

# 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 take a closer look at how fear continues to influence our lives, even as we seek healing. Many of us are surprised to discover that beneath patterns of lust, there is often fear—fear of rejection, fear of loneliness, or fear of facing difficult emotions.

In active addiction, fear often drove our behavior. We may have turned to fantasy, secrecy, or compulsive actions as a way to cope. These behaviors promised relief, but they ultimately deepened our isolation. In recovery, we begin to see that these patterns did not remove fear. Instead, they intensified it and kept us disconnected from ourselves, others, and God.

The *Alcoholics Anonymous* text describes fear as “an evil and corroding thread” that touches nearly every part of our lives (p. 67). This is especially true in lust addiction. Fear can shape how we relate to others, how we view ourselves, and how we respond to discomfort. Even as we begin to change our behavior, fear can remain present in more subtle forms like withdrawal, avoidance, or dishonesty.

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.”*

As beloved children of God, we are learning to recognize a new voice. Many of us spent years listening to the voice of

compulsion, shame, or self-reliance. These voices led us deeper into secrecy. In contrast, the voice of Christ calls us into the light. He calls us personally, not as our past defines us, but as who we are created to be.

Learning to recognize that voice takes time. It requires honesty, accountability, and connection. Through meetings, sponsorship, and spiritual practices, we begin to discern the difference between fear-driven thinking and the truth that leads to freedom.

Jesus also says the sheep will not follow a stranger. In recovery, this means learning to step away from patterns that once felt automatic. The voice of fear may still urge us toward secrecy or escape, but over time, we begin to recognize that those responses do not lead to life.

Psalm 23 reminds us: *“Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; for you are at my side.”* Recovery does not eliminate struggle, but it changes how we walk through it. We are no longer alone.

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 God. This includes trusting God in moments of temptation and uncertainty, rather than relying on old coping patterns.

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 is our Good Shepherd. He walks ahead of us, calling us by name and leading us toward freedom. Fear may still arise, but it no longer defines us. We are learning to follow His voice.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When have you noticed fear driving your thoughts or behaviors beneath the surface?

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- What helps you recognize the difference between the voice of fear and the voice of truth?

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- How are you learning to respond with honesty and connection instead of secrecy?

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## 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