

Sunday 4th (C) of Easter

Gospel text (Jn 10,27-30): Jesus said, «My sheep hear my voice and I know them; they follow me and I give them eternal life. They shall never perish and no one will ever steal them from me. What the Father has given me is above everything else and no one can snatch it from the Father's hand. I and the Father are one».

«My sheep hear my voice and I know them; they follow me»

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Today, Jesus' gaze over manhood is that of the Good Shepherd, who accepts under his responsibility the sheep that are given to him by the Father and takes good care of each one of them. Between him and them He creates a link, a recognition and faithfulness instinct: «My sheep hear my voice and I know them; they follow me» (Jn 10:27). The Good Shepherd's voice is always an invitation to follow him, to enter his magnetic circle of influence.

Christ has won our hearts not only through his examples and his doctrine, but also with the awful price He had to pay of his Divine Blood. He tremendously suffered for all of us, and therefore, He does not want to lose anyone of us. And yet, the evidence is clear: some do follow the Good Shepherd's call while others, do not. Some react with anger at the announcement of the Gospel while others jump with joy at the news. What do the latter have the former do not? Saint Augustine, before the vast mystery of the divine election, used to answer: «God does not leave you, if you do not leave him»; He will not forsake you if you do not forsake him. Do not therefore put the blame on God, or the Church or on others, because you are the only one to blame for, the problem of your faithfulness being only yours. God does not deny anyone his grace, and this is precisely our strength: strongly stick to God's grace. It is no merit of ours; we have simply been “blessed”.

Faith enter us through the ears, by listening to he Word of the Lord, and the greater risk we run is our own deafness, to miss the Good Shepherd's voice, because our head is full of noise and other dissonant voices. Or even worse, what in Saint Ignatious' Spiritual Exercises is named as «to turn a deaf ear», to know God is

calling you and pretend not to hear it. He who consciously and repeatedly closes his ears to God's call, is no longer in tune with Jesus and will also lose the joy of being a Christian, to go grazing in other pastures that neither satiate nor give eternal life. Nonetheless, He is the only one who could have said: «I give them eternal life» (Jn 10:28).