

# Read

Acts 13:14, 43-52

Psalms 100:1-2, 3, 5

Revelation 7:9, 14b-17

John 10:27-30

## Fourth Sunday of Easter

### May 11, 2025



### REFLECTION

Have you ever watched an animated movie and at some point while watching you recognize the voice of the actor playing one of characters? Perhaps during the beginning of the movie, you thought to yourself how familiar that voice sounded. Once you realize who it is, it is hard to get that person out of your mind when you hear their voice. Suddenly, you see this movie in a new way, with a new knowledge, and a new perspective.

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus says that his sheep know his voice and they follow him. How is that possible for us when we have never actually heard his voice with our ears?

In order for us to hear the voice of the Lord, we have to spend time listening to him. We have to learn his voice and its unique contours and tones. It proclaims God's presence in actions of love, mercy, and forgiveness. We hear it in generosity, humility, and prayer. We follow it when we follow the way of peace. When we start to recognize his voice, we will hear it everywhere!



### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Where do you recognize God's voice in your life?
- ❖ How can you increase your awareness of Jesus' presence in your daily experience?



### ACTION

Learning to recognize Jesus' voice is a lifelong process. This week, choose one of the Gospels and read it through from beginning to end. If you don't have much time, the shortest Gospel is that of Mark. Pay attention to what Jesus says and how he interacts with all different types of people. Reading Scripture, especially the Gospels, will help you to learn Jesus' voice. Then you'll be better equipped to hear him speaking to you in your daily life.



See how sheep respond to the shepherd's voice!

<https://youtu.be/Holr54eF4LY>





May 11, 2025

# FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

## LECTIONARY #51C

Acts 13:14, 43-52

Psalms 100:1-2, 3, 5

Revelation 7:9, 14b-17

John 10:27-30

## Prepare for the Word

*The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.*

### Leader's Context

The Fourth Sunday of Easter is known as Good Shepherd Sunday. A shepherd cares for his sheep and protects his flock from danger. The sheep's survival is dependent upon the shepherd. The sheep recognize the sound of the shepherd's voice and follow him. Jesus is our Good Shepherd because he cares for us, protects us, and guides us. He calls us by name into his flock. Jesus tells us earlier in John's Gospel that a good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Jesus the Good Shepherd loved his sheep so much that he died for our sins. As part of Jesus' flock, we will follow Jesus wherever he leads. We are called to be united as one flock, one community of faith in our Good Shepherd.

**Q FOCUS:** *Jesus is our Good Shepherd.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

This week we will celebrate the feast day of St. Matthias on May 14. After the resurrection, Jesus' apostles wanted to replace Judas Iscariot with a new apostle who was a faithful follower of Jesus. They wanted someone who had witnessed all of Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection. They chose Matthias, who then became one of the twelve. On May 15, we celebrate the life of St. Isidore the Farmer (c. 1080-1130). Isidore was a farmer who was devout in his faith. He often arrived late to work in the fields because he was attending daily Mass and got lost in his prayer. He and his wife, Maria (also a saint), gave

all that they had to help the poor, even though they were poor themselves. We look to St. Matthias and St. Isidore this week as examples of good and faithful members of Jesus' flock.

### Church Teaching Connection

"The Good Shepherd—Jesus—is attentive to each one of us; he seeks us and loves us, addresses his Word to us, knowing the depths of our heart, our desires and our hopes, as well as our failures and disappointments. He accepts us and loves us as we are, with our merits and our faults. He 'gives eternal life' to each one of us: that is, he offers us the opportunity to live a full life, without end. Moreover, he safeguards us and leads us lovingly, helping us to cross impervious paths and the sometimes dangerous roads that appear in life" (Pope Francis, Regina Caeli Message, May 12, 2019).

## Hear the Word

*Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.*

### Gospel Acclamation

*Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.*

Alleluia, alleluia.

### Gospel

John 10:27-30

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

*All make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.*

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."

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Everyone may be seated.*

## Reflect on the Word

*When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:*

Our Gospel reading today is very short and concise, but it is part of a longer set of scenes. It comes after the story of Jesus healing the man who was born blind (John 9). The religious leaders sent away the man Jesus had healed because they refused to believe that Jesus could have this power to heal. Jesus criticizes their actions, noting that they are the ones who are blind to the presence of God in their midst. Jesus continues his response to them in John 10, where he equates those leaders with thieves and robbers who try to lead the sheep (the people of God) astray. In contrast, Jesus is the Good Shepherd who knows and protects the sheep, and they trust him. In today's reading, Jesus continues to use this metaphor of his identity as the Good Shepherd when he encounters more people who question his identity as the Messiah.

► **What might be some reasons why Jesus used parables and metaphorical language to describe himself and others? Why didn't Jesus just tell everyone who he was?**

► **What does the metaphor of the Good Shepherd reveal to us about Jesus?**

The image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd would be a very relatable image to those in Jesus' time. Shepherding was a common occupation. Those who heard Jesus' words would have been familiar with the general concepts associated with being a shepherd. When Jesus states, "My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me," those listening to

him would have understood the familiarity between the shepherd and his sheep. The shepherd would protect the sheep, care for them, and lead them to nourishment. Applying this image to the relationship between Jesus and his followers, we come to know of the protection, security, and care that Jesus gives to us.

In the verses following today's Gospel passage, the people who are opposed to Jesus attempt to stone him for his blasphemy of saying that he and the Father are one. They believe he is just a man. This conflict between Jesus and those who did not believe him continued to his death. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, lays down his life for the sheep. We also have the metaphor of Jesus as the Lamb of God, who is sacrificed for the sins of the world, just as the lamb was sacrificed at the Passover. Jesus' sacrifice shows the depth of his love for us.

► **In what ways do you experience Jesus' love for you?**

Jesus tells us in this Gospel that he and God the Father are one, and that no one can take his sheep away from him. We are forever in God's loving care and are part of his flock. However, we are reminded on a daily basis of the dangers and struggles that Jesus' followers face. It is not easy to be one of Jesus' flock in our world. Being a Christian means that we follow a way of life that is, at times, countercultural. The image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd can bring us comfort and peace in those times of trial. Jesus walks with us, protects us, and calls us by name. He brings us into the eternal kingdom of his heavenly Father and preserves us for eternal life.

## Wrapping It Up

*Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 192.*

**Jesus is our Good Shepherd, and we are his flock.**

**Jesus gives his flock eternal life.**

**We can never be taken away from God's fold.**



# Act on the Word

## What Am I Called to Do?

*For this activity, you will need journals, pens, and Bibles.*

Share with the teens that Good Shepherd Sunday also marks the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. Today's Gospel reading about the Good Shepherd calls to mind all those who shepherd (lead and guide) the Church in our day. The World Day of Prayer for Vocations focuses on praying for those who are ordained (deacons and priests), those in consecrated life (male and female religious), and those who are missionaries. While we should keep the people in these roles in prayer always, today we will reflect on a more general understanding of vocation—a call by God to live out our baptism identity in a particular way that makes use of the gifts and skills he has given us so that we can help build up the Church. Jesus our Shepherd calls us to serve him in ways that reflect his own life of faithfulness, care, and devotion.

Invite the teens to spend some time as a large group discussing this type of vocation. How are they being called to serve the Church at this moment in their lives? There are many ways to serve, even as young people. What are the different ministries in your parish? There are liturgical ministries like musicians, altar servers, Eucharistic ministers, readers, ushers, and so on. Many parishes also have social ministries, like welcoming committees, peace and justice ministries, and so on. Or, there are also ministries of teaching. How do the people in these

different ministries guide and lead others? How do these ministries build up the Body of Christ?

Once you have discussed the different ways the teens can serve in the parish, have them find a quiet space to begin a time of prayerful reflection. Ask them to focus their prayer on finding their calling within God's Church. What gifts, skills, and talents has God given them? How can they use those to serve God in his Church? What do they feel God calling them to do? Encourage them to open themselves to the movement of the Holy Spirit in their heart, to quiet their minds, and to focus on God. Give them plenty of time for discernment as they journal about their calling. You can play quiet, reflective music in the background to help set the tone for this time.

## Closing Prayer

*Lord God,  
we are your people,  
the sheep of your flock.  
Hear our prayers  
and shepherd us from sin and death  
to the joy and newness of life.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

## For Next Sunday

*To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at [www.ltp.org/lwgr](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.*