

**Fourth Sunday Easter -A- 2020**  
**Mass Suspended due to Coronavirus**  
**On-Line Homily**  
**Acts 2.14,36-41///1Peter 2.20-25///John 10.1-10**

→there once was a young man trying to get a job with the circus...rather desperate for work...he announced that he would do any job at all.

→so the manager of the circus decided to give him a chance to be an assistant lion tamer...and took him to the lion's cage.

→the head lion tamer was a beautiful young lady who was just about to rehearse her act.

→she stepped into the cage, removed her cape with a flourish revealing a gorgeous sequined costume and with authority she spoke a command to the lion.

→obediently the lion crept towards her on its belly and then rolled over twice before it sat on its hind legs to beg for a treat.

→ "well" the manager said to the young man, "do you think you can learn to do that."

→ to which the young man replied... "I'm sure I can...but first we need to get the lion out of here."

→now the point of the story is that the lion recognized the voice of its trainer...just as Jesus tells us in today's gospel the sheep recognize the voice of their shepherd.

→one of the best ways to teach someone is often by using simple examples and images they can relate too.

→talk to children about something that they are familiar and know about and they will connect to the concept you are trying to get across.

→well today... Jesus does exactly same thing...as we just heard in today gospel's passage.

→whenever Jesus wanted to teach people anything about himself or about God

→he always used examples that people were familiar with so that they could make the connection and get the message.

→today...Jesus uses the familiar image of sheep and shepherds.

→he does so because at the time....people were very familiar with sheep and shepherds

---it was common knowledge that each shepherd had their own special call or sound that the sheep easily became familiar with

→the sheep would then follow when they heard that sound.

→the shepherd would call or whistle to get the sheep's attention and they would follow

--even if sheep were mixed in with other sheep, all the shepherd would have to do is make his sound and the sheep would come and follow

→they all knew their shepherd's call, they were familiar with his voice...and they would follow their shepherd and no one else.

→and this is the image Jesus uses for us today....it is quite clear and very straightforward and yet we hear that people in the gospel did not grasp or understand it.

→now perhaps you might be thinking....that is a bit strange....how could the people hearing this lesson NOT get the message

→yet how often....even today....do we still fail to get message...even when it is very simple and straightforward as well

→FURTHERMORE.....we even hear...*"that even though Jesus used this figure of speech [the Pharisee's], did not realize what he was trying to tell them...."*

SO he goes through the image again and spells it out very straightforwardly

*"...I am the gate for the sheep...I am the gate...and whoever comes through me will be saved....I came that they might have life and have it abundantly."*

and very simply put...that is the same message that you and I are being told today as well.

→we, like the sheep, need to also enter through the gate and we enter the gate by recognizing the voice of the shepherd...the one who calls AND challenges us to become more like Christ to one another.

→this challenge to become more like Christ plays out very simply everyday of our lives in the way we are with others

→how we act and speak and share and feel and relate to each other.

and very simply put...is the **heart and soul** of Christ's message

→these days, in so many ways, we are being asked to heed the message that is being placed before us....

→social distancing...staying apart from one another...changing the way we shop and entertain ...go to events and out to eat.....all that is not easy to do

→and the longer these circumstances remain the more difficult and frustrating it can become....

→however just like the people in today's gospel and people of every generation who have faced uncertainty and ambiguity

→we need to pay attention to the message placed before us....

that is what it means to become the sheep of Christ....and today Jesus is not only urging us to become like him but also to recognize that HE is the gate that leads to eternal life

→it is the voice of compassion, of kindness, of dignity and respect, of patience and endurance that leads us to the gate

→and it is that voice we need to recognize and follow.

PAUSE

→Jesus has been telling us this very same message for past 2000 years.

one that is....perhaps...most important right now...here today...

→may our hope and prayer be that....THIS message will not only be remembered but truly lived in our daily lives.