

REFLECTION

4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

John 10: 1-10

Today we celebrate the Fourth Sunday of Easter also known as the Good Shepherd Sunday as well as Vocations Sunday. The Gospel reading draws us to understand and to relate the identity of Jesus.

In the synoptic gospels Jesus keeps proclaiming the kingdom of God in terms of parables. In the Gospel of John, we rather have a series of figurative statements designed to demonstrate the who Jesus is. In there, Jesus said things like, *"I am the bread of life; I am the light of the world; I am the resurrection and the life; I am the way, the truth, and the life; I am the true vine."* And in today's scripture, Jesus added one more image: *"I am the gate of the sheepfold."* All these figures of speech reveal something of the who Jesus is.

Today we are being drawn to embrace Jesus as the gate through which we are saved. Jesus gave this teaching after a controversy with the Jewish leaders following the healing of the blind man on the Sabbath. The Jewish leaders are a symbol of restriction and wellbeing. Rather than restricting the sheep Jesus is gate protects them and also leads them to good pasture and abundant life. He is the means by which we enter the sheepfold. The sheepfold is a place of safety, and security in the midst of a world full of dangers and threats. Jesus is presenting himself as someone who is in the position of providing wholeness, safety and security here and now. Jesus is not here talking of paradise nor of heaven but the world we live in. Isn't this saying that even this place of safety is not entirely secure? There are still a few thieves and robbers who could climb the fence not entering through the gate.

Our only protection from such dangers is that we would not follow their voice. This figure of speech should give us a pause. Are we led astray by other voices in our modern world? We have the responsibility to be critical because some of these voices might appeal to our preconceived ideologies. They may be voices that may soothe us with simplistic and self-serving messages.

This figure of speech is calling us to be critical of voices bent on leading us away from gospel values. Let us know the gate through which we enter the sheepfold and not be drawn away by other voices.

Fr Naz, 3/5/20