



April 21, 2024 | Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 4:8-12 | 1 Jn 3:1-2 | Jn 10:11-18

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

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

Several years ago I went to a shopping mall with my six-year-old son, and I could tell he was overwhelmed by the fast-moving crowds; he stuck close to my side. Not long into our trip, he turned a corner and, suddenly, his face lit up. He pointed at a young boy ahead. “That’s James! I know him! He’s in my class!” he exclaimed, and ran up to talk to him. Out of the sea of strangers was someone he *knew*, and who knew him. That changed the whole experience for him. Today’s readings are all about that kind of knowing. In the Gospel Jesus tells us that, like a good shepherd, he knows his flock and they know him. How comforting it is to know that Jesus not only knows each one of us, but he willingly chose to lay down his life for each one of us as the ultimate sacrifice of love. But how do we get to know our Good Shepherd better? By immersing ourselves in Scripture and prayer and seeking a personal relationship with him. If we stay close to the Lord, we’ll know his voice when we hear it – in the quiet of our prayer, in the everyday promptings of the Spirit in our decision-making, and even, in the midst of all the noise, as the calming and guiding voice leading us along the right path.

PRAY Spending time in prayer and reading the Scriptures are essential in order to get to know the voice of Jesus. Read the Gospels this week, even a chapter a day, and contemplate what passages stand out for you. Pray about it at Mass. The Scriptures and the sacraments are how Jesus speaks to us, like a good shepherd speaks to his flock so the sheep will know his voice and follow it.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Being known is one of the most fundamental human and spiritual needs. When my son recognized his friend, he also instinctively recognized – without being able to articulate it – this need, in the midst of the anonymity of the mall. And his reaction was so pure: “I know him, and he knows me!” But he didn’t leave it at that; he went to engage with his friend. He *encountered* his friend. This is what Christ desires for, and with us – not just to know us, to simply recognize us from afar, but for us to want to encounter him! We are meant to be in community; Jesus is always here for us: in the Church, in the sacraments, in Scriptures and in our hearts.