

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish **Bulletin for Teens**



Whose voice do you listen to?

Sunday the 26th of April 2026, Fourth Sunday of Easter, Year A

Gospel: John 10:1-10

Jesus said: 'I tell you most solemnly, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate, but gets in some other way is a thief and a brigand. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock; the gatekeeper lets him in, the sheep hear his voice, one by one he calls his own sheep and leads them out. When he has brought out his flock, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know his voice. They never follow a stranger but run away from him: they do not recognise the voice of strangers.'

Jesus told them this parable but they failed to understand what he meant by telling it to them. So Jesus spoke to them again:

'I tell you most solemnly. I am the gate of the sheepfold. All others who have come are thieves and brigands; but the sheep took no notice of them. I am the gate. Anyone who enters through me will be safe: he will go freely in and out and be sure of finding pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full.'



The Gospel of the Lord.

A little bit of history for context

Understanding how shepherds cared for sheep in the time of Jesus makes the Gospel of John come alive. Jesus wasn't speaking in abstract ideas - he was using everyday images that His listeners knew well.

At night sheep were kept in sheepfolds, stone-walled enclosures, that often had only one narrow entrance. There was no physical gate, so instead the shepherd would lie across the entrance at night. This meant that no sheep could leave without passing the shepherd and no predator or thief could enter without confronting him. This is the background for Jesus saying: 'I am the gate of the sheepfold.'

Shepherds kept small flocks and they built strong relationships with them. Many flocks and multiple shepherds would graze on the same ground, and even share the same sheepfold. Sheep learned to recognise their shepherd's voice and would follow him - but not strangers. This connects directly to Jesus saying: 'The sheep hear his voice, one by one he calls his own sheep and leads them out.'

Unlike modern farming in many places, shepherds in Jesus' time led from the front, rather than driving from behind. The sheep followed willingly because they trusted the shepherd. This is the context for: 'When he has brought out his flock, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know his voice.'

Whose voice are you listening to?

In this Gospel, Jesus talks about sheep, shepherds, gates and thieves; but what He's really talking about is trust, identity and belonging.

We've learnt that in Jesus's time, sheep keeping was different. Sheep knew their shepherd's name. Not just kind of - they really knew it. The shepherd would call, and only his sheep would follow. They wouldn't go with a stranger.

Every day, we're surrounded by voices: social media telling us who we should be and who we should believe; friends who might be good or bad influences; the pressure to fit in, succeed, look or act a certain way; and our own thoughts which might be sometimes encouraging and sometimes tearing us down with uncertainty and feelings of failure and despair. Some of these voices lead us somewhere good. Some don't. Jesus calls the harmful influences 'thieves, things that steal your peace, identity, confidence and joy.

Jesus isn't just another voice. Other voices say: "You're only work something if you succeed", "You need to look like this or hide your true self to be accepted.", "You have to prove yourself." But Jesus says "I know you", "You belong", "Follow me - I'll lead you to life." Jesus is not offering just survival, nor just getting by. He says "I have some so that they [you!] may have life and have it to the full."

What does 'life to the full' mean? It doesn't mean everything is perfect. It means having purpose, even when life is confusing. It means having peace, even when things are stressful. It means knowing that you're valued, even when others don't see it. It means being guided, not lost. It is the difference between wandering aimlessly, and being loved and led by someone who knows and cares for you.

A challenge

Whose voice or what voices are you actually listening to and following? This week try and notice the voices that you listen to the most and ask: is this leading me towards life...or away from it?

Holiness is not determined by age

Holiness isn't something you 'unlock' when you get older. It's not reserved for adults, priests, or people who seem to have life completely figured out. Holiness is about saying 'Yes' to God right where you are - and that includes when you're a teenager.

Some of the Church's most inspiring saints were young people who lived ordinary lives in extraordinary ways.

Take St. Carlo Acutis. He loved video games, football and computers. Pretty normal, right? But he also loved the Eucharist deeply and used his tech skills to create a website about Eucharistic miracles. He once said, "The Eucharist is my highway to heaven." Carlo didn't wait to be older to live for God - he did it as a teenager.

Or St. Maria Goretti, who was just 11 when she chose forgiveness instead of hatred, even in the face of violence. Her courage and mercy show that holiness can shine brightest in the hardest moments.

Then there is CCC Pier Giorgio Frassati, a young man who loved hiking, friends, and adventure. He also spent his time serving the poor and standing up for justice. His faith wasn't separate from his life, it shaped everything he did.

What do all these young people have in common? They didn't wait. They didn't think, 'I'll take God seriously later.' They chose holiness in the middle of school, sport, friendships, struggles and everyday life. You can too. Chose kindness when it is easier to join the gossip. Stand up for someone who is left out. Make time for prayer, even when you're busy or not sure God is there (He is). Be honest, even when it costs you. You don't have to be perfect. Just keep turning back to God and trusting Him.