

4 Easter Monday JN 10:1-10

Today's gospel is the exact same gospel we heard yesterday, the first ten verses of Jesus' famous "Good Shepherd Discourse." Within these first ten verses, Jesus speaks of the sheep recognizing the shepherd's voice.

The sheep hear his voice, as he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice. But they will not follow a stranger; they will run away from him, because they do not recognize the voice of strangers."

A friend of mine explained to me this imagery of the shepherd's voice, telling me the story about the time she was driving through sheep farms on back roads in the Midwest. Now I know nothing about sheep, but from what I understand, sheep are dumb and they are easily distracted. As my friend was driving, she saw a sheep who had his head stuck in the fence. He put his head through the wire in the fence and no matter how hard he tried, could not get it out. She felt so sorry for the poor sheep, she stopped the car and walked over to the sheep hoping

to free his head from the fence. But the closer she got to the sheep, the more frantic the sheep became, trying more to get away from her than free himself from the fence. Afraid the sheep was going to hurt himself because she upset him so much, she got back in the car and followed the fence to the driveway up to the farm house. She called to the farmer who came out and she told him that he had a sheep whose head was stuck in the fence, and that she tried to free him, but she only made him more upset. The farmer, or should I say the shepherd, knew exactly what sheep it was. It was Rosco, and it was not the first time Rosco got his head stuck in the fence. So off they drove, back to the stuck sheep.

My friend kept her distance as she didn't want to upset the sheep, but the shepherd went up to the sheep, who was still upset and trying unsuccessfully to get his head out of the fence. The shepherd made this noise. T T T and when the sheep heard T T T , he calmed right down. The shepherd went over, turned the sheep's head with his hands so he could free the sheep, and all was well.

All this dumb sheep, who often got his head stuck in the fence, needed to hear was the familiar T T T. The shepherd didn't speak a word, and all was well in the sheep's world.

So during this pandemic, you don't know whose voice to listen to:

- ✓ There are those in charge and making decisions;
- ✓ There are those in the medical field who are saying one thing;
- ✓ There are the Monday morning quarterbacks who are saying another thing;
- ✓ At first, don't need to wear a mask; now, wear a mask;
- ✓ We will be isolating this for another six weeks;
- ✓ We shouldn't be isolating at all.

Lots of opinions, lots of voices. Stranger's voices. Perhaps all we need to do is listen to the Good Shepherd's voice, which is as simple and as soothing as T T T was to Rosco. Following the voice of the Good Shepherd, let's allow him to tilt our heads this way and that, until we are free from

the pandemic as Rosco was freed from the fence, and all is well.