

Fourth Sunday of Easter



Fear often plays a central role in the lives of those affected by a loved one's addiction. It can paralyze us – fear of what might happen, fear of what others think, fear that nothing will ever change. We may have tried to manage or control our loved one's behavior to ease our anxiety, only to find ourselves more isolated, confused, and exhausted. The harder we tried to fix things, the more powerless we felt.

To find freedom from this cycle, we need a Higher Power who sees our suffering and gently pursues us in love. Jesus reminds us of His mission when He says, "It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick" (Luke 5:31). As we loosen our grip on what we cannot control, we begin to recognize that healing starts with our surrender – not theirs.

Jesus teaches us about the heart of God 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.'"

This story reminds us that God's love is personal and persistent. Sheep rely on the flock for safety and connection – when they wander off, they panic and suffer. In the same way, many of us have felt lost, disconnected, and uncertain of where we belonged. But the Good Shepherd seeks us out, lifts us up, and gently carries us back into community, where we begin to find belonging and peace again.

Fear, described as "an evil and corroding thread" that touches every aspect of our lives (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 67), had to be replaced with something stronger. We find that strength not by fixing others, but by turning to God and allowing ourselves to be restored. In fellowship with others who understand, we are no longer alone. We are encouraged to "stay in the middle of the herd" – to remain connected, honest, and open to grace.

This Sunday's Gospel offers us the comfort and assurance of the Good Shepherd's voice:

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."

As we walk the path of recovery – supported by the Twelve Steps and the sacramental life of the Church – we trade fear for faith. We learn to release what we cannot control and place ourselves, and our loved ones, in God's hands. Our worth is no longer determined by how others behave, but by the unwavering love of our Good Shepherd, who calls us by name, protects us, and never lets us go.

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- In what ways has fear shaped how you've responded to your loved one's addiction, and how is God inviting you to release that fear today?
- Can you recall a time when you felt "lost" emotionally or spiritually? How did God—or others—help carry you back to a place of peace or belonging?
- How have you personally witnessed Jesus as the Good Shepherd?

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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