

2023 EASTER REFLECTION BOOKLET | YEAR A

# The Word The Life of the World

4th Sunday of Easter

Listen to the Word





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## Opening Prayer

God our Father, You gave us our Good Shepherd, and through the ages Your voice was heard by many as You called them and guided them. Despite the many distractions, Your voice rang clearly for them. Your call was to be who we are in Your presence, a child in this great world, You created through Your Word. For only through Your Word can we find true wisdom, peace and direction in a world torn by strife due to individualistic pursuit of vain glory.



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# Listen to the Word

At this time of celebrating the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we celebrate the conquest of good over evil, the liberation from self-destruction and the Light of Truth being a beacon for all who search for the Truth. We praise and glorify You, through Christ our Lord.

Amen

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Readings

*4th Sunday of Easter*

# *Listen to the Word*

## **1st Reading: Acts of the Apostles 2:14, 36-41**

We know that listening is not mere hearing, that the sounds that go through our ears need to find a home in our minds and hearts for things to truly take root. The crowd heard Peter's preaching and was 'cut to the heart', showing how they listened and allowed his words to truly touch their hearts. When we open our hearts to listen to the Word as they did, we too can be converted as the crowd was. A heart that listens to the Lord will lead us to respond to Him.



*4th Sunday of Easter*

# *Listen to the Word*

## **2nd Reading: 1 Peter 2:20-25**

Peter's letter reveals a stark contrast: between the Lord who was obedient to His Father enduring suffering for our sake, and us who are like sheep who have gone astray. The difference is obedience, and the Lord is the example of what it means to truly obey. The word 'obedience' is derived from the Latin word for 'listen' and so the invitation to obey God our Father is also an invitation to listen to His Word. Our journey towards obedience to God thus begins with us learning to listen in order for us to obey.

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## **Gospel: John 10:1-10**

The relationship between the shepherd and the sheep is very much auditory: the sheep know and listen to the shepherd's voice. The Gospel reading reminds us that this relationship is not something that happens overnight. The sheep first hear the voice of the shepherd before slowly recognising it as the one who cares for them. It's only after they recognise the voice that they follow the shepherd and not a stranger. Our relationship with our Father is like that: we hear our Father's voice and begin to follow God as we recognise this voice deep in our hearts.

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Reflections



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Sheep have a reputation for not being very clever and for being easily led astray. Whether this is true or not isn't something that city dwellers can confirm but what does seem to be true is that after a time, the sheep grow to know their shepherd and would willingly follow this person anywhere. If we look beyond the image of just sheep and shepherd, and focus on the relationship that grows between them, we realise the depth of this parable and it reminds us of how our relationship with the Lord should be like.



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Our lives of faith are based very much on the relationship that we build with the Lord, a relationship that needs to be nurtured through our listening to Him with our entire hearts so that we can grow to know and love Him better. This relationship is not something that we keep for ourselves. We celebrate Vocation Sunday this week and it's good to remember that we're all called (the word "vocation" derives from the Latin *vocare* "to call") by the Lord to live our lives for Him and for others in unique ways.



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Healthy relationships require good communication. We foster good communication by being open to the voice of the Lord and by allowing this voice to touch our hearts. This is where we begin to harness the ability to follow the Lord in His call for us to go out to serve Him in the world. This is what 'mission' is all about — having a strong relationship with the Lord. A relationship that is based on us listening to Him from our hearts and to respond to Him through how we live our lives, lovingly and faithfully.

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Sharing Questions



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## Personal Reflection & Sharing Questions

What struck you from the passages of scripture?

What stirs your heart? Remain with it for a while.

- Try to remember a time when a passage of scripture, a prayer or a moment during the Eucharist that you heard God our Father speaking to you. How did you feel then and how were you prompted to respond to God?
- The aim of good listening is a good relationship with God. How would you describe your relationship with God now and what might God be inviting you to do to build this relationship?





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Sharing Questions

**For Small Christian Communities**

- Is your community able to listen to the despair and pain of others without jumping into giving solutions?
- What are the words of life that you offer to those in the community? Are these words the Word of God?





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Sharing Questions

**For Ministry**

- How has the Easter celebration helped us learn to listen to the voice of our heavenly Father?
- How has the ministry been instrumental for us to harness the ability to follow the Lord in His call for us to go out to serve Him in the Church and in the world?





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Sharing Questions

**For Family**

- Has the Easter celebration helped us as a family to listen to one another? What can we, as a family, do to better listen to each other as we grow to listen more to the Lord?
- What spiritual practices (praying, reading scripture etc.) can we adopt as a family so that we can grow in our relationship with the Lord?





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## Take home

A heart that listens to the Lord will lead us to build a deep relationship with Him. We do this in the reality of our lives, while discerning where the Lord is calling us on mission.



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## Doing your bit

Rework your sharing if necessary. Read your written sharing (reflections) and see if you need to make any changes. Pray again the three verses that had struck you.





# Closing Prayer

Father, we can never thank You enough for the Good Shepherd, our risen Lord Jesus Christ. Your gentle presence is here with us, listening to and accompanying us as we reflect on Your Word. Our lives of faith are based very much on the relationship we have with You and Your Word.



# Closing Prayer

This relationship is nurtured through our listening to Your Word with our entire hearts so that we can live according to it. It is in listening to Your Word that we can hear Your voice directing us to the right path. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen

