer over the People

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**P**—Bow down for the blessing.

(*Pause*)

Be gracious to your people, O Lord, and do not withhold consolation on earth from those you call to strive for heaven.

Through Christ our Lord.

**All—Amen.**

**P**—And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (+) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

**All—Amen.**

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#### Dismissal

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**P**—The Mass is ended. Go in the peace of the Lord.

**All—Thanks be to God.**



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## PRAYER TO THE SACRED HEART *of Jesus*

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**D**ivine Jesus, you have said, "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," behold me kneeling at your feet, filled with a lively faith and confidence in the promises dictated by your Sacred Heart and pronounced by Your adorable lips. I come to ask this favor: *(Here silently mention your petitions).*

To whom can I turn if not to you whose Heart is the source of all graces and merits? Where should I seek if not in the treasure which contains all the riches of your kindness and mercy? Where should I knock if not at the door through which God gives himself to us and through which we go to God? I have recourse to You, Heart of Jesus. In you I find consolation when afflicted,

protection when persecuted, strength when burdened with trials, and light in doubt and darkness.

Dear Jesus, I firmly believe that you can grant me the grace I implore, even though it should require a miracle. You have only to will it, and my prayer will be granted. I admit that I am most unworthy of your favors, but this is not a reason for me to be discouraged. You are the God of Mercy and you will not refuse a contrite heart. Cast upon me a look of mercy, I beg of you, and your kind Heart will find in my miseries and weaknesses a reason for granting my prayers.

O Sacred Heart, whatever may be your decision with regard to my request, I will never stop adoring, loving, praising and serving you. My Lord Jesus, be pleased to accept this my act of perfect resignation to the decrees of your adorable Heart which I sincerely desire may be fulfilled by me and all your creatures forever.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I know that there is but one thing impossible to you: to be without pity to those who are suffering or in distress. Look upon me, I beg of you, dear Jesus, and grant me the grace for which I humbly implore you through the Immaculate Heart of your most sorrowful Mother. You have entrusted me to her as her child, and her prayers are all-powerful with you. Amen.

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