



## FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

### FIRST READING: Acts 9:36-43

A reading from Acts.

<sup>36</sup>Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha,  
which in Greek is Dorcas.

She was devoted to good works and acts of charity.

<sup>37</sup>At that time she became ill and died.

When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs.

<sup>38</sup>Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there,  
sent two men to him with the request,

“Please come to us without delay.”

<sup>39</sup>So Peter got up and went with them;  
and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs.

All the widows stood beside him,  
weeping and showing tunics and other clothing  
that Dorcas had made while she was with them.

<sup>40</sup>Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed.

He turned to the body and said, “Tabitha, get up.”

Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up.

<sup>41</sup>He gave her his hand and helped her up.

Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive.

<sup>42</sup>This became known throughout Joppa,  
and many believed in the Lord.

<sup>43</sup>Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time  
with a certain Simon, a tanner.

The word of the Lord.            *or*            Word of God, word of life.

### PSALMODY: Psalm 23

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#### FIRST READING    *Lydda = LID-uh*

This simple but dramatically miraculous story illustrates again that almighty God has power over death. That is the reason it appears in the cycle of Easter texts. Bring a sense of mystery, a sense of awe to the reading and the hearers will be helped. Do not lose sight of the last two verses. Verse 42 needs to be heard. Verse 43 is a delightful little detail that suggests that in the midst of God’s mighty acts, life goes on! Do not throw the line away.

## SECOND READING: Revelation 7:9-17

A reading from Revelation.

<sup>9</sup>After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands.

<sup>10</sup>They cried out in a loud voice, saying,  
“Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne,  
and to the Lamb!”

<sup>11</sup>And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, <sup>12</sup>singing,  
“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom  
and thanksgiving and honor  
and power and might  
be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

<sup>13</sup>Then one of the elders addressed me, saying,  
“Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?”

<sup>14</sup>I said to him, “Sir, you are the one that knows.”

Then he said to me,

“These are they who have come out of the great ordeal;  
they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

<sup>15</sup>For this reason they are before the throne of God,  
and worship him day and night within his temple,  
and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.

<sup>16</sup>They will hunger no more, and thirst no more;  
the sun will not strike them,  
nor any scorching heat;

<sup>17</sup>for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd,  
and he will guide them to springs of the water of life,  
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

The word of the Lord.      *or*      Word of God, word of life.

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### SECOND READING

First and foremost this is a vision. Revelation! A sense of wonder is essential. See the scene! Fill in the details in your mind before you begin to read. Help the hearer see what you see. As with the first reading, this text declares that God sustains God's own and that they will take their place around the heavenly throne forever.

## **GOSPEL: John 10:22-30**

The holy gospel according to John.

<sup>22</sup>At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem.  
It was winter, <sup>23</sup>and Jesus was walking in the temple,  
in the portico of Solomon.

<sup>24</sup>So the Jews gathered around him and said to him,  
“How long will you keep us in suspense?  
If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.”

<sup>25</sup>Jesus answered, “I have told you, and you do not believe.  
The works that I do in my Father’s name testify to me;

<sup>26</sup>but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep.

<sup>27</sup>My sheep hear my voice.

I know them, and they follow me.

<sup>28</sup>I give them eternal life, and they will never perish.

No one will snatch them out of my hand.

<sup>29</sup>What my Father has given me is greater than all else,  
and no one can snatch it out of the Father’s hand.

<sup>30</sup>The Father and I are one.”

The gospel of the Lord.

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### **GOSPEL**

“Hear” the voice of Jesus before attempting to bring it to life. Does this reply to the question voiced in verse 24 ring out? Or is there a kind of understated confidence that leads to the holy yet startling truth that “the Father and I are one”?