

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, May 11, 2025
Fourth Sunday of Easter
Cycle C

There is a scene in the Old Testament (1 Kings 19:11-13) that often gets overlooked, but it teaches us something powerful about how God speaks. It is when the **prophet Elijah**, weary and afraid, hides in a cave on Mount Horeb. He is desperate to hear from God. And then something curious happens: A **mighty wind** tears through the mountains – but God is not in the wind. A powerful earthquake follows – but God is not in the earthquake. Then comes a **roaring fire** – but again, God is not there. Finally, Elijah hears a **tiny whispering sound**, a still small voice. And *that* is where God is.

Today is Good Shepherd Sunday. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, says in today's gospel: "My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me." Today's world is filled with wind, earthquakes, and fire of another kind: The non-stop news cycle; The social media noise; The busyness of our schedules; The chatter of opinions and anxieties; The not-so-subtle self-promotions. Even our own inner distractions.

No wonder it is hard to hear the Lord. Yet Jesus, the Good Shepherd, has not stopped speaking. He still calls us by name. The problem is not that the Good Shepherd is silent... it is that our lives are often too loud. To hear Jesus, we must make room for silence. Not just silence from the outside, but an inner

stillness that allows us to tune in. Like an old radio, our hearts are filled with static. And unless we adjust the frequency – unless we pause, pray, listen – we will miss his gentle voice.

Why is his voice faint? Because love never forces itself. Because the Lord wants our free attention, not coerced obedience. God does not compete with the noise. He waits patiently to be wanted. And that makes his voice all the more precious when we finally hear it. Think of this: When lovers whisper, it is not because they are weak – it is because they are close. When God whispers, it is a sign that he is near. But we must be willing to stop. To be still.

Silence is not emptiness – it is an opportunity to be filled with God's presence. Silence is the space where God fills the soul. It is said that Mother Teresa used to spend an hour of silence before the Blessed Sacrament before serving the poor. She first listened to the Lord Jesus in the Eucharist. That is why she could recognize him in the gutters.

Maybe that is what we need too. Before we act, listen. Before we speak, pray. Before we decide, discern. Because the voice we follow determines the direction we take. And only one voice leads to life. So here is the challenge: Find time for silence. Ask the Lord Jesus to speak. And then, do not rush. Wait for the whisper.

Let us not settle for noise when the Good Shepherd is near. This week, carve out sacred silence: turn down the volume of the world and turn up the ear

of the heart. Jesus is not far. He is close – closer than we think – and He is speaking. Not with thunder, but with tenderness. Not with force, but with love.

The question is not whether he is calling... He is. The real question is: Will you stop long enough to hear his voice... and follow?