

4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 4:8-12 1 John 3:1-2 John 10:11-18

Time before the Blessed Sacrament

Last Sunday we departed from the readings of the day to see where we are coming from with regard to the Exposition of the Blessed sacrament which takes place in this church every Thursday. Today we continue to build on that but in connection with both, the readings of this fourth Sunday of Easter and the fact that this is also Vocations Sunday. The image of the Good Shepherd and the sheep in the Gospel is nothing else but a way of talking about relationship. What unites the shepherd and the sheep is precisely what unites the Father and the Son. In between the shepherd and the sheep, just as in between the Father and Jesus is nothing else but a process of listening, nothing else but an exchange of voices.

You read from the Gospels how, on a number of occasions Jesus escaped from the good work of healing people in preference to spending time listening to his Father in quiet places such as the wilderness.

PRAYER BEFORE THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

When we go out to pray before the Blessed Sacrament on Thursdays it is time for us to enter into that wilderness to speak to the Lord. It is also time for us to listen. At that time Our Lord is saying to us: *'Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live.'* It means that when we come before the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament we may have a list of petitions we would like to voice out. This an acceptable starting point. However, it is important to give God a chance to speak as well. Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament is a conversation, not a monologue. Like the young Samuel in the Old Testament, we come before the Lord in a mode of *'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.'*

We can see in the Gospels that listening was important for Jesus.

When he was twelve, he was found in the Temple listening to the teachers and asking them questions (Lk 2:46). In his public ministry, he listened to people and to their problems. His compassion came from listening to what was going on around him. Jesus also reminded those who have ears to use their ears for listening well and at depth (Mt 4:9...) At the Transfiguration, the disciples are in turn told to listen to Jesus. Even at his baptism a voice was heard: *'This is my beloved son, listen to him.'*

The time in front of the Blessed Sacrament, is a good opportunity to do just that. To be caring like the Good Shepherd, we need to ask ourselves:

How good am I at listening?

What stops me from listening at depth?

What can help me listen to God, or listen more attentively?