

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 how fear can shape the lives of those impacted by a loved one's addiction. Even as we begin to experience healing, fear can remain beneath the surface, influencing how we think, respond, and relate to others.

Many of us know how powerful fear can be. We may have feared what would happen next, feared saying the wrong thing, or feared losing someone we care about. In response, we may have tried to manage, control, or fix situations that felt overwhelming. Yet over time, we begin to see that these efforts did not remove fear—they often intensified it and left us feeling more exhausted and uncertain.

The *Alcoholics Anonymous* text describes fear as “an evil and corroding thread” that touches nearly every aspect of life (p. 67). This can be true for those impacted by another person's addiction as well. Fear can shape how we communicate, how we set boundaries, and how we respond to uncertainty. Even as we begin recovery, it can show up in subtler ways like overthinking, people-pleasing, or trying to control outcomes.

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 reminds us that we are not meant to navigate life alone. Many of us have spent years listening to other

voices—the voice of fear, urgency, or responsibility. These voices often pulled us toward anxiety and overextension. In contrast, the voice of Christ leads us toward peace. He calls us personally and invites us to trust Him, even when circumstances remain uncertain.

Learning to recognize that voice takes time. It can be difficult to distinguish between fear and wisdom, especially when we are used to reacting quickly. This is why connection is so important. Through meetings, sponsorship, and honest relationships, we begin to slow down and respond more thoughtfully rather than react out of fear.

Jesus also says the sheep will not follow a stranger because they do not recognize that voice. In recovery, this can mean learning to step back from patterns that once felt necessary but no longer serve us. The voice of fear may still urge us to control or fix, but over time, we begin to recognize that these responses do not lead to peace.

Psalm 23 offers a reassuring image: “*Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; for you are at my side.*” The promise is not that everything around us will change, but that we are not alone as we walk through it.

One of the most important shifts in recovery is moving from fear to trust. Step Three invites us to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God. This includes trusting God with the people we love. While this can feel difficult, it opens the door to greater peace and clarity.

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 Christ walks ahead of us. He knows our fears and meets us within them. As we learn to follow His voice, we begin to experience greater freedom, even in the midst of uncertainty.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When have you noticed fear influencing how you respond to a loved one or a difficult situation?

- What helps you pause and respond with greater trust instead of reacting out of fear?

- How is God inviting you to release control and grow in trust in this season?

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