

Today the Church is asking all of us to listen...  
listen for the voice of our Good Shepherd  
and if that voice happens to sound like your mother...  
that is good since we celebrate Mother's Day...  
and hers was the first voice we ever heard.

Easter...4Sun...Yrc.2025

I will speak about mothers at the end  
but let's begin by listening again to what the Gospel tells us.  
"My sheep hear my voice; I know them and they follow me."  
This simple verse reveals our relationship with Jesus. "I know them."  
We are not just followers.  
Jesus knows us...each and every one of us.  
We are not part of a nameless crowd...we are part of a great multitude  
whom the shepherd calls...each by name.  
Listen for his voice.  
But listening to the shepherd requires silence and intention.  
I want to hear his voice.

Today so many voices compete for our attention.  
The noise of the world...social media...fear...confusion.  
Every one of us here have a personal way of hearing Jesus.  
This morning, we have come together at this Mass  
to listen in a special way to the very words  
and lessons spoken by Our Shepherd.  
The Eucharist is what brings us together as one flock...  
here together with one shepherd.  
Listen and hear Him.

We hear in the 1<sup>st</sup> Reading from Acts that Paul and Barnabas  
were preaching boldly and many came to believe.

Yet jealousy and persecution rose up quickly.  
The Word of God is both embraced and sometimes rejected.  
What did Paul and Barnabas do?  
They shook the dust from their feet and carried on...  
filled with the Holy Spirit.  
This is a lesson for us today.  
When we speak the truth...when we live as Catholics...  
we may face rejection.  
Not everyone will want to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd.  
Even among good Catholics there is selective hearing of the Truth.  
But just like the early Apostles,  
we are called to remain joyful and faithful and to carry on.

In our 2<sup>nd</sup> reading from the Book of Revelation,  
the vision of St. John was a great multitude of saints  
coming together from every nation...  
standing before the throne of God.  
These are the ones who have come out of the great tribulation.  
They have suffered. They have endured.  
And now the Lamb will shepherd them.  
We celebrated this Jesus, the sacrificial Lamb on the cross,  
just this Easter.  
John reminds us that Jesus ended the suffering of death  
with His Resurrection.  
That is why at the end of the Revelation reading it says,  
"God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

I love this time of the Liturgical Year because we hear  
so many stories from the Acts of the Apostles.  
It was the Apostles and the early believers who listened to Jesus

and took his message to the known world.

They were the 1<sup>st</sup> evangelizers.

Does that look like our Church today? I would say Yes.

We come together to listen and to spread the Good News.

So here are today's lessons. Listen. Persevere. And speak the Truth.

1) Listen to the voice of Jesus, our Shepherd.

Make time each day...even 5 minutes...to be silent  
and listen in prayer or Scripture  
or the Catechism of the Catholic Church.  
Read sources of the Truth.

2) Persevere in the face of trials.

Like the saints in Revelation we are in a spiritual struggle.  
But Jesus promises..."No one can take them out of my hand."  
You are not alone. We are not alone.  
Stay close to Jesus in a personal relationship.

3) Be courageous in witnessing for your faith.

Like Paul and Barnabas, we are all sent into the world  
to speak and to live the truth of our Catholic faith.  
It may be unpopular...but it is powerful.

Listen. Persevere. And speak the Truth.

This Gospel today I think is perfect

for today's celebration of Mother's Day.

Think about this...who's the first voice a baby hears?

Of course. A baby's mother.

A child's auditory system develops at 16 weeks.

So for 5 months of a pregnancy a child will hear  
muffled sounds of its mother's voice  
while still tucked in the womb.

I can remember my mother saying to me...  
Quit playing soccer on my bladder.

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In all seriousness...

Mothers, you have nurtured life to a little person.  
You have nurtured life to a human being who is going to live forever.  
Think of that!  
You have nurtured life to someone  
that will never go out of existence...  
who has the opportunity of eternal happiness in Heaven...  
life without end.

We celebrate All you Mothers today...in our homes...  
in our parish...in our community.  
May all mothers mimic our Good Shepherd's voice  
of Love...Mercy...and Compassion.

Now...our great Alleluia this week is....."We have a pope!"  
Pope Leo the 14<sup>th</sup>.

And how wonderful that he is one of our own. A priest from Chicago.  
Join me in a moment of prayer for his leadership and success.

"Lord, as Pope Leo XIV assumes the Ministry of Peter,  
we pray that the Holy Spirit draw ever closer to him  
as our new Holy Father...and illuminate his path  
so that he may faithfully see and respond  
to the needs of his people. Christ Jesus, bless Pope Leo XIV -  
and bless us, your holy people, as together we strive  
to be your Body in our wounded world. Amen."