

# FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Over the past few weeks, we have reflected on how the risen Christ meets us in our fear and walks with us along the path of recovery. This week, the Easter journey deepens as we consider one of the most persistent obstacles in our lives: fear. Even as we begin to experience healing, fear can remain beneath the surface, influencing our thoughts, decisions, and relationships.

Many of us know how powerful fear can be. In active addiction, fear often drove our behavior—fear of being exposed, not getting what we thought we needed, or facing ourselves honestly. In response, we turned to substances or compulsive behaviors for relief. Yet in recovery, we begin to see that these behaviors did not remove fear—they intensified it.

The *Alcoholics Anonymous* text describes fear as “an evil and corroding thread” that touches nearly every aspect of our lives (p. 67). Fear can shape how we think, relate to others, and respond to uncertainty. Even as we change our behavior, it can remain present in subtler forms like control, avoidance, or self-protection.

This Sunday’s gospel reading offers a powerful image of how Christ meets us in that fear (John 10:1-10). Jesus describes Himself as the shepherd who calls His sheep by name and leads them:

*“The sheep hear his voice, as the shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice.”*

This image speaks directly to recovery. Many of us spent years listening to other voices—the voice of fear, shame, or self-reliance. These voices led us into isolation. In contrast, the

voice of Christ leads us out. He calls us personally and invites us to follow.

Learning to recognize that voice takes time. It can be difficult to distinguish between fear-based thinking and the gentle guidance of God. This is why connection is essential. Through meetings, sponsorship, and honest relationships, we begin to hear truth more clearly and discern what is rooted in fear.

Jesus also says the sheep will not follow a stranger because they do not recognize that voice. In recovery, this means learning to step away from patterns that once felt familiar but were harmful. The voice of fear may still sound convincing, but over time, we begin to see that it does not lead us toward life.

Psalm 23 offers a complementary image: *“Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; for you are at my side.”* The promise is not that we avoid the valley, but that we do not walk through it alone.

One of the most important shifts in recovery is moving from being driven by fear to being guided by trust. Step Three invites us to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God. This does not eliminate fear overnight, but it gives us a new way to respond—pausing, praying, and seeking support.

Step Four deepens this work by inviting us to make a searching and fearless moral inventory, including our fears. As we name them honestly, we begin to see how they have shaped our actions and relationships. This process brings clarity. As our fears are brought into the light, they lose their power, and we grow in our ability to recognize fear and choose faith.

As we continue through the Easter season, we are reminded that the risen Christ is not distant. He is our Good Shepherd,

walking ahead of us, calling us by name, and leading us toward freedom. Fear may still appear, but it no longer has the final word.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When have you noticed fear influencing your thoughts or decisions in your recovery journey?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What helps you distinguish between the voice of fear and the voice of truth in your life?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How are you learning to respond differently when fear arises instead of returning to old patterns?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## MASS READINGS

**FIRST READING** Acts 2:14a, 36-41

**RESP. PS.** Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b4, 5, 6

**SECOND READING** 1 Peter 2:20b-25

**GOSPEL** John 10:1-10