

**Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions [FDLC]**  
**Mystagogical Reflection on the Collects of the *Roman Missal***  
Link to Mystagogy Project on FDLC home page: <http://www.fdlc.org>.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

April 21, 2013

Collect:

Almighty ever-living God,  
lead us to a share in the joys of heaven,  
so that the humble flock may reach  
where the brave Shepherd has gone before.  
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

Reflection:

This prayer echoes the themes of the readings associated with the Fourth Sunday of Easter, those describing Jesus as the Good Shepherd. Found in the 8<sup>th</sup> century *Gelasian Sacramentary* and recovered for our current Missal, this Collect draws those who gather for Eastertide worship more deeply into the paschal themes of the season.

Jesus Christ – the Lamb of the new Passover, sacrificed for our salvation – is (paradoxically) also the Shepherd. It is Jesus who bravely leads us into eternal life by his own Death and Resurrection. Christ has opened the gates of paradise and leads his “humble flock” to the “joys of heaven.”

But sharing in the joys of heaven as one of Jesus’ flock requires humility. Do we have the humility to truly follow Christ, even unto death? Are we willing to set aside our own will so that we may hear our Shepherd’s voice and walk in his ways? This prayer invites us to share in Christ’s Resurrection by our humble submission to the Good Shepherd, as one of the humble flock reborn in Baptism.

Prayer:

O Lord who are both Lamb and Shepherd, grant me a humble heart so as to know your will, and the strength to bravely follow you from death into life.

Submitted by:

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