



May 11, 2025

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 13:14, 43-52 | Rev 7:9, 14b-17 | Jn 10:27-30

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

“My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”

The spiritual riches contained in this line alone are enough to sustain us for a lifetime. First, we rejoice that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, calls us his own. We belong to him who, like the shepherds of bygone days, protects his sheep – capable of little in the way of self-defense – even at the cost of his own life. Also, among the distinctive marks of Jesus’ sheep are that they hear his voice and follow him. Thus, to be part of Christ’s flock involves not only being known by him, but knowing him and heeding his call. A sheep who has not attuned its ears to the voice of its shepherd is a lost sheep! Although the world’s fertile meadows may look inviting, *not* to attune our ears to the voice of Christ means exposing ourselves to the dangers of a life apart from God. On the other hand, if we make our pilgrimage of life with him, we abide within the protective confines of his love until the day we follow him into the pastures of eternal life.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Frequently, our free will (something we do not share with sheep) gets in the way of our ability to heed the Shepherd’s voice. For us, his voice is expressed in concrete ways: in his commandments, in the teachings and tradition of his Church, in the Scriptures, in our legitimate superiors, and in prayer. These are the means he uses to mark out the path he wishes us to follow. But this path always involves the cross, and our sheep-ish (pun intended) nature recoils at the sight of suffering. In today’s second reading, however, St. John’s vision offers the key to overcoming our resistance: “For the Lamb who is in the center of the throne will shepherd them.” In other words, Jesus, our Divine Shepherd, is also a lamb who has tread the difficult way of the cross. He is *the* Lamb of God who offered himself in a sacrifice of perfect obedience to his Father’s will. Thus, we do not embark along the way of obedience and suffering alone; Jesus walks before us to sustain and protect us along the way.

OBSERVE

Find an image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd online and spend 15 minutes praying about what you see. What is the Shepherd’s attitude toward his sheep, and the sheep’s attitude toward their Shepherd? What do we learn from this about *our* relationship with Christ?