



Reflection from Ben Babaran

"I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me."

Before we had cell phones, Jo and I devised a way to call each other when we are in a crowd or in a shopping mall. It's a high-pitched whistle created by inhaling rather than blowing. It is such a unique call that when the children were born, we decided to teach them the whistle. To this day, when we call each other in a crowd or in a movie theater or across the Thrift Store or just to get each other's attention or even just to say a long distance "hi!", we whistle. I myself find it endearing and many times amusing when one of our family members tries to get my attention using the whistle. It even gives me peace of mind whenever I get their respective whistle response.

In like manner, shepherds and farmers have their own distinct and unique ways of calling their sheep or farm animals. Their animals listen to them. They know their master's voice and call. To be in Jesus' flock, one has to know, hear and follow his voice. It goes beyond registration in a religion, belonging to a special group or participating in rituals. It demands listening to him intimately. But there's the rub! Too many voices claim they are leading us to God. Jesus, however, distinguishes himself as the good shepherd from the hired man whose main concern is his personal comfort and safety.

One of the characteristics of a good shepherd is sacrificial love, the kind of love that took Jesus to the cross where he bled and died for his flock. Jesus loves his sheep to the point of giving his life for them. He knows his sheep. He knows when they are hungry and thirsty. He knows when they are weak and wounded. He knows when they are sick and having problems. To love is to know. There is no love without knowledge.

Our society is bleeding today because some of us who are church leaders, teachers, parents, doctors, nurses, lecturers, public servants, artisans, employers and employees, caregivers work NOT for the well-being of those placed under our care; rather, we work ONLY for ourselves and for our egos. Jesus as the good shepherd was humble, patient and tolerant.

St. James Catholic Church Kansas City is full of good shepherds. They know when a fellow member of the flock is ill. Many thanks and kudos to those who took care of a sick member of the flock last Sunday.

HAPPY GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY TO ALL!

~ Peace,

Ben