

Fourth Sunday of Easter

A Christian guy named Bill saw an ad online for a Christian horse, so he went to check it out. The horse's owner said, "It's easy to ride him. Just say 'Praise the Lord!' to make him go and 'Amen!' to make him stop." Bill got on the horse and said, "Praise the Lord!" Sure enough, the horse started to walk. "Praise the Lord!" he said again, and the horse began to trot. "Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!" he yelled, and the horse broke into a gallop. Bill was enjoying his ride so much that he almost didn't notice the cliff he and the horse were about to go over. Bill shouted "AMEN!" at the top of his lungs, and the horse stopped right at the edge of the cliff. Relieved, Bill said, "Phew! Praise the Lord!"

Dear Friends,

It is Mother's Day weekend. I wish a happy mother's day to all the mothers who make tremendous sacrifices in their lives for their children and families. If your mother is alive, please make a visit or make a call if you are not able to visit. If you are a mother, I appreciate all your gifts of life to the earth and your family. Kindly pray for the mothers who have some challenges in their family lives.

This Sunday is traditionally called Good Shepherd Sunday. It is remembered as world day of prayer for vocations. Let us pray for vocations to priesthood and religious life. Jesus is portrayed as a good shepherd in the Gospel today. we read the small passage of the gospel. But each word brings a lot of reflection. I would like to reflect on two of those phrases.

Jesus says: "My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me." It is a beautiful verse. God hears our voices. We have a lot of clamoring attention from different voices in where we live through social media and so many other means. Voices of fear, – Ukraine & Russia , Israel & Palestine, India & Pakistan, and other countries, civil war – voices of division and voices of conflict and so on. Jesus's voice is different from all these. A voice of love, mercy and truth. A voice from the heart. He hears our voices. He hears our wounds, frustrations, challenges, joys and hopes. He hears all our needs and dreams.

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, a theologian quoting Daniel Berrigan, a Jesuit priest and activist says: "Faith in Jesus and the Resurrection won't save us from humiliation, pain, and death in this life. Faith isn't meant to do that. Jesus doesn't grant special exemptions to his friends, no more than God granted special exemptions to Jesus." God is not one who ordinarily rescues us, but is rather a God who redeems us. God doesn't ordinarily intervene to save us from humiliation, pain, and death; rather he redeems humiliation, pain, and death after the fact. (Just read John, 11th chapter.)

Hence, let us listen to the shepherd who can redeem us from all evil and dangers and all other disturbing voices.