

Fourth Sunday of Easter



We come together each week united in the saving hope of Jesus Christ, our Shepherd. In his name, we have been saved and given new life. Addiction recovery provides a tangible way to measure what our lives were like before surrendering to Jesus, what happened, and what our lives are like now. Sharing this good news has been the foundation of 12-step groups since their start in the 1930s and has been a primary source of healing what used to be considered a hopeless condition—alcoholism and addiction of all forms.

“The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone,” is heard in both our First Reading and Responsorial Psalm as we celebrate the Fourth Sunday of Easter. What used to be driving our demise—our relentless pursuit of lust, pornography, sexual compulsions, and other unhealthy attachments—has been resurrected as our source of faith in the Shepherd who lays down his life for us.

The Good Shepherd knows the voices of his sheep. He knows them individually in their distinctiveness and uniqueness, and he can pick us out of a crowd. He hears our prayers and calls out to us in a way that we take notice. Jesus Christ is not just a moral standard for conducting ourselves but is our Lord who knows us intimately. We call out to God and He hears our cry, knowing our specific pains and desires before we can even acknowledge them ourselves.

We hear from the tenth chapter of John’s Gospel this Sunday:

Jesus said:

"I am the good shepherd.

A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

A hired man, who is not a shepherd

and whose sheep are not his own,

sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away,

and the wolf catches and scatters them.

This is because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd,

and I know mine and mine know me,

just as the Father knows me and I know the Father;

and I will lay down my life for the sheep.

Jesus Christ, our Shepherd, heals and gives us the authority to heal each other. In the same way modern recovery groups grew from one alcoholic helping another, the first century Church was comprised of those who witnessed the healing power of Jesus Christ and were willing to spread it to all corners of the world. In our resurrected form, we are called to do the same while remaining obedient to the word of our Shepherd.

Let us not forget the source of our freedom and new life. We can offer gratitude for the efforts of those who established modern recovery and for the courageous faith of the first disciples of Jesus. We walk with those disciples throughout the season of Easter as we include the Acts of the Apostles in our daily and Sunday Mass readings. This Sunday we hear Peter declare that we can only find salvation through Jesus Christ, our Shepherd:

*Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said:
"Leaders of the people and elders:
If we are being examined today
about a good deed done to a cripple,
namely, by what means he was saved,
then all of you and all the people of Israel
should know that it was in the name of Jesus Christ
the Nazorean whom you crucified,
whom God raised from the dead;
in his name this man stands before you healed.
He is the stone rejected by you, the builders,
which has become the cornerstone.
There is no salvation through anyone else,
nor is there any other name under heaven given to
the human race by which we are to be saved."*

Reflection Questions

- Share what it was like for you before recovery, what happened to find it, and what life is like now.
- How does Jesus take on the role of Good Shepherd in your life?
- How does the phrase "the stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone" relate to your experience with addiction and recovery?

Attend a CIR Retreat in 2024

There are several retreat opportunities around the country this year to strengthen your recovery and faith

- Hear inspiring testimonies, attend meetings, engage the sacraments, participate in workshops, and more!
- Dedicated time for quiet meditation and fellowship
- Remaining 2024 retreats include Portland, OR (full); Hanceville, AL; Wichita, KS; Fort Wayne, IN; San Diego, CA; Subiaco, AR
- For more information and to register for a retreat visit catholicinrecovery.com/events

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Acts 4:8-12

Responsorial Psalm: 118:1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 28, 29

Second Reading: 1 John 1:1-2

Gospel: John 10:11-18