

Fourth Sunday of Easter



Fear often took root early in our lives. As children in dysfunctional homes, we may have walked on eggshells, stayed hypervigilant, or took on roles to survive – becoming the caretaker, the hero, the invisible one. Fear taught us to hide our feelings, doubt our instincts, and question our worth. Over time, these patterns became ingrained, making it difficult to trust others, ourselves, or even God.

But God sees us. He knows our wounds and seeks us out – not to shame us, but to carry us into healing. Jesus reminds us in the Gospel of Luke, “It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick” (Luke 5:31). Recovery begins when we stop pretending everything is fine and start letting God into the places we’ve long kept hidden.

Jesus speaks directly to our hearts through the Parable of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15:4–6):

“What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it? And when he does find it, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy and, upon his arrival home, he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them, ‘Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.’”

As children, many of us felt emotionally abandoned or invisible – like the “lost one” who didn’t know how to ask for help or whether we were even worth finding. But Jesus tells us otherwise. He goes out of His way to search for us, lift us up, and bring us back to safety. His shoulders carry the burden we were never meant to bear alone.

Fear, described in recovery literature as “an evil and corroding thread,” weaves through much of our story (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 67). But Jesus offers us something greater: belonging, restoration, and love. Healing happens as we step out of isolation and into fellowship with others who understand. We are no longer alone – we are part of a flock, a family, a body of Christ where it’s safe to show up as we are.

This Sunday's Gospel gives voice to the deep reassurance we longed to hear as children:

Jesus said:

"My sheep hear my voice;

I know them, and they follow me.

I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.

No one can take them out of my hand.

My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all,

and no one can take them out of the Father's hand.

The Father and I are one."

These words remind us that we are known – not for our performance, not for our role in the family, but for who we are. In recovery, we gradually learn to trust the voice of the Good Shepherd and stop listening to the lies we were told or internalized growing up. We begin to understand our true identity as beloved sons and daughters of God.

As we walk this path, fear gives way to faith. We let go of old coping mechanisms and begin to live in the freedom of being found. In the care of the Good Shepherd, we are safe. We are home.

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- What fears or survival patterns from your childhood do you still notice in your relationships today—and how is God inviting you to surrender them?
- Have you ever felt like the “lost sheep” in your family or community? What was it like to be found—or what would it look like to let yourself be found now?
- What does it mean to you that Jesus knows you, calls you by name, and promises, “No one can take them out of my hand”?

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First Reading: Acts 13:14, 43-52

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 100:1-2, 3, 5

Second Reading: Revelation 7:9, 14b-17

Gospel: John 10:27-30