# Fourth Sunday of Easter (C)

**Gospel text (*Jn* 10:27-30):** Jesus said: “My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can take them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can take them out of the Father’s hand. The Father and I are one.”

***“My sheep hear my voice; I know them and they follow me”***

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Today Jesus' gaze upon humanity is the gaze of the Good Shepherd, who takes responsibility for the sheep entrusted to him and cares for each one of them. He creates a bond between Him and them, an instinct of knowledge and fidelity: They "hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me" (Jn 10:27). The voice of the Good Shepherd is always a call to follow him, to enter his magnetic circle of influence.

Christ has won us not only with his example and his doctrine, but with the price of his Blood. We have cost him a lot, and that is why he does not want any of his people to be lost. And yet, the evidence is overwhelming: some follow the call of the Good Shepherd, and others do not. The proclamation of the Gospel provokes anger in some, and joy in others. What do some have that others do not? Saint Augustine, faced with the abysmal mystery of divine election, responded: "God will not leave you if you do not leave him"; he will not abandon you if you do not abandon him. Therefore, do not blame God, nor the Church, nor others, because the problem of your fidelity is yours. God does not deny his grace to anyone, and this is our strength: to hold fast to God's grace. It is not a merit of ours; we have simply been "graced."

Faith enters through the ear, through hearing the Word of the Lord, and the greatest danger we have is deafness, not hearing the voice of the Good Shepherd, because our heads are full of noise and other discordant voices, or, even more serious, what the Exercises of St. Ignatius call "playing deaf," knowing that God is calling you and not taking it personally. Those who consciously and repeatedly close themselves off to God's call lose touch with Jesus and will lose the joy of being a Christian, to go graze in other pastures that neither satisfy nor give eternal life. However, He is the only one who could say: "I give them eternal life" (Jn 10:28).

## *Thoughts on Today's Gospel*

- “‘If anyone enters through me, he will be saved’, and he will come in and he will go out and find pasture. He will come in coming to faith; he will come out from faith to face-to-face vision, he will find there to graze eternity pasture.” (Saint Gregory the Great)

- “Herein lies the distinction between the owner, the true Shepherd, and the robber. For the robber, for the ideologues and the dictators, human beings are merely a thing that they possess. For the true Shepherd, however, they are free in relation to truth and Love.” (Benedict XVI)

- “Participation in the communal celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is a testimony of belonging and of being faithful to Christ and to his Church. The faithful give witness by this to their communion in faith and charity (...). They strengthen one another under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, № 2182)