

John 10:22–30 | “My Sheep Hear My Voice”

Reflection for Easter 4 – Year C

A few years ago, I met a Filipino seafarer in Hamburg. Let’s call him Joel. He had been working at sea for more than 15 years, going from country to country, dock to dock — a life of long voyages, unpredictable weather, and very little rest. When I asked him what he missed the most, I expected him to say food, or sleep, or maybe his hometown. But he said something different.

He said, *“I miss hearing my son’s voice on the phone. I know it’s him even before he speaks — just the way he breathes. I know that breath. I know him.”*

That moment stayed with me. Because when someone truly matters to you — when you’re bound by love, memory, and presence — even the smallest sound can mean everything. Even just the breath before the words.

That’s what Jesus is pointing to in the Gospel. *“My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me.”*

It’s not a cold command. It’s a relationship of trust and recognition. And it’s not only about being comforted — it’s also about being claimed. To hear His voice is to belong.

And to belong is to be called into something larger than ourselves.

To be part of God’s flock means we don’t just walk alone. We walk with others. We care for each other. We carry responsibilities. We listen not only for Jesus’ voice calling *us*, but also His voice whispering through the cries of our neighbors, through the needs of our community, through the silent hopes of those who feel unseen.

And here’s something important: when we truly hear, it’s not just for our personal security. It’s an invitation to live as people who belong to God — and because we belong to God, we belong to each other. We are made part of a flock, a body, a household of faith.

Here in St. Catherine’s, that belonging is real. We are not a random collection of worshippers. We are a community — entrusted to one another, called to listen together, to serve together, to care for what God has given us. Whether you’ve been here for many years or just arrived, you are part of something God is shaping. And the Shepherd is speaking to all of us: *“Take care of one another. Strengthen this community. Build a place where others can also hear My voice.”*

And as we reflect on leadership and shepherding, we also acknowledge the recent election of Pope Leo XIV. He brings with him the pastoral wisdom of his missionary work, especially in Latin America, where the Church has often walked alongside the poor and the displaced. As the new Bishop of Rome, he takes on the global task of listening — listening to God, to the cries of people, and to the signs of the times. We pray that his leadership will reflect the heart of the Good Shepherd — humble, courageous, and close to the people.

We see that same shepherding spirit in the Acts of the Apostles. Peter is called to Joppa because a woman named Tabitha — or Dorcas — has died. She wasn't a famous preacher. She was a disciple who made garments, who cared for widows, who served with her hands and her heart. Her death brought deep grief to the community. And when Peter arrived, they didn't talk about miracles. They showed him the tunics she made — the love she stitched into every piece.

And Peter prayed. And he said, "*Tabitha, get up.*" And she did. That's the Shepherd's voice — calling someone back to life, through the hands of a friend, through the faith of a grieving community.

And in the Book of Revelation, we see a vision of hope: a great multitude from every tribe, every language, standing before the Lamb. They have come through the "great ordeal." They have suffered, persevered, and now they are gathered not around a throne of power, but around the Lamb who is also their Shepherd. The One who wipes away every tear, who leads them to springs of living water, who gives them peace beyond the pain.

So what does this mean for us?

It means that to hear the voice of the Shepherd is to live in a relationship of trust — and also to say yes to a calling. It means we are known — but also sent. It means we are loved — but also responsible for the places and people we've been given. It means that the voice we listen to shapes the life we live.

So I ask you:

Do you hear His voice — not just for comfort, but for calling? Do you recognize His whisper — not only in Scripture or silence, but in the needs of our church, our neighbors, our community here at St. Catherine's? Do you follow where that voice leads — even when it leads you to serve, to welcome, to make space for others — and yes, even when it calls you to give more of yourself... to spend more of your time, your talent, your treasure, not out of pressure or guilt, but because you know you belong here... and because this is God's flock entrusted to you too?

The voice of Jesus will always sound like love. Sometimes firm, sometimes gentle — but always faithful. It will sound like truth without cruelty. It will sound like grace that challenges and restores. It will sound like a hand reaching out to the grieving. Like clothes made for widows. Like breath on the other end of a long-distance call.

And today, it speaks again:

*"I know you. You are mine. No one will snatch you from my hand. But I am placing something in your hands too: My people. My flock. My Church. Take care of them — as I take care of you."*

That, my friends, is not just good theology.

That is the voice of love — and the beginning of a life worth following. Amen.