HOMILY IV SUNDAY OF EASTER SEASON YEAR A

I CAME THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE, AND HAVE IT ABUNDANTLY

Brothers and sisters… we continue contemplating Jesus… **alive, present, and close**… And today… He presents Himself to us with the image of the Good Shepherd… the One who knows… who calls… And who gives life… **My sheep hear my voice… I know them… and they follow me**…

It's a relationship of closeness… of intimacy… Jesus doesn't speak about crowds… He speaks about each one of us… Jesus speaks of a voice that recognizes… of a name that is called… of a life that is accompanied… **And that changes everything!**

Because we don't follow someone who is far away… we follow someone **who walks with us**… who never grows tired of going out to find us…

We follow someone, who becomes **the way and the gate of salvation for each one of us**… someone who sustains us… And above all… **who gives us life… I have come that they may have life… and have it in abundance**…

Not a little life… not a life lived halfway… but a full life… a life that is renewed… a life that rises again…

And once again I say it! that too is Easter… Christ alive… who continues to give life… Not through force… **but through His voice**… A voice that doesn't shout… but touches the heart… a voice that doesn't impose… but invites… a voice that doesn't confuse, **because the one who listens**… recognizes it…

That, is why today… we're invited to have an attentive heart… to listen to the Good Shepherd, **who uses different ways to speak to us**…

My dear friends… in the midst of so many voices… in the midst of so many things we hear every day… the question is simple… Do I recognize the voice of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who calls me, looks at me, and transforms me? Do I recognize the voice of the One who is always seeking a way to meet me?

Jesus is that Shepherd who never grows tired of **seeking, carrying, healing, guiding**… Jesus is that Shepherd who not only protects, but also **inspires, encourages, lifts up the one who has fallen, and gives us the courage to move forward**…

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I CAME THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE, AND HAVE IT ABUNDANTLY

My dear friends… in moments of tiredness or discouragement, knowing that He calls us by name and, that His voice continues **to resonate, even when it's gentle or silent, is a deep source of comfort and strength**…

Jesus doesn't want us to follow Him from afar, like spectators, but from a deep, living, and transformative relationship… Because He doesn't only care from the outside; **He wants to dwell in the heart of His sheep** and lead us into a full communion with God…

And here! we come to an important point… the heart of the Good Shepherd isn't reserved only for priests… Yes, we priest, with our stole, represent the shepherd who cares for a portion of God's people… That is our vocation… to know our sheep, to guide them, not to run away when difficulties come, and above all, to love them to the end…

But you! are also called to have the heart of the Good Shepherd… Don't grow tired of carrying on your shoulders **the sheep that the Lord has entrusted to you**… your children, your parents, your brothers and sisters, a family member in difficulty… ***especially the children***…

At times they drift away, at times they stop listening, they may even get lost… but don't stop seeking them, guiding them, and loving them…

Don't stop speaking with tenderness**, correcting with firmness and embracing with patience**… Jesus walks with you in this sacred mission…

And for all of us… to have the heart of a shepherd today means to think about those who aren't here… those who have left… those who have been hurt… or those whom, intentional or unintentionally, we've left outside…

To have the heart of a shepherd means to open the doors so that many may enter… It means to look people in the eyes and speak with mercy, even when we've been hurt or disappointed…

Today Jesus calls us to have a heart that listens attentively, that knows with kindness, and that follows with firmness…

In this Eucharist… that voice becomes food… that Shepherd becomes Bread… **to sustain us… to strengthen us… to keep us walking**…

My dear brothers and sisters… let us ask the Lord today… for the grace to attune our hearts… to recognize His voice… and the trust… to follow Him… knowing… that with Him… **we always find life… and life in abundance**…

Let us ask the Lord to make us shepherds after His own heart… That we may not live a faith closed in on ourselves, but a faith that is open, compassionate, and courageous…

That we may learn to listen to His voice, allow ourselves to be known by Him, and follow Him wherever He leads us…

Fr. Moices Rafael C.