

# Good Shepherd Sunday

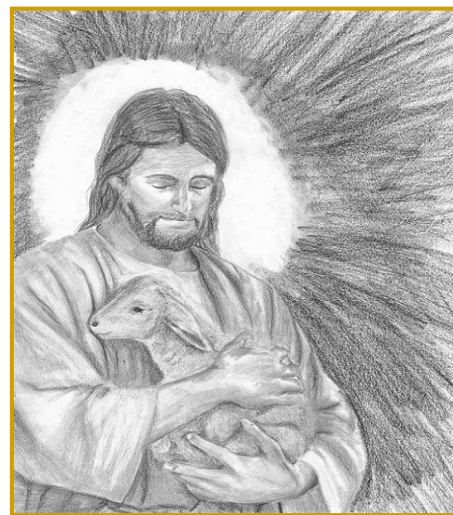
4th Sunday of Easter  
Cycle C | May 11, 2025

## WISDOM FROM THE CELLS

I remember how much the life of violence and gangs has affected me. It really did take over my life. I let myself get so involved with that lifestyle that I failed to see how much I was hurting my family and myself. What kind of life was I living? I don't know why I let myself live that life or why I wanted to live that lifestyle. I was so lost, and now I'm in prison.

Throughout my life, I've learned about Jesus and all the good he has done for us. But I turned my back to him for so long and did not listen to his word. Now I understand even more how wonderful he is; so much that I want to spread his word even more, especially to those that are uninterested so that they can't say they never knew or that no one has ever stretched a hand to help them out. Jesus was good to everyone equally. So I want to do the same. I can do this by telling everyone the good I get from following God and that they, too, can feel the same way as me. Everyone gets to a dark place in life and needs help at some point. So we should never be ashamed to ask for help if we need it or help others who are in need of help. It's ok to be vulnerable at times. God will always be by our side.

**-Ismael, who is in a California State Prison.**



*Drawing by Elaine Golden*

## PENITENTIAL RITE

**Lord, have mercy.**

**Christ, have mercy.**

**Lord, have mercy.**

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.

**R. Amen.**

## OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray:

Lord God,  
You know each of us by name and you invite us to follow you. Show us today the truth of your ways, so that we may find deep joy and lasting peace.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**



# LITURGY OF THE WORD

## First Reading: Acts 13:14, 43-52

Paul and Barnabas continued on from Perga and reached Antioch in Pisidia. On the sabbath they entered the synagogue and took their seats. Many Jews and worshipers who were converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who spoke to them and urged them to remain faithful to the grace of God. On the following sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and with violent abuse contradicted what Paul said. Both Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first, but since you reject it and condemn yourselves as unworthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, *I have made you a light to the Gentiles, that you may be an instrument of salvation to the ends of the earth.*" The Gentiles were delighted when they heard this and glorified the word of the Lord. All who were destined for eternal life came to believe, and the word of the Lord continued to spread through the whole region. The Jews, however, incited the women of prominence who were worshipers and the leading men of the city, stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their territory. So they shook the dust from their feet in protest against them, and went to Iconium. The disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.

The Word of the Lord.

**R. Thanks be to God.**

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

**R. We are his people, the sheep of his flock.**

Sing joyfully to the LORD, all you lands;  
serve the LORD with gladness;  
come before him with joyful song.

**R. We are his people, the sheep of his flock.**

Know that the LORD is God;  
he made us, his we are;  
his people, the flock he tends.

**R. We are his people, the sheep of his flock.**

The LORD is good:  
his kindness endures forever,  
and his faithfulness, to all generations.

**R. We are his people, the sheep of his flock.**

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

I, John, had a vision of a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue. They stood before the throne and before the Lamb, wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands. Then one of the elders said to me, "These are the ones who have survived the time of great distress; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. "For this reason they stand before God's throne and worship him day and night in his temple. The one who sits on the throne will shelter them. They will not hunger or thirst anymore, nor will the sun or any heat strike them. For the Lamb who is in the center of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to springs of life-giving water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

The Word of the Lord.

**R. Thanks be to God.**

## Gospel: John 10: 27-30

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."

The Gospel of the Lord.

**R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**



# MEDITATION: I AM WITH YOU

maria had six children  
one of them was  
on a scholarship  
after receiving straight a's  
in high school  
her two daughters  
taught religious  
education  
with her at church

her second oldest  
son jaime  
had been arrested  
for attempted murder  
even though  
he was not  
a gang member  
he had been in the car  
when someone fired  
a weapon

everyone at school  
could not understand  
how he could be involved  
in such a serious crime

at first  
there was an outpouring  
of sympathy  
but as time went on  
people slowly forgot him  
no letters  
no phone calls

maria never missed  
a visit with jaime  
her friends  
would say to her  
why do you waste  
your time with this son?  
he will never amount  
to anything

i see how wonderful  
your other children are

sometimes  
her other children  
would ask her:  
why are you going  
again to see jaime?  
he is never going  
to change  
he always gets  
into trouble even  
since he was young

he makes bad choices  
maria read the passage  
to her daughters:  
*my sheep hear my voice  
i know them  
and they follow me  
they shall never perish*

maria was reflecting  
on the incarceration  
of her son  
it has not been easy  
and this has  
radically changed  
her life and her routine

her husband  
was so angry at jaime  
that he would only  
visit him occasionally

on the sunday  
of the week that jaime  
was going to court  
he sat across the table  
from his mom  
in the visiting room

jaime took  
his mom's hand  
and said to her:  
i am nervous about  
going to court  
on tuesday  
i cannot sleep at night  
my whole life  
could be taken  
away from me  
i have never been  
honest with you  
but mom  
when i was twelve  
i really did get  
jumped into a gang

maria just said  
i know that *hijo*

then jaime said:  
mom, you never  
gave up on me  
you have never stopped  
caring for me  
and visiting me  
i know i am loved by you  
no matter what

i have done  
mom  
i want to tell you  
something  
i have changed my life

*hijo*, said maria  
this is the thing  
i have prayed  
for every day  
i cannot tell you  
what that means to me  
everyone told me  
to give up on you  
that you are nothing  
but *hijo*  
i tell you something  
since the day  
i first held you  
in my arms  
after you were born  
i knew you were special

when you started  
getting into trouble  
i knew one day  
you would return  
to who you were  
growing up to be  
i know that god  
will hear our prayers  
and you will be  
home soon

as jaime spoke  
with his mother  
it was as if no one else  
was in the visiting room

a week later  
maria had come  
early to be at  
the court hearing  
she was there sitting  
with the whole family  
and watched  
as the bailiff  
brought jaime  
through the doors  
in his orange jump suit  
shackled

jaime was her son  
of seventeen years  
she had so  
many memories of him

playing soccer  
with his friends

she will never  
understand how  
he got lost and  
why he joined a gang  
when he had everything  
at home

but this morning  
maria noticed  
something different  
about her son

ever since he told her  
that he wanted  
to change  
there was almost  
a glow about his face  
there was not  
that empty look  
he had carried around  
for so long

finally the trial was over  
it had lasted three weeks  
jaime's face  
was peaceful  
and then the words  
hung jury

maria knew  
god had blessed  
this sheep that was  
lost and found

she knew that  
maybe not today  
not tomorrow  
but someday soon  
jaime would be home

maria prayed silently  
giving thanks to god  
as large warm tears  
flowed down my face  
as jaime left  
the court room  
he turned around  
and smiled to his mom



**REFLECTION:** Jesus, I remember a time when you tried to show me your way, but I did not listen. I remember this is what happened.... I remember.... I remember....

### OUR FATHER

Let us pray with confidence to the Father  
in the words our Savior gave us:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy Kingdom come,  
thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against  
us, and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.**

**R. For the kingdom, the power and the  
glory are yours, now and for ever.  
Amen.**

### SIGN OF PEACE

Jesus, you said to your apostles: "I leave you  
peace, my peace I give you. Look not on our  
sins, but on the faith of your Church, and  
grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom  
where you live forever and ever. **Amen.**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.  
**R. And with your spirit.**

### LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:  
**have mercy on us.**

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:  
**have mercy on us.**

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:  
**grant us peace.**

This is Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the  
sins of the world. Happy are we who are called to  
his supper.

**Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter  
under my roof, but only say the word and  
my soul shall be healed.**

### COMMUNION

### CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray:

Lord,  
You promise to be with us any time we call on you.  
Help us to call on you in our prayers and to trust  
you to help us.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**

