



As a  
*mother*  
comforts her child,

so I will  
*comfort*  
you.

Isaiah 66:13

## *A foretaste of Paradise*

Throughout Easter Time, the Church rejoices with Jesus, risen from the dead. Our readings on this Fourth Sunday of Easter celebrate our instinct to come together in joy, worshiping in church. While private prayer nourishes our individual relationship with the Lord, community prayer is a foretaste of paradise. The book of Revelation depicts a “great multitude” worshipping God “day and night in his temple.” Our churches on Easter Sunday often reflect this happy multitude, filling the pews to bursting. Four Sundays into the festive season, we are encouraged to keep praising God together. In the Acts of the Apostles, Paul and Barnabas demonstrate their instinct to worship with their faith community each Sabbath, dutifully taking their seats in the synagogue. In the Gospel, Jesus calls us his sheep and reminds us why coming together as a flock is so important: uniting in community, we imitate the unity of God.

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## *Saints and Special Observances*

<b>Sunday:</b>	Fourth Sunday of Easter; Mother’s Day; World Day of Prayer for Vocations
<b>Tuesday:</b>	St. Damien de Veuster; St. John of Avila
<b>Thursday:</b>	Ss. Nereus and Achilleus; St. Pancras
<b>Friday:</b>	Our Lady of Fatima
<b>Saturday:</b>	St. Matthias

## *Readings for the Week*

<b>Monday:</b>	Acts 11:1-18; Ps 42:2-3; 43:3, 4; Jn 10:1-10
<b>Tuesday:</b>	Acts 11:19-26; Ps 87:1b-7; Jn 10:22-30
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Acts 12:24 — 13:5a; Ps 67:2-3, 5-6, 8; Jn 12:44-50
<b>Thursday:</b>	Acts 13:13-25; Ps 89:2-3, 21-22, 25, 27; Jn 13:16-20
<b>Friday:</b>	Acts 13:26-33; Ps 2:6-11ab; Jn 14:1-6
<b>Saturday:</b>	Acts 1:15-17; Ps 113:1-8; Jn 15:9-17
<b>Sunday:</b>	Acts 14:21-27; Ps 145:8-13; Rv 21:1-5a; Jn 13:31-33a, 34-35



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## *Today's Readings*

**First Reading** — The Jews angrily reject Paul and Barnabas’ preaching. They then turn their energies to the Gentiles (Acts 13:14, 43-52).

**Psalm** — We are his people, the sheep of his flock (Psalm 100).

**Second Reading** — John envisions a great white-robed multitude standing before the throne and before the Lamb. (Revelation 7:9, 14b-17).

**Gospel** — My sheep hear my voice; they follow me. I give them eternal life (John 10:27-30).

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## *Prayer Of The Week*

Fourth Sunday of Easter  
Almighty ever-living God,  
lead us to a share in the joys of heaven,  
so that the humble flock may reach  
where the brave Shepherd has gone before.  
Who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.

## *Reflection question:*

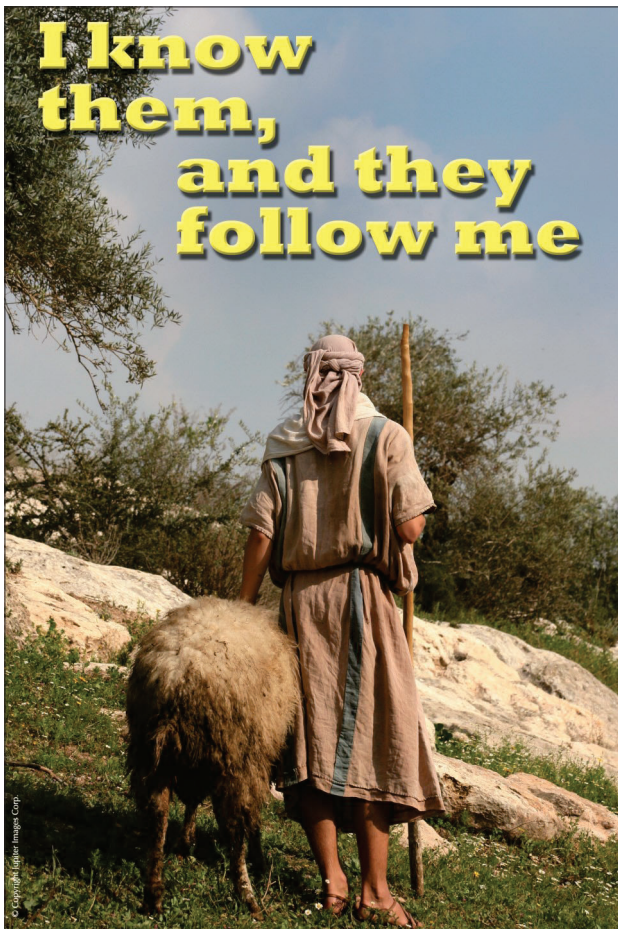
**How can I listen more closely to the voice of the Good Shepherd?**

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## Treasures From Our Tradition

The reception of Holy Communion at Sunday Mass is such an expected feature of the Mass these days that it is surprising to realize that for many centuries, receiving Communion was a relatively rare event in the life of a faithful Christian. "Easter duty" means that Catholics must celebrate reconciliation if aware of serious sin, and receive Holy Communion during the Easter season. For a while, this was a requirement of Easter week, and later extended to the whole season of fifty days, and even beyond that by a few weeks. For the majority of people long ago, this meant Communion was a once-a-year moment. A rather complex bureaucracy grew up around this rule in the Middle Ages. Amazingly, people received a kind of token at confession admitting them to Communion in their home parish, which then kept careful records and reported them to the bishop. Surviving records can tell us a great deal about our ancestors. In fact, people were encouraged to journey to the church of their baptism in order to fulfill their duty, and therefore the Easter duty includes in its origins a grateful pilgrimage to the font in which you were first embraced by Christ. If your "Holy Mother Church" is within a drive, why not make a pilgrimage to that font be a feature of your Easter celebration of these fifty days?  
—James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.



## A Lot of Nerve

Last week we saw how the disciples rejoiced to suffer for their faith. This week we see them turn away from their persecutors and begin preaching to the Gentiles. Even though they are thrown out of town, they still are filled with joy (Acts 13:50-52). Rejected by their own people, they are happy that the pagans not only listen to them, but also spread the word of the Lord. What I find interesting is that the disciples' joy comes from their failure to convert the Jewish leaders in Antioch. If those Jews had become believers and had not rejected Paul and Barnabas, the disciples probably would never have thought to preach to non-Jews about Jesus. I think that failure to convert their own people allowed them to see how God's power was working for them. That's why their joy was so great. They were not just congratulating themselves on how well they were preaching. No, they saw how God was doing the real work. That took the pressure off of them. They could stop worrying about every word of their preaching, wondering if they looked holy enough to impress people, or afraid that someone might make fun of them (or do a background check: "Isn't that Saul, who used to persecute Jesus' followers? He's got a lot of nerve thinking he could now be one of them."). None of that mattered, because they knew that the Spirit was leading them, as our second reading says, "to springs of life-giving water, and God will wipe every tear from their eyes" (Revelation 7:17). They knew they were in God's hands, as we heard in the Gospel (John 10:28). Can we be like those disciples? Instead of getting angry at frustrations, can we see them as an opportunity to experience God's grace? Do we let our failures get us down, or do we let God bring us through them, teaching us to rely on the Lord? When people reject us, do we give up, or do we trust God to help them? Are we ashamed of our past sins, or grateful for God's forgiveness?

Of course, the disciples didn't go around looking for ways to suffer. But they did look for ways to share their great news that Jesus is risen from the dead. Let us ask the Lord to send us the Spirit to show us how we can spread that same news.

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## Job Description

Do not feel totally, personally, irrevocably responsible for everything . . . That's my job.

—God

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