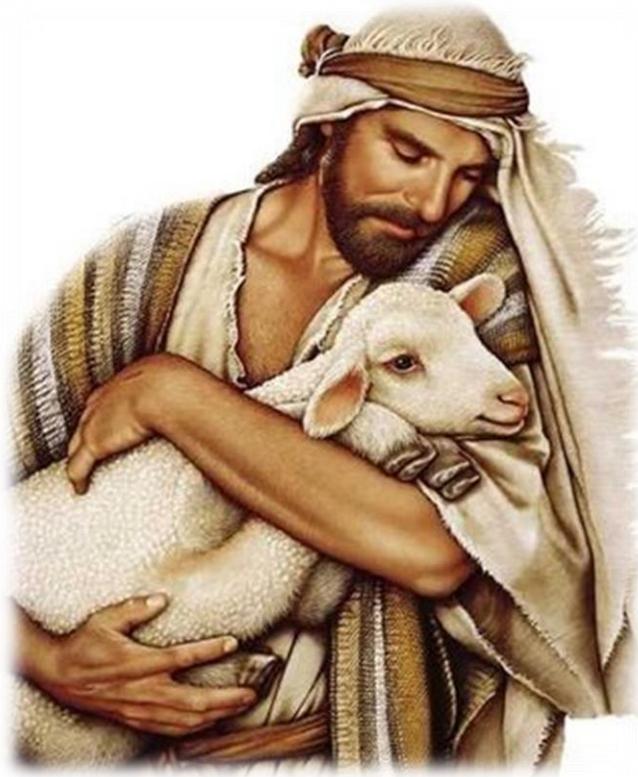


Fourth Sunday of Easter

Year C

Last weekend, we heard Simon Peter being missioned by the Risen Jesus:
“Feed my Lambs, Feed my Sheep”.

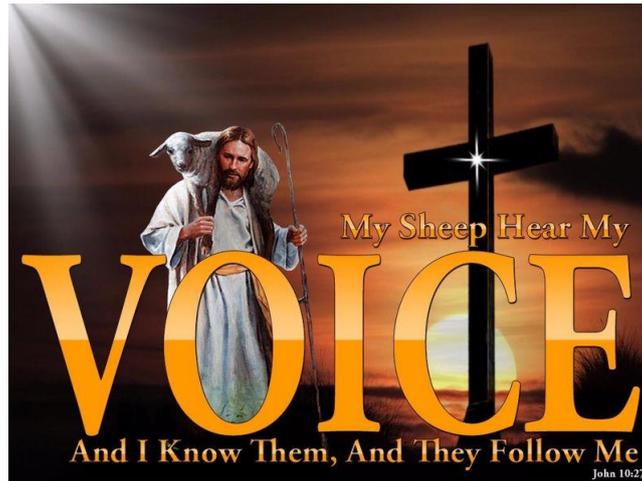
In today’s Gospel, we are called the sheep that belong to Jesus. He says that we listen to his voice, that he knows us and that we follow him. He promises us eternal life.



The first reading tells of the difficulties Paul and Barnabas had when they were preaching the Good News of Jesus in the synagogue at Antioch. Although they were greeted with warmth by many Jews and converts on the first Sabbath there, the mood of the leading people of Antioch had changed by the following Sabbath. They expelled Paul and Barnabas from their territory. Acknowledging that the Jews there had rejected God’s word, they moved on to Iconium, remembering that Jesus had commanded them to be a *“light for the nations, so that his salvation may reach the ends of the earth.”*

The second reading says, *Jesus will be our shepherd and will lead us to springs of living water; and God will wipe away all tears from our eyes.*

The image of the shepherd speaks to us about the protection, security, and care that shepherds represent for their sheep. As Jesus is the Good Shepherd then his sheep are the ones who seek tenderness, care, protection and a love that will look for them when they are lost. We recognise that Jesus offers us these things and so we follow him trusting that he will look after us in a way that no one else can. He offers us eternal life in the kingdom of God.



In our world today there are so many voices calling out to be heard. Unfortunately, many of these voices are speaking the language of violence, extremism, hatred, jealousy and prejudice. Unless we listen to the voice of Jesus, we may miss the voices that we need to hear – the voice of the poor; the voice of the sick; the voice of those hurt by the institutional church; the voice of the oppressed; the voice of the abused; the voice of the lonely.

We must be the voice of the voiceless. We must offer people the tenderness, care, protection and love that Jesus, the Good Shepherd offers us. Being a Shepherd in the Most Holy Trinity is not a job for Canon Alan alone: it is a job to which each one of us are called through our Baptism and through the Resurrection of Jesus.

*We shall go out with hope of resurrection.
We shall go out, from strength to strength go on.
We shall go out and tell our stories boldly,
Tales of a love that will not let us go.
We'll sing our songs of wrongs that can be righted.
We'll dream our dreams of hurts that can be healed.
We'll weave a cloth of all the world united
Within the vision of a Christ who sets us free.*

*We'll give a voice to those who have not spoken.
We'll find the tunes for those whose lips are sealed.
We'll make the tunes for those who sing no longer,
Vibrating love alive in every heart.
We'll share our joy with those who are still weeping.
Chant hymns of strength for hearts that break in grief.
We'll leap and dance the resurrection story
Including all within the circles of our love.*

Tune: Londonderry Air