



April 26, 2015
Fourth Sunday of Easter

"I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me..." John 10:14

Dear Friends;

Today we celebrate the Fourth Sunday of Easter which is also referred to as Good Shepherd Sunday. Each year on the Fourth Sunday of Easter our Gospel reading is taken from the 10th chapter of John's gospel in which Jesus is referred to as the Gate for the Sheep and The Good Shepherd. The passage we hear today tells us that Jesus will lay down his life for us, that he knows us, that he loves us, that he will take care of us, that there are others who belong to him and we all will be one flock and his sheep know his voice.

Throughout scripture we hear reference to shepherds good and bad alike. In the Hebrew Scriptures often the Kings of Israel are referred to as "not so good shepherds" who have led their flock astray. In Psalm 23 we read the Lord is our shepherd. And today's Gospel speaks of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. Those in Jesus' time would have recognized the comparison that was being made of the Kings (shepherds) of their past and Jesus as the Good Shepherd in their present.

Shepherds know their sheep and their sheep know them. The shepherd walks in front of their flock and their flock follows. Shepherds in Jesus' time were nomadic, always on the move with their flock. They were not part of the established community in the towns and so were not highly thought of and yet Jesus refers to himself as the Shepherd... he is always pushing us to rethink the norm... change the status quo.

Jesus as our shepherd knows us intimately and we in turn know his voice. But how do we know his voice? The same way we know the voice of those we love... spending time with them, talking with them, listening and hearing them. And so we need to do the same with Jesus.

As Catholics we have many ways to spend time with Jesus, to hear his voice. We attend Mass, we pray the rosary, we sit in prayer during adoration, we pray the Stations of the Cross and the Liturgy of the Hours, to name just a few. But we also hear his voice in the questions of a child, the tears of a friend going through a difficult situation, the lyrics of a song, the music of nature and so many other ways.

To hear his voice we need to be open and present in every situation. Have you ever been speaking with someone and realized they have stopped listening to you? How does that make you feel? I know when that happens to me I get a bit angry and often just stop talking. But Jesus isn't like me he continues to call us, to talk with us, to love us.

So as you go about your week take some time to reflect on the Good Shepherd and his model for us. Take some time to be present in the moment, to be present to your children, co-workers, partners, the grocery store clerk, and the neighbor you bump into as you rush out. Listen for His voice because if you listen for it you will hear it.

Peace & Happy Easter!

Lisa