

Fourth Tuesday of Easter ~ 5/1

"My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand.

(John 10:27-28)

Voice recognition seems second nature to most of us. If we get a phone call from our mother or husband or sister or friend we know who it is as soon as the first word is out of their mouths. It is difficult to disguise our voices, and even when we are being playful and change the pitch or accent those who know us well will usually not be fooled. Recognizing a voice can bring us happiness. It can make us angry or sad and at times frighten us. A child will recognize when mom or dad is angry, and he or she will dread the scolding that is sure to follow. Who hasn't watched the joy on the face of a baby when he or she hears the voice of the mother as she comes in the house from a shopping trip? Even after a person has died we remember the voice of the beloved family member even if it has been silenced for many years. The voice still rings clearly in our minds.

In this gospel verse from St. John Jesus tells us that we must follow His voice when we recognize it. Because we are His 'sheep', because we have become familiar with His voice we will recognize Him and we will know that to follow His lead is to be on the right path.

Unlike the voice of another human being however the voice that we follow when we follow Christ may not always sound the same. Sometimes it will have a very feminine quality. Sometimes it will be childlike and sometimes it will shake with the weight of many years. On some days the voice of Jesus will sound like the song of an Oriole high in the tree and sometimes on a dark cold night it will be in the cry of a lone wolf. The voice of Jesus thunders in the heaven and whispers in the wind. Christ's anxious cries of pain and suffering can be heard on our televisions nightly in the voices of the victims of bomb blasts and mortar fire. We hear the Lord weeping over all the dying AIDS victims in Africa and for all the vanishing species of this planet. The voice of Jesus can literally be heard everywhere on the planet at any time of the day or night. If we have heard the voice within that speaks of love and Easter we will recognize the different dialects and accents of Christ in the world around us. Listen carefully and be attentive and you will be led unerringly by a very good Shepherd.

Questions for Reflection

- 1. What does the voice of Jesus inside of me sound like?*
- 2. What are the most significant voices of Christ that are crying out today in the world?*

Prayer: Speak Lord for I want to listen to Your voice so I can learn the language of love.