



John 10:27-30

27 Jesus said: 'The sheep that belong to me listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life; they will never be lost and no one will ever steal them from me. 29 The Father who gave them to me is greater than anyone, and no one can steal from the Father. 30 The Father and I are one.'

Other readings: Acts 13:14, 43-52 Psalm 99 (100) Apocalypse 7:9,14-17

Having listened to the accounts of the appearances of the risen Jesus in the Gospel of John we now consider some of the words of Jesus from earlier in the gospel, which richly illustrate his mission and identity. We read from the Gospel of John throughout the Easter period due to its profound insights into the person and work of Jesus. It is most appropriate to reflect on these deep truths and rich images as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and his gift of new life to us.

Today's passage is taken from the tenth chapter of the gospel, which is renowned for Jesus' words: 'I am the good shepherd'. In fact, the chapter includes various sayings of Jesus relating to the image of the shepherd and his sheep. The use of this image, or parable, takes us back into the books of the Old Testament, where God is on several occasions described as a shepherd who has care for the sheep. The most famous instance of this is of course Psalm 22 (23), which begins with the words 'The Lord is my shepherd. There is nothing I shall want.'

Despite the brevity of today's passage from John's gospel, several important themes of the gospel occur. 'Belonging to Christ' as sheep to a shepherd presupposes hearing and accepting the word. In John's gospel we know Jesus himself as 'the Word'.

Finally, Jesus speaks of his relationship with the Father. 'The Father and I are one' is a statement of enormous importance in helping us to understand the person of Jesus and the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

How do I respond to the call to follow Christ as my shepherd?

What consolation does this gospel passage provide?

We pray for a deeper sense of belonging to the world-wide 'flock of Christ'.

We pray for reverence and love for the mystery of God, who is Three in One.