

## Sunday's

## READINGS

Jeremiah 23:1–6  
Ephesians 2:13–18  
Mark 6:30–34

Scan the code to read today's readings. →



## Opening PRAYER

*Jesus, my Good Shepherd, help me to recognize how desperately I need to be led by you. You lead me to greener pastures, the only place where I will have my deepest needs satisfied. Amen.*



## Thoughts for REFLECTION

What helps you to trust that God wants to lead you to greener pastures?

What are the needs that you have today?

*Awaken* is written and edited by Jo Ann Paradise, D.Min.



## What You NEED to KNOW

### Scripture Background

#### Jeremiah 23:1–6

Jeremiah is writing about the last years before the Babylonian exile (587 B.C.). His focus in this reading is on the failure of leadership in Judah (the southern kingdom), which for Jeremiah is an underlying cause of the destruction of the kingdom. While the Old Testament gives us many images of God as the Good Shepherd, the kings of Israel were also shepherds. They were appointed by God to care for and protect his people. God asserts his primary place in the lives of the Israelites. New kings will be appointed to rule with justice and righteousness. And from these men of the Covenant a shoot from David will bring about the Kingdom of God.

#### Ephesians 2:13–18

This letter is addressed to a church community in Ephesus that consisted of a great number of Gentiles, or non-Jews. Saint Paul offers the image of Jesus as the Peace-maker. Paul points to how Jesus has broken down the walls between Jews and Gentiles. He has broken down the wall between God and all peoples. The wall that separated death and eternal life was shattered on the Cross.

Now, death is the doorway to the possibility of total communion with God forever. Jesus is the gift of God that has taken us from division to communion in our human relationships and in our relationship with the Divine. How great is our God?

#### Mark 6:30–34

This passage gives us a glimpse of the Apostles as they return from their mission. Sent two by two to preach and perform wondrous signs, they return exhausted and spiritually drained. Recognizing their condition, Jesus takes them away in a boat to rest awhile. By the time they arrive at their next destination, crowds had already gathered. In a rare passage, we are given a look into the emotional life of Jesus. He had pity on the people, for they were sheep without a shepherd. One of the responsibilities of a shepherd was to move the sheep to greener pastures, a place where their stomachs could be filled. Like Jeremiah, Jesus recognizes that these people need to be moved to a place where their relationship with God could be restored. It needed to be redirected away from the oppressive misinterpretation of the Torah taught by their spiritual leaders.





## Points to Ponder

### Following the Leader

Examination of our current workforce tells us that working for a good manager or a good leader is more important than salary. Those are powerful words when you consider that we are living in a consumerist society. It underscores the truth that built into our human psyche is the need to be moving toward a common, meaningful goal. It is important for us to know where we are being led. If the pasture is not meaningful to us, we are less committed and less passionate. As we walk our faith journey, it is essential that we reflect on that human reality. Where do you believe Jesus, the Good Shepherd, is leading you? Even when we have come to believe that our perfect pasture is communion with God in eternal life, holding on to the hope that God is leading us there can be challenging. Trusting that God's infinite capacity to see the bigger picture takes commitment.

- What have you committed yourself to that helps you to grow more passionate in your faith?
- Reflect upon a time when you experienced a good leader. What qualities did she or he possess?



Lord Jesus, you are truly present. Amen!



Receive Communion often, very often... there you have the sole remedy, if you want to be cured. Jesus has not put this attraction in your heart for nothing.

—Saint Therese of Lisieux

Strengthen belief in the True Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Visit the Pflaum Eucharist resources page.



Connecting GOSPEL

## and CHURCH TEACHING

### Where You Lead, Will I Follow?

Creating something first requires the creator to name the purpose of the creation. If you do not know your goal for it, or how it can live out the fullness of what you imagined it to be, your creation will not hold any value. Once you assent to the belief that there is a Creator, what must follow is your understanding that all of creation has within it a meaning or purpose. "God created the world to show forth and communicate

his glory. That his creatures should share in his truth, goodness, and beauty—this is the glory for which God created them" (CCC, 319). The *Catechism* continues, "God guides all his creatures with wisdom and love to their ultimate end" (CCC, 321). This is the Father of Jesus, the Creator of all.

➔ To learn more, refer to CCC, 50–58, 319, and 321 or go to Booklet 2, Session 1 in Growing Faith.



### Closing PRAYER

*Lord God, give me the grace to know your purpose in creating me. Help me to know and accept that I am unique and precious in your sight. Amen.*

### FAMILY CORNER

Scan here for parent resources. ➔



#### Question of the Week

How do you find the energy to do the things you need to do when you are tired?



#### Family Prayer

Jesus, we know your grace is enough for whatever we need to do. Please help us turn to you when we need rest and strength. Amen.