



VOICE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD OUR ONLY DIRECTION TO ETERNAL GLORY IN HEAVEN

May 09, 2020

ABUJA, NIGERIA -

Christians have been called upon to listen to the voice of Christ, the Good Shepherd and follow his ways to be able to obtain eternal glory, after their sojourn on this earth of vanity. This was the kernel of the homily delivered by Rev. Fr. Augustine Okochi, the Education Secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN); during the celebration of the Mass for the fourth Sunday of Easter, at St Gabriel Chaplaincy, Durumi, Abuja.

In the homily titled: Listening to the Voice of the Good Shepherd; Fr. Okochi noted that it is the sheep that listens and follows the voice of the shepherd that gets home safely, irrespective of its docility, innocence and confusion, among other weaknesses. He added: "A good shepherd is very much aware of all these behaviour on the parts of the sheep and is constantly watching out for them and putting them on the right track."

Pointing out that this is what Christ is doing for us as the Good Shepherd, the homilist stressed the need for all Christians, especially Catholics to cultivate close relationship with Christ as this will enable them to differentiate his voice from the cacophony of voices attracting their attention but fraught with deceit and earthly materialism that can make them miss eternal glory.

Using the readings of the day, especially the Gospel reading to buttress his point, Fr. Okochi noted that Christ's

constant call is to enable the faithful differentiate between the good and the bad. He added; The good consists of virtues that will lead them to heaven and the voices of evil fraught with earthly vanities, irrespective of how they are got. These earthly vanities he added, draw them father away from God and lead to eternal suffering in hell fire.

His words: "In the midst of all these voices seeking for our attention, it is the voice that we have the most intimate relationship of love and trust with, that wins and controls our beliefs and practices." Based on our Christian calling, the identity of that voice should be obvious - the voice of Jesus Christ, the saviour of the world."

The CBCN Education Secretary continued: "A close relationship needs to be cultivated with the shepherd so that his voice becomes very clear and familiar to the sheep, and can easily be distinguished from the cacophony of voices calling for the sheep's attentions."

Assuring that God always want to accompany us on our journey of faith, Fr Okochi declared: "We must consciously take steps to nurture our capability to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd through Scripture reading, prayers, private and personal; reading of spiritual books, dedicating some portion of our day, everyday to silent contemplation of God, enrolling in pious Christian associations and listening to the earthly shepherds chosen by Jesus to lead us to himself.

He added: "We must constantly compare the different voices demanding our attention with the life teachings, examples and the person of Jesus Christ the good Shepherd. Any demands or commands by any other voice that goes against the demands and commands of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, should be ignored."