

Listening to the Voice that Leads to Life

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In the First Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (2:14a 36-41), we witness a powerful moment of conversion. Peter stands before the crowd and boldly proclaims Jesus as Lord and Christ. His words strike the hearts of the listeners and they ask a question that echoes through every generation: *“What are we to do?”* Peter’s answer is clear, *repent and be baptized*. This is not just a one-time event, but a lifelong journey of turning back to God. In our daily lives, we experience this call in simple but real ways: choosing to apologize instead of holding onto pride, returning to prayer after neglect, or seeking reconciliation after a broken relationship. Like those three thousand people who were baptized that day, we too are invited to respond with openness and trust.

The Gospel complements this message by presenting Jesus as the Good Shepherd and the gate. He says, *“My sheep hear my voice... and they follow me. (John 10:3)”* The image is both comforting and challenging. It reminds us that God knows us personally, He calls each of us by name, but it also asks whether we truly recognize His voice. In a world filled with noise, social media, opinions, pressures, it can be difficult to discern what is truly from God. The voice of Christ is different. It leads not to confusion, but to peace; not to fear, but to trust. For example, when we feel called to help someone in need, to forgive someone who hurt us, or to stand for what is right even when it is difficult, that is often the voice of the Shepherd guiding us.

Jesus also warns about “strangers,” voices that lead us away from life, temptations, false promises, or paths that seem easy but leave us empty. We encounter these daily: the temptation to measure our worth by success or possessions, the pressure to compromise our values, or the distraction that pulls us away from what truly matters. These are the “thieves” that steal our joy and peace. But Jesus offers something far greater: *“I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly. (John 10:10)”*. This abundant life is not just about material blessings; it is about a deep, lasting relationship with God.

As a parish community, we are called to be people who listen, respond, and follow. Just as the early Christians supported one another after their conversion, we too are invited to grow together in faith, through worship, service, and generosity. I am grateful for the many ways you continue to support our parish and its mission. Each act of kindness, each moment of prayer, each gift offered becomes part of that abundant life Christ promises.

This week, let us ask ourselves: Do I recognize the voice of Christ in my life? Where is He calling me to follow Him more closely? And like those first believers, may we respond with open hearts, trusting that the Good Shepherd always leads us to life.

-Fr. Patrick