



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The fourth Sunday in Easter is called "Good Shepherd Sunday" since we always read from John 10 about Jesus being the Good Shepherd. Because of this, we celebrate World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

In the Gospel, Jesus says, "**My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me**" (John 10:27). Vocation literally means a calling. We hear Jesus call to us, and so we follow Him. For some, this calling leads to the priesthood or religious life. For others this call leads to marriage and family life (Happy Mother's Day, all you mothers out there!!!). For others, the call may lead to a single life of service. For all of us, though, the call is a call to take up our cross and follow Christ. There will be times of immense joy in following our vocation, but there will be times of struggle. To follow Christ, though, is the **GREATEST ADVENTURE**, the surest way to peace, and the only way to become the best-version-of-ourselves.

If we believe that God calls each of us – that He calls us to follow Him on a unique road into His Heart – this presupposes that we can actually hear Him. This is the truth: God does speak to us and we can hear His voice. Jesus said that in today's Gospel, as I quoted above – we can hear His voice. But how? In the incredible noise of the world, God is in the silence; in the shouting of our social media, God is whispering. We must, *we must*, **WE MUST** enter into silence! This is the only way we will be able to hear God. As St. Teresa of Calcutta said, "The fruit of silence is prayer." As we spend time away from the noise of the TV and radio, the computer and video games, and all manner of electronic devices, we start to open our ears to the voice of Jesus, our Good Shepherd. As we spend time in silence and solitude with Him – alone with *The Alone* – we begin to recognize His voice. It won't sound like a thunderclap. It will be in the silence of our heart that He speaks and there we will know the love of Him who is Love.

On this World Day of Prayer for Vocations, we need to pray for those who have not yet found their vocations. Many do not follow God's call for their lives. This could be for several reasons. One reason is that we might not listen for God's voice. As I referenced above, this is so easy given the climate of noise in which we find ourselves today. With earbuds constantly in our ears, we may never hear God speaking to us. Another reason might be that we may not want to follow God's plan for us. There are times when we think we have a better plan for our lives, or we think following God will make us miserable (when all we see are the "frozen chosen" this could be why!). Another reason people don't follow God's call for their lives is that they can be driven by fear. Sometimes we're afraid of what it will cost to follow God. As I mentioned above, to follow Jesus is to take up our cross. It costs something. But in everything in life, we have to make a choice – this over that. If I marry this person, I can't marry that person. If I enter a convent, I cannot travel the world the way *I* want to. But the problem is that not choosing *is* choosing. We can't keep our options open forever or we will never do anything. We can't live in FOMO mode (**Fear Of Missing Out**), or else we will miss out on those things that give us most joy, peace and fulfillment.

I invite you, on this World Day of Prayer for Vocations, to pray for more people to have the wisdom to discern God's call in their lives and the courage to follow Him where He leads.