



Fourth Sunday of Easter Cycle C

OPENING PRAYER

Loving God, we trust in your peace when bad things happen.
May we be filled with the joy of your Holy Spirit
as we follow your son Jesus, our Good Shepherd. Amen

LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Acts of the Apostles 13:43-44, 47-48

(Listen to or sing a Psalm/Song)

John 10:27-30 (*Show a stuffed sheep or a picture of a sheep, if you have one.*)

REFLECTION WITH DISCUSSION

When you were a few years younger and were in an unfamiliar place, a big place, like a shopping mall or a county fair, what would make you feel safe and protected?

Hearing the voice of one of your parents or holding the hand of one of your parents.

In the very short Gospel reading today, Jesus talks about his followers as sheep. They did not feel safe; they were afraid. **What did you hear Jesus say to them?** "My sheep know my voice. They follow me. No one can snatch them out of my hand." That sounds like what your parents might say to you. "My children know my voice. They follow me. No one can snatch them out of my hand." Jesus called himself the "Good Shepherd." The Good Shepherd is like good parents. Jesus is like your parents. That's how much He cares for you. Imagine Jesus holding your hand so that you don't get lost. Listen to Jesus' voice speaking to you. What is Jesus saying to you?

I imagine many of you have a pet at home. Right? **Does your pet know your voice? Does your pet follow you? Do you protect your pet so that no one can snatch it out of your hand?** This is how Jesus cares for you – the same way you care for your pet. You are one of Jesus' pets. He has many pets.

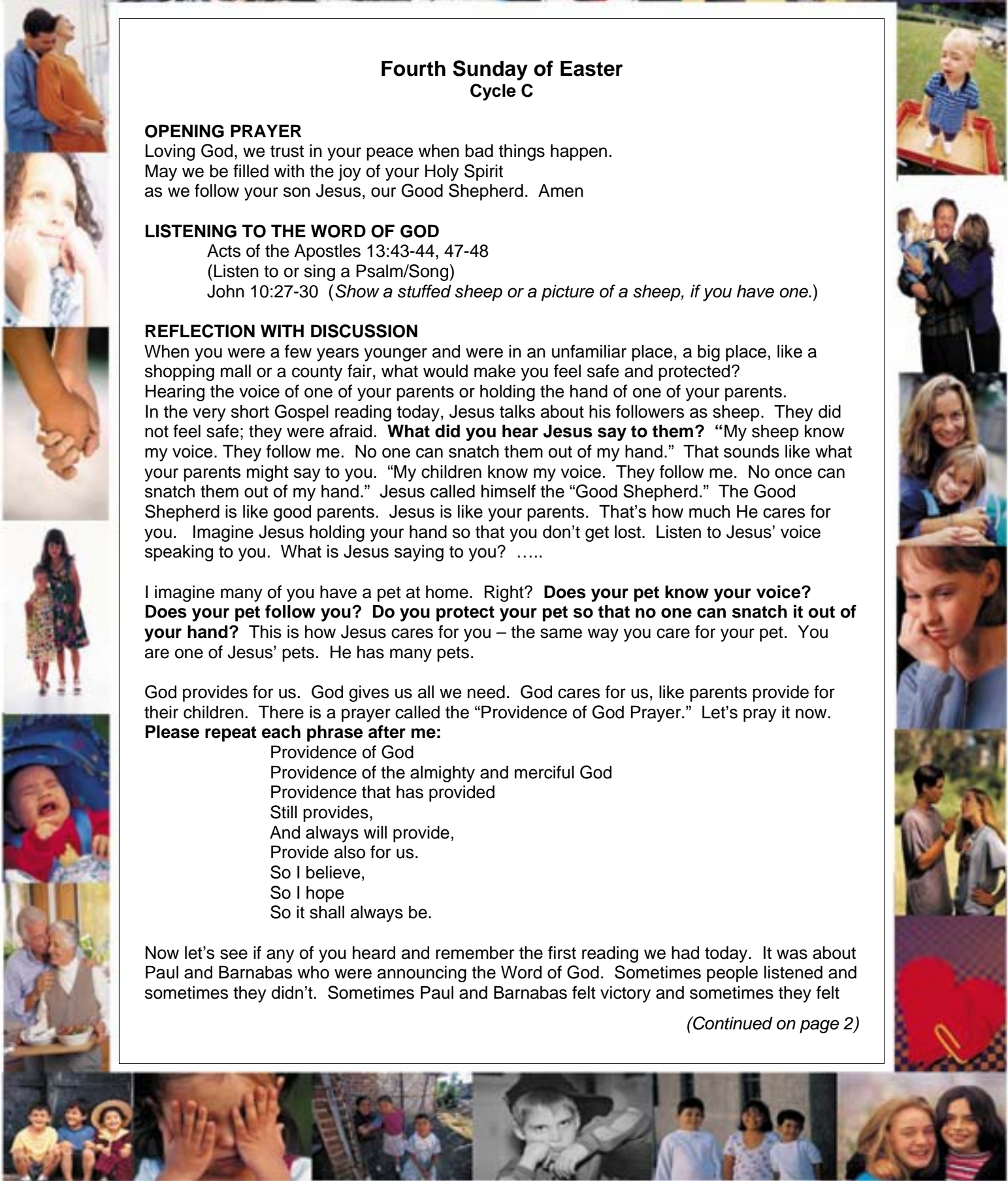
God provides for us. God gives us all we need. God cares for us, like parents provide for their children. There is a prayer called the "Providence of God Prayer." Let's pray it now.

Please repeat each phrase after me:

Providence of God
Providence of the almighty and merciful God
Providence that has provided
Still provides,
And always will provide,
Provide also for us.
So I believe,
So I hope
So it shall always be.

Now let's see if any of you heard and remember the first reading we had today. It was about Paul and Barnabas who were announcing the Word of God. Sometimes people listened and sometimes they didn't. Sometimes Paul and Barnabas felt victory and sometimes they felt

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defeat. **When Paul and Barnabas felt defeat, what voice did they listen to?** The voice of God, of course. God said "I have placed you here as a light... You are to take the word of God to people everywhere."

When you are afraid, when you feel defeated, whose voice will you listen to? I hope you can hear the voice of Jesus who loves you like a shepherd loves his sheep. Jesus will give you some good ideas on how to act. Jesus will hold your hand and tell you that he will protect you.

Lastly, does being a sheep in Jesus' flock mean you will never be afraid? That you'll never be hurt? That life will never be difficult? No. Does this mean that you will be totally safe from all harm all the time? No. But it does mean that Jesus will help you through any hard times.

ACTIVITY

Let's have a little procession/parade now. We'll each walk in a pair, holding hands, singing:

Jesus had a little lamb, little lamb, little lamb.
Jesus had a little lamb, its fleece was white as snow.

Everywhere that Jesus went, Jesus went, Jesus went.
Everywhere that Jesus went, the lamb was sure to go.

(You can repeat both verses)

CREED

Do you believe in God our loving Father? Yes, we believe.
Do you believe in Jesus our Good Shepherd? Yes, we believe.
Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who lives in us? Yes, we believe.

PETITIONS

Spontaneous.
Include a prayer for all who keep us safe: parents, teachers, police.
Close with the same prayer as the Opening Prayer.