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The Fourth Week of Easter

The **Fourth Week of Easter** gives us a continuing picture of the how the Holy Spirit is guiding the early community. Peter's preaching is full of fire and it is effective in bringing many to baptism.

Sunday's gospel begins our reflection on Jesus as the gate, the gate keeper and our shepherd, all from the 10th chapter of the **Fouth Gospel**. Jesus describes the intimate relationship he has with us: "I know my own and mine know me." We recognize his voice and we follow him.

Then from Wednesday on, there are selections from the 12th, 13th and 14th chapters:

*I came into the world as light,
so that everyone who believes in me might not
remain in darkness.*

*From now on I am telling you before it happens,
so that when it happens you may believe that I
AM.*

*Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the
life.
No one comes to the Father except through me."*

*Amen, amen, I say to you,
whoever believes in me will do the works that I
do,
and will do greater ones than these,
because I am going to the Father.
And whatever you ask in my name, I will do,
so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
If you ask anything of me in my name, I will do it."*

All of this leads us to the **5th Sunday of Easter** where in the gospel, we hear Jesus console us, asking us to not let our hearts be troubled because he goes only to prepare a place for us and that "No one comes to the Father except through me."

Daily Prayer This Week

This will be a powerful week to reflect upon Jesus as our gate, gate keeper and shepherd as we pray for the intercession of the Holy Spirit in the selection of the new pope.

Who among us hasn't felt threatened or fearful or lost at one time or another? To the degree we have any of that in our hearts this week, we can bring it all to the Lord. The words of the beautiful song by Marty Haugen come to mind: "Shepherd me, O God, beyond my wants, beyond my fears, from death into life." Beyond what we want and what we fear is where we all can ask to be guided, cared for. The intimacy of knowledge is a wonderful grace to ask for each day, as well. Lord, I want to enjoy how you know me through and through, so much more than I know myself - even what I don't admit, acknowledge or accept in myself. You know and love me. O Lord, how I desire to know you. Show yourself to me. Let me recognize your voice, your urgings, your comfort and your call.

We can ask for graces about the areas of darkness we are going to have to walk through, engage in and wrestle with each day this week. We can ask to be brought to the Father by Jesus. We can confidently ask that we might be able to do what Jesus does - in the very places we find ourselves this week.

Imagine how helped we will be this week to wake each morning and just have these kind of prayers on our lips. As we focus them throughout each day, we will be doing two things: letting these desires deepen in our hearts in the background of our consciousness, and we will let them interact and transform the options before us and the choices we make. We will be able to feel how good this feels, how it lightens our spirits and how it helps us end each day feeling a gifted intimacy with our Lord.

Each night we can look back over the day with gratitude, even as we get undressed and ready for bed. Later in the week, we can begin to want to hear the upcoming Sunday gospel, longing to hear Jesus say to us: "Do not let your hearts be troubled."

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