

4th Sunday of Easter, Year C

GOSPEL

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Jesus said:

‘The sheep that belong to me listen to my voice;
I know them and they follow me.
I give them eternal life;
they will never be lost
and no one will ever steal them from me.
The Father who gave them to me is greater than anyone,
and no one can steal from the Father.
The Father and I are one.’

(John 10:27–30)

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- The Latin word for shepherd is *pastor*. It is from this word that we derive many of the terms used in the Church for people with a special role: pastor or priest, pastoral care, pastoral associate, pastoral council. These roles always imply a duty of love and care towards those for whom one is responsible.
- The Shepherd King was an ancient image of God used by the Hebrew people.
- In this gospel text, John is addressing one of the issues that confronted his community: the heretical voices of those who sought to lead people away from—rather than towards—God.

EXPLORING THE WORD

This text in John’s Gospel is set in Jerusalem, while Jesus is there for the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22), a feast celebrating the presence of God in the temple. The temple was not just a building for Israel. It was the visible place where God dwelt in the heart of God’s people; to go to the temple and worship was to ‘approach God’. Jesus is teaching something completely new here. He stands within the temple precinct and declares that it is only through him and through hearing his voice that people can come to the Father. The voice of Jesus is both seen and heard in the events of his life, death and resurrection. It is through all these events that the ways of God are made known to us.

- How do you ‘hear the voice’ of Jesus?
- What are some of the conflicting voices we hear in our world? Which voices are the loudest? Where do these voices lead us?
- What sense do you have of being called by name? How do you experience God’s constant care for you?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- What are the things about the Church and your particular community that make you feel like you belong?
- These words from Jesus are spoken with the utmost confidence in their truth! How confident are you feeling that you know Jesus and that he will give you eternal life?
- What are the things that may ‘steal you away’ from listening to the voice of Jesus?
- In your life, in what ways are you called on to act as a ‘shepherd’—a leader, provider, protector?
- Who are the people who act as a shepherd to you? In what ways do they carry out this role for you?
- Attend very carefully to the needs of those people who are in your care this week.
- Use today’s psalm as your prayer this week:

*Cry out with joy to the Lord, all the earth.
Serve the Lord with gladness.
Come before him singing for joy.*

*We are his people, the sheep of his flock.
Know that he, the Lord, is God.
He made us, we belong to him.*

*We are his people, the sheep of his flock.
Indeed how good is the Lord,
eternal his merciful love.
He is faithful from age to age.*

We are his people, the sheep of his flock.

