

## 4<sup>th</sup> Easter 2007

Voice Recognition. I open my cell phone and hear:

Please say a command:

Contacts

Please say a name:

Carol

Did you say? Carl? No, Did you say Paul? No? Did you say Gustav?

NOOOOOO

Voice recognition is a great technology. It's amazing how the sound of one's voice can be translated to the "ears" of a computer and bingo; you have the information you need. (most of the time. I'm sure you've had the experience of speaking to a computer and being totally exasperated in directory assistance and finally a human voice comes on the line. Finally someone who will really understand me!)

Voice recognition: Just this week the front page of the Globe carried a story about the advances in this technology so that you can speak into your mobile phone you desire for the nearest Pizza Place and the menu will come up on the screen. Wow just what we need more information at our fingertips.

With all the good that comes with technology and voice recognition there is nothing quite like the human voice that not only recognizes the uniqueness of our individual voice but also can give us more than "information". The voice that can hear our pain, our laughter, our longing, our need, our fear, our joy.

I am the good shepherd, My sheep hear my voice, I know them and they know me. I really haven't dealt with sheep much, at least the wooly kind but I hear that despite how "intellectually challenged" they are, they recognize the shepherd's voice. There is an intimate bond, a connection that is made from the voice of the shepherd to the sheep who follow..

That is what we hear in the scriptures today. Jesus, the good shepherd knows us. We recognize his voice. But never having heard the voice of Jesus, the way you are hearing mine, what might that mean. In truth a person's voice is not just the sound that is produced by air waves over the larynx. A person's voice is so much more. A person's voice is what expresses their sense of self, of being, of vision.

And maybe that is why we who have never heard the actual voice of Jesus, recognize his voice.

My sheep know my voice. I know them and they follow me.

Hopefully! It may be one thing to know the voice of Jesus in the Scriptures, especially in this Easter season when he says "Do not be afraid. I am with you" Peace be with you. Love one another as I have loved you" These are comforting, consoling words like the ones we hear at the end of the reading from Apocalypse.

And it's another thing to know the voice of Jesus when he challenges us to be more" Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you" How much of Jesus' voice do ignore or avoid?

And even more challenging, do we hear the voice of Jesus speaking through our brothers and sisters in Christ. How is our voice recognition if the voice of Jesus is coming from someone who is "hard to listen to", someone who may be challenging us, or not saying what we would like to hear.

Do we believe that the voice of Jesus speaks to us through our community; through the assembly of believers we call "Church", through those who are called to be shepherds?

My sheep hear my voice. I know them and they follow me.

Yesterday was a very pastoral day for me personally. A funeral, a reconciliation, a wedding, an anointing of a person crying out for help and healing, another Eucharist with young people celebrating through the arts. The question for me is when and where did I hear the voice of Jesus speaking through the people whom I was with? How did I let the voice of Jesus speak through me?

It's a question that all of us need to ask ourselves. How do you discern the voice of Jesus in your brothers and sisters in Christ, and others? And how do others hear the voice of Jesus speaking through you. Not a voice that just speaks words but the voice that is the whole person.