



The sheep hear his voice, as he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

JOHN 10:3

SPETIEN/SHUTTERSTOCK

Matters of Life and Death

Sheep are a lot smarter than some people think. They recognize the voice of their particular shepherd and follow that voice alone. However, that is not the point of Jesus' teaching today. Because most of us don't raise sheep or know much about them, we don't realize that the situation described in the Gospel passage is a matter of life and death.

It's similar to the relationship between a military squad leader and the troops he leads, another life-and-death matter. In both, unquestioning obedience is required, and absolute trust in the other is presumed.

That's what Jesus is describing. He's suggesting: "Listen to me. Follow my lead. Trust in me. I want only what is good for you, so I will be your sure protection."

It sounds so easy, as parables and metaphors usually do. What does it mean to follow this Shepherd? In the first reading, Peter announces the answer in one word: Repent!" There is that challenging word—the word

we might associate with Lent, not with Easter. If we do so, we miss the point of following the Shepherd, for to follow him means to be like him. It means: "Repent! Stop taking advantage of other people. Open your minds and hearts to newcomers. Respect those who observe different religious traditions. Help those less fortunate than you." All of this is captured in the final words of the Gospel reading: do what you can so that all "might have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Clearly, that's smart.

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR Reflection

- * On what path might the Shepherd be leading you?
- * In what area is he calling you to repent?

Dear Padre,

How will it happen that Jesus will come again and lead us “through the gates”?

We have it from the best of authorities that the date of the world’s end is hidden. Jesus said, “But of that day and hour no one knows... but the Father alone” (Matthew 24:36). In spite of Christ’s admonition that the day of his Second Coming is known but to God, there have been countless false prophets who have confidently but incorrectly predicted a date for the end of the world. Most of these foolish forecasters based their claims on misinterpretations of the Book of Revelation.

The main purpose of the Book of Revelation is to assure us that God’s power will prevail. In the ongoing struggle between good and evil, there are times when evil seems to have the upper hand. No matter. Evil will be conquered and God’s rule will extend over all creation.

The world might end tomorrow, or next year, or in five billion years. Jesus tells us we can’t know for sure. We are sure, however, that this world will pass away. And for each one of us the world will end at the moment of death. What matters is that we should always be ready to meet Christ.

And we shall be ready if we follow Christ, our Shepherd, whom we meet in today’s Gospel. Jesus leads us safely through this life by his teaching, his example, and his grace.

—Fr. Oscar Lukefahr, CM
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KIMBASTONSHUTTERSTOCK



A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

We should never forget: the Church is not a static reality, inert, an end in herself, but is on a continual journey through history, towards that ultimate and marvelous end that is the kingdom of heaven, of which the Church on earth is the seed and the beginning.

—GENERAL AUDIENCE, NOVEMBER 26, 2014

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Calendar

Monday

MAY 4

Easter Weekday

Acts 11:1–18

Jn 10:11–18

Tuesday

MAY 5

Easter Weekday

Acts 11:19–26

Jn 10:22–30

Wednesday

MAY 6

Easter Weekday

Acts 12:24–13:5a

Jn 12:44–50

Thursday

MAY 7

Easter Weekday

Acts 13:13–25

Jn 13:16–20

Friday

MAY 8

Easter Weekday

Acts 13:26–33

Jn 14:1–6

Saturday

MAY 9

Easter Weekday

Acts 13:44–52

Jn 14:7–14

Sunday

MAY 10

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts 6:1–7

1 Pt 2:4–9

Jn 14:1–12

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