



About the Readings on July 21, 2024

****Click on the links for the Bible Verse(s)*

Sunday, July 17–23

Lectionary 16

This is a day for the sheep to be fed, the warring factions to come to peace, the aliens to become citizens, the building that is the church to stand upon Christ.

[Jeremiah 23:1-6](#)

The choice of Jeremiah 23 today exemplifies the historic use that the church has made of the Old Testament: to understand the New Testament. Verse 3 describes God as the worthy shepherd, and Mark 6:34 assumes the hearer knows this metaphor when it hints that Jesus is that shepherd. Also verse 5 reminds us of Advent 2 A and Advent 1 C, which use the metaphor of the righteous branch of Jesse's tree. Like Jeremiah, Christ was also rejected by his hearers.

[The Psalm for the Day](#)

[Psalm 23](#) is a good one to memorize. This Sunday's readings speak of believers in the plural, and Psalm 23 applies the metaphor of the flock to each individual. Verse 6 speaks of my dwelling in the house of the Lord, which today's reading from Ephesians uses as a metaphor for all believers in Christ.

[Ephesians 2:11-22](#)

Today, with the author of Ephesians, we can say that there is no more dividing wall between different flocks. Christ the shepherd is our peace, the single cornerstone on which the church builds.

[Mark 6:30-34, 53-56](#)

Without ridiculing sheep, which the Bible never does, we can understand ourselves as like sheep: we are God's creatures, the divine flock, nurtured to serve the community with food and clothing, always needing the care of a shepherd. The word pastor means shepherd. Jesus and his disciples rarely rest, since there is a perpetual need for them to teach and heal. We are the sheep requiring God's care, we are those who touch the fringe of his cloak for healing. The words and the food of this morning are like the fringes of his cloak.