

I read a recent report stating that the use of television and social media during this period of the pandemic has increased by over 60 %. With so many people staying at home this means a huge increase in the number of voices bombarding us with *their* agendas. We are hearing more & more conflicting voices whether it be scientists, politicians, so -called experts, advertisers, or just public opinion. Add to that the voices in our heads worrying about this CoVid situation. All of their voices together tend to create confusion, uncertainty, doubt & a dizzying loss of focus and direction. It reminds me of a parody of the familiar 23rd psalm.

*The TV is my shepherd, I shall not want, / It makes me to lie down on the sofa
It leads me to unending distractions. // It numbs my soul.
Even though I walk through the valley of darkness I have no fear, for the TV is with me.
// Its cable and remote control, they comfort me
It presents a table full of commercials /. It anoints my head with consumerism
My cup and bowl of snacks overflow.*

Well, you get the idea.

In today's gospel Jesus speaks about himself as the shepherd who's voice calls his sheep by name and leads them. The sheep follow him because they recognize His voice. It's any wonder that we would be able to recognize the shepherd's voice among the many competing voices we hear every day. Jesus calls you by your true name, the name God has given you from the beginning to time. He calls you to follow him because He desires you to be in relationship with Him. Jesus wants you to know and follow His way of being human because this is the **only way** to come to the fulfillment of your humanity. It's the voice of the Good Shepherd which will lead you to see the world and other people the way God sees them. If you follow the voice of Jesus you will become more loving and forgiving, more compassionate and merciful. Generous & caring. The voice of Jesus will lead you away from the dehumanizing attitudes of greed, self-indulgence, manipulation, and all the other distorted opinions which we see in the culture around us. The good shepherd's voice calls us to an ongoing conversion that leads us to take on ever more fully the mind and heart of Jesus.

In order for this to happen we have to tune out the voices that conflict with our best interests by listening to the voice of God that comes to us in the scriptures, reflective prayer and from other faithful followers of the good shepherd. Why not make good use of staying at home by stepping back from all the misleading voices and spending some time listening to the voice of the Good Shepherd. Today decide to take time this week just to be still & listen for the voice of God. Let his words nourish your soul, so that, as He said in today's Gospel.:

you may have life and have it more abundantly