

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, we reflect on how fear can continue to shape our lives, especially for those who grew up in dysfunctional or unpredictable environments. Even as we begin to heal, fear can remain present, influencing how we think, relate, and respond to the world around us.

Many adult children learned early in life to live with a constant sense of uncertainty. Fear may have shown up as the need to stay alert, avoid conflict, or manage the emotional environment around us. These responses helped us cope, but they can continue into adulthood in ways that keep us stuck.

The *Alcoholics Anonymous* text describes fear as “an evil and corroding thread” that touches nearly every part of life (p. 67). This can resonate deeply for adult children. Fear can shape how we approach relationships, how we express ourselves, and how we handle uncertainty. Even as we grow, it can remain present in subtle ways like people-pleasing, withdrawal, or over-control.

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 to the experience of learning a new way of living. Many of us grew up listening to voices shaped by fear—internal messages about needing to perform, stay small, or manage everything ourselves. In recovery, we begin to hear a different voice. Christ calls us by name and invites us into a new identity rooted in love and truth.

Learning to recognize that voice takes time. It often requires slowing down and becoming more aware of our thoughts and reactions. Through meetings, support, and prayer, we begin to notice when fear is guiding us and when we are being invited into something different.

Jesus says the sheep will not follow a stranger. In recovery, this can mean learning to step away from old patterns that once felt necessary. The voice of fear may still sound familiar, but over time, we begin to recognize that it does not lead us toward freedom.

Psalm 23 reminds us: *“Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; for you are at my side.”* For many adult children, this is a new experience—learning that we do not have to face life alone.

One of the most important shifts in recovery is moving from fear to trust. Step Three invites us to turn our lives over to God’s care. This can feel unfamiliar, especially if trust was difficult to learn early in life, but it opens the door to healing.

Step Four deepens this work by helping us recognize how fear has shaped our patterns. 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 Christ walks ahead of us. He knows our story and calls us forward with compassion. Fear may still arise, but it no longer has to lead. We are learning to follow a new voice.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When have you noticed fear influencing how you respond in relationships or situations?

- What helps you become more aware of fear-based patterns in your daily life?

- How are you learning to trust God and others in ways that feel new or unfamiliar?

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