

FROM MERCY TO MISSION

April 26, 2026 | Fourth Sunday of Easter



John 10:1 – 10

Jesus said: "Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate but climbs over elsewhere is a thief and a robber. But whoever enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice, as the shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice. But they will not follow a stranger; they will run away from him, because they do not recognize the voice of strangers."

Although Jesus used this figure of speech, the Pharisees did not realize what he was trying to tell them.

So Jesus said again, "Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

Opening Prayer

Draw us forth, God of all creation.
Draw us forward and away from
limited certainty into the
immense world of your love. Give
us the capacity to even for a
moment taste the richness of the
feast you give us.

Give us the peace to live with
uncertainty, with questions, with
doubts. Help us to experience the
resurrection anew with open
wonder and an increasing ability
to see you in the people of Easter.
Amen.

Call to Action (*Choose One*)

- **Listening** → Spend 10 minutes in silence at least once this week. Ask: "Jesus, what are You saying to me?" Don't rush—simply listen and write down what comes to your heart.
- **Following** → Notice one small prompting this week, an invitation to serve, reach out, or act. Instead of overthinking it, respond with trust and take that step.
- **Abundant Life** → Choose one intentional act of service this week (at home, at church, or in your community.) Before you do it, pray: "Jesus, help me follow You by loving this person well."

From Noise → Listening → Following → Abundant Life

After encountering the risen Jesus and recognizing Him in the breaking of the bread, the journey of discipleship deepens. It's no longer just about recognizing that Jesus is present. It's about learning how to listen to Him, follow Him, and live the life He promises.

In this week's Gospel, Jesus describes Himself as the Good Shepherd. He doesn't force, push, or control. Instead, He calls His sheep by name and they recognize His voice. That's the shift for us this week. We move from encounter → to relationship.

There are many voices competing for our attention (culture, expectations, fears, distractions). They promise fulfillment but often leave us restless or empty. Jesus offers something different. He speaks personally, gently, and consistently, but His voice is learned over time.

The disciples on the road to Emmaus didn't recognize Him at first. But their hearts began to burn as He spoke. In the same way, we begin to recognize Jesus' voice not just through knowledge, but through relationship, through time spent with Him in prayer, Scripture, and the Eucharist. And here's the key: We don't learn His voice just to feel close to Him. We learn His voice so we can follow Him.

Jesus says that His sheep not only hear His voice but follow Him. That takes wisdom to discern, trust to believe, and freedom to choose. Following Jesus isn't automatic, it's a daily decision, and sometimes it costs something. But it leads somewhere.

"I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly." This abundant life isn't found in comfort, success, or control. It's found in relationship with Jesus lived out in service to others. When we begin to follow His voice, we are led outward into love, into mission, into giving ourselves away. Because the Good Shepherd doesn't come to take, He comes to give. He doesn't use fear, He leads with love. He doesn't demand from a distance. He walks ahead and invites us to follow. And He calls you by name.

This week, the invitation is simple: Slow down. Listen. Learn His voice. And take one step to follow where He leads.

Discussion Questions

- Over the past two weeks, you've reflected on recognizing Jesus' presence. Where have you begun to notice Him more clearly—and how might He now be inviting you to listen more intentionally to His voice?
- There are many voices competing for our attention every day. What are some of the "loudest voices" in your life right now, and how do they make it harder to hear Jesus?
- Jesus says His sheep know His voice. What helps you personally recognize when something is from Jesus versus from fear, pressure, or distraction?
- Following Jesus requires trust and choice—not just awareness. Where might Jesus be inviting you to take a next step of obedience, even if it feels uncomfortable or costly?
- Jesus promises an abundant life, not just a busy or successful one. How have you experienced (or how could you experience) deeper fulfillment through serving others rather than focusing on yourself?