



## FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

### FIRST READING: Acts 4:5-12

A reading from Acts.

<sup>5</sup>The next day [the] rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem,  
<sup>6</sup>with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander,  
and all who were of the high-priestly family.  
<sup>7</sup>When they had made the prisoners Peter and John stand in their midst,  
they inquired,  
“By what power or by what name did you do this?”  
<sup>8</sup>Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them,  
“Rulers of the people and elders,  
<sup>9</sup>if we are questioned today  
because of a good deed done to someone who was sick  
and are asked how this man has been healed,  
<sup>10</sup>let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel,  
that this man is standing before you in good health  
by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,  
whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead.  
<sup>11</sup>This Jesus is  
‘the stone that was rejected by you, the builders;  
it has become the cornerstone.’  
<sup>12</sup>There is salvation in no one else,  
for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals  
by which we must be saved.”

The word of the Lord.            *or*            Word of God, word of life.

### PSALMODY: Psalm 23

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#### FIRST READING    *Caiaphas = KAY-uh-fus*

Peter and John have been arrested for testifying to Jesus' resurrection and healing a disabled man. They continue their bold testimony now in court. Theirs is a bold and simple confession of faith. Although brief, the reading is dramatic and requires considerable energy from the beginning. From the very first verse the hearer needs to sense the drama developing. Peter's confession demands a voice that is amplified and confident.

## SECOND READING: 1 John 3:16-24

A reading from First John.

<sup>16</sup>We know love by this,  
that <sup>1</sup>Jesus Christ<sup>1</sup> laid down his life for us—  
and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.

<sup>17</sup>How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods  
and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

<sup>18</sup>Little children, let us love, not in word or speech,  
but in truth and action.

<sup>19</sup>And by this we will know that we are from the truth  
and will reassure our hearts before him <sup>20</sup>whenever our hearts condemn us;  
for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

<sup>21</sup>Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us,  
we have boldness before God;

<sup>22</sup>and we receive from him whatever we ask,  
because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

<sup>23</sup>And this is his commandment,  
that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ  
and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

<sup>24</sup>All who obey his commandments abide in him,  
and he abides in them.

And by this we know that he abides in us,  
by the Spirit that he has given us.

The word of the Lord.                      *or*                      Word of God, word of life.

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### SECOND READING

The reading celebrates the name of Jesus, as did the first reading. Let the reading build to verse 23. Allow each sentence a chance to sink into the hearers' consciousness by carefully observing periods, semicolons, and new paragraphs. Approach the text with intensity from the outset.

## **GOSPEL: John 10:11-18**

The holy gospel according to John.

「Jesus said:」

<sup>11</sup>“I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

<sup>12</sup>The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away— and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

<sup>13</sup>The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep.

<sup>14</sup>I am the good shepherd.

I know my own and my own know me,

<sup>15</sup>just as the Father knows me and I know the Father.

And I lay down my life for the sheep.

<sup>16</sup>I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold.

I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.

So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

<sup>17</sup>For this reason the Father loves me,

because I lay down my life in order to take it up again.

<sup>18</sup>No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.

I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again.

I have received this command from my Father.”

The gospel of the Lord.

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### **GOSPEL**

Work hard at hearing this text as if for the first time. Read it for the assembly as though they were hearing it for the first time. This discipline will slow the delivery. Slowing the delivery will allow the assembly adequate time to absorb the implications of every marvelous phrase.