

April 26, 2015 – Fourth Sunday of Easter
World Day of Prayer for Vocations
Acts 4:8-12, 1 John 3:1-2, John 10:11-18
by Father Peter Asantebwana

In times of Jesus, everyone knew about shepherds, their sheep, and how they interacted with each other. [Just few of us have watched shepherds tending their sheep] During nights the shepherds kept their sheep in sheepfolds that were large circles of stones that both enclosed the sheep while at the same time protecting them from predators such as wolves. There was a narrow opening to let the sheep in and out. At night the shepherds would spread their bedrolls across the base of those openings and sleep there. An enemy could enter the sheepfold only by crossing over the bodies of the shepherds.

Now the teaching of Jesus to His disciples was. ...So Jesus said again, “Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.”

Today we should ask ourselves: “Whose voice am I following?” Some of us listen to only our own inner voice. We tell ourselves, nobody, can tell me what to do or what to believe. Some of us listen to the seductive whispers of the world. Still others pay little attention to any call other than their urges, drives, or desires. We all know that many voices call us and we need to beware of them, where they are coming from, and where they will lead us.

How can we discern and listen to the voice of our Good Shepherd? How does God speak to us?

1. You need to expect that God can reach you. Think of the good things that have come to you, the good things that you have experienced.
2. Prayer is essential. Prayer places your soul at the disposal of God. Prayer can bring us to be reflective, to contemplate, to see and hear the actions and whisperings of the Holy Spirit in us. In our silent attentiveness the gentle whispering of the Holy Spirit can be heard deep within us.
3. God also speaks to us in the beauty and majesty of creation. Moments when we are filled with awe and wonder over nature’s beauty are moments when God is speaking to us.
4. There are examples of good people along with their words, their attitudes, and their dispositions. The Preachers, ministers of the Eucharist and the sacraments; these, too, are ways in which God speaks to us. Much depends upon your basic disposition toward God.

Fr Charles Irvin says *anyone who is in charge of others is called by God to care for those placed in their charge. Who are they? They are parents and grandparents; they are teachers, doctors, nurses, lawyers, priests, ministers, and mentors. Are you responsible in any way for the well-being of others? If you are, Jesus is calling you to shepherd them as He shepherds us.*

Parents to their children: Tell your children "You can become a lawyer and priest, you can become a doctor and a priest, you can become a priest and professor, a sister and principal of a school, a sister and engineer, a sister and an accountant, a sister and professor, a sister and a medical doctor etc."

Do you feel that God cares for you? Do you feel that God can reach you? If so, then you can understand what today's Gospel is telling you. But understanding is only the beginning. What is necessary is for you to let God find you, tell you of His love for you, and then let Him carry you back to where you belong.