

Fr. Romeo Homily  
May 12, 2019  
Fourth Sunday of Easter (C)

Herbert Marshall McLuhan is best remembered for the dictum, “The medium is the message”. In our modern world today, communication is not limited to the message sent through a medium; the medium is already part of the message. Communication is not just “media”, it has become a “culture”.

Applying this thought to the Gospel, we can think of a parallel saying, “The messenger is the message”! And we can apply this to Jesus. The Synoptic Gospels present him as the “messenger”, and his message is the “Kingdom of God” that enters the lives of human beings with his presence. Jesus tells the parable of the Lost Sheep to teach us that in the kingdom of God, every person is important. In Luke, it is one of the three parables of the “lost” addressing the complaint of the Pharisees and the Scribes that Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them. Heaven rejoices over just one sinner who repents. In Matthew, the parable is told to remind the believers to search for the lost among their members. It is not the will of the heavenly Father that one of the little ones be lost.

In the Gospel of John, the parable becomes reality. The story of the shepherd’s case for the sheep is incarnated in the person of Jesus himself. Jesus is, as it were, the parable. The messenger is also the message. The shepherd who seeks out the lost sheep becomes the Good Shepherd in John. The Good Shepherd “Lays down his life” for the sheep and “knows” the sheep. This implies a deep intimacy that unites shepherd and sheep, an intimacy that speaks of readiness to offer one’s life for the other. Elsewhere, Jesus says, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends”.

Being a priest for almost 17 years and your shepherd here for more than 2 years, I’ve learned two most important things in my life.

First, as priest or as pastor, I need to always be selfless. It means that the needs of the people I serve takes priority over mine. Because a selfish priest or pastor will never grow in his relationship with God and with the people he serves.

Honestly, I tell you if I choose to be selfish, I would not say yes to the big project that we will be doing soon, the remodel of the Markey Center. It takes a lot of time and energy. But we need to do this because this is not just for all of us, this is for the future of this community.

Second, I've learned that it is in being selfless that I grow in my knowledge about the people I serve. Being unselfish will always bring good connections to others. As Jesus reminded us today, "My sheep hear my voice: I know them, and they follow me".

But all this would be meaningless without your support and prayers. Today is World Day of Prayer for Vocations. So I ask you to pray and support your shepherds. Pray for more vocations to the priesthood and religious life. We need more Good Shepherds to care for all of us.

"It is easy to become a priest or shepherd, but it is not easy to become a good priest and good shepherd".

But with the power of your support and prayer it will become possible.