

Lectionary readings: Acts 9: 36-43; Psalm 23; Revelation 7: 9-17; John 10: 22-30

For reflection and prayer

- **Acts 9:** Tabitha was 'well-known for doing good and helping out'. I hope we, too, are known for doing good and that people know we can be relied on for being compassionate and giving practical help when needed. Here we see Peter acting out Jesus' message: *'I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of.'* (John 10:10 The Message) Tabitha had committed her life to Jesus and to living like Jesus, sharing His life and love with everyone she met. May we, too, be alive with God's life and bring new life to those who are at a low ebb or suffering in any way, and reach out with God's love to all.
- **Psalm 23:** The Psalmist declares that, because the Lord is his Shepherd, he is fulfilled and has everything he needs to give his life meaning and purpose. He speaks of the stillness and peace he enjoys as gifts from God. How we need to know that stillness, inner peace and contentment in our lives today. He speaks of his lack of fear when he comes face to face with death because he knows the Lord's presence with him. He speaks of the blessings of God that help him to face his fears and other 'enemies' that trouble his soul. And he is assured that the Lord's goodness and unfailing love will be his forever. May we, too, open ourselves to God and know the blessings of His presence every day this week.
- **Revelation 7:** Here we have a lovely picture of 'a huge crowd, too huge to count' - all nations and tribes, all

racess and languages - worshipping God. Let's not think we know who will share life with God after death. Let's not try to label people as 'saved' or 'unsaved'. Let's make sure that, as we live life here and now - and let's face it, life can be hard, painful, difficult and we can be subject to great suffering at times - we face up to all that comes our way with courage and hope, finding God with us and embracing all, allowing our faith to grow and our love for God to deepen. This is fullness of life.

- **John 10:** It seems amazing that the people who had Jesus living amongst them should fail to make the connection between His way of living and the promised One. But we, too, fail to make connections, fail to see God in the people around us and in the experiences we go through. So often our minds are made up; but we need to be willing to have our beliefs challenged, our attitudes changed and to live the questions and work through our doubts, keeping an open mind. Then we may well be truly astonished as our eyes are opened to God's presence with us and we experience ourselves being filled with that fullness of life that Jesus came to bring us.

A prayer

Risen Christ, we give you thanks that we can recognise you in the Scriptures and hear you speak to us. We give you thanks for the spiritual food you give us. Open our eyes that we may find you more and more in friend and stranger. Thank you for times of doubt and struggle, for times of confusion and turmoil, for times of wrestling to make sense of life, for it is in these times that we learn what faith is. Lord, you are present with us wherever we are and you know what we are going through. May we trust you and commit ourselves to you in such a way that your risen life surges through our beings and we come alive with your life and love. Amen.