

**Knowing your Shepherd and Recognizing his Voice – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter  
Year A May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 (Acts 2:14a, 36-41, Psalm 23, 1Peter 2:20b-25, John  
10:1-10)**

Friends in Christ, today is the 4th Sunday of Easter, also called Vocations Sunday. It is a day of special prayer for those who are “shepherds” in the church so they can model their shepherding role on Jesus our shepherd who is our guide and leader. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> readings describe to us what Jesus did while he lived on earth and call on us to imitate him. As a shepherd, either as a priest, religious, lay missionary, parent, teacher or employer, how committed are you to the care and protection to those God has entrusted to your care? As shepherds our main concern in discharging our duties should be, “Sheep First, Shepherds Last.”

The Rabbis used to tell a story of three shepherds who met with their separate flocks of sheep. While these three men were conversing, their sheep intermingled forming one big flock. When the men were ready to say goodbye to each other, each of the shepherds called out to his sheep. At the sound of their shepherd’s voice, like magic, the sheep separated again into three flocks. Just like these sheep, what distinguishes us is not so much the “pen” we inhabit, but the shepherd we follow. Some sheep come running as soon as their shepherd calls, but some struggle to obey his lead, going astray whenever there is temptation.

In today’s gospel, Jesus tells us about the sheep and their shepherd. He also says there are some thieves who would want to come and steal the sheep. I am wondering how the sheep can tell the difference between the thieves and their

shepherd. But we hear further in the gospel that, the sheep know their shepherd by his voice. The sheep will not follow thieves because they do not know the voice of strangers. The thieves and strangers may try to call the sheep to follow them, but the sheep will not follow them because they recognise only the voice of their master.

My brothers and sisters, Jesus is our shepherd and we need to listen to his voice and follow Him. But sometimes there are other voices that distract us. There are the voices on TV, voices of peer pressure and friends, voices of technology that we hear all around us. I wonder how we can keep listening to Jesus' voice when we are hearing all these other voices. One thing is clear, the promises of these other voices can never be compared with the good things that Jesus' voice promises. Jesus promises his obedient sheep that he will lead them safely and provide them with good pasture.

The last line in today's gospel is a very important one that we can rely on, "I came that they may have life and have it more abundantly."(John 10:10b) Our Responsorial Psalm for today says, "The Lord is my Shepherd, there is nothing I shall want." Who is your Shepherd in this world? May Jesus the Good Shepherd give us guidance and instructions to help us come out of our current situation safe and healthy. Amen.

**By Fr. Emmanuel Subaar**