

As you may remember, I was found on the doorstep of the police station in South Korea when I was about one  
I have been told that parents would sometimes leave sheets of paper inside the child's shirt listing information such as name  
and birthdate - so my birthday of 10/10/1974 could be for real or maybe the orphanage made it up  
Either way, years later when my brother and I were playing soccer, my mother didn't want to drive everyday to two soccer  
practices and two soccer games so she listed my birthdate as 10/10/1975 on my soccer registration form - thus making  
my brother and I less than four months apart - my mother figured if anyone asked, we would just say weren't exactly  
sure when I was born anyways

I don't know this for sure, but I have received in prayer that maybe my birth mother was a single teenage mother - I don't know  
if she left me there at the police station in South Korea for altruistic reasons or selfish reasons - either way, it was the  
first step in a long line of events in my life that led me to standing in front of you, being a Roman Catholic priest in  
southern Minnesota - a vocation God choose for me before time began and which I love

God knew each one of those events even before my life began - Psalm 139 says that all of our days were shaped by God  
even before one came to be - God is an expert at bringing good from bad - my life is evidence of this

So as we celebrate Mother's Day, I need to say thank you to my birth mother who said yes to life and thank you to my mother  
who raised me and put up with me

But I was not the child who made my mother a mother - that would be my oldest sister Gretchen - Dr. Janet Smith, a Catholic  
moral theologian, says that statistics show that couples who have children in their first year of marriage have a lower  
divorce rate - she hypothesis that the reason why is that children almost instantly make you a better person - in  
some ways one can be married and still be selfish - however, with a child, one is almost forced to get up in the middle of  
the night to feed the child - one is forced to take of someone's needs besides their own - she also says that you almost  
instantly become a better citizen - all of a sudden you care about how good the local school system is - you might care  
about the public library - you care if the local park is a safe park

Being a parent, especially a mother, requires the presence of another person - the Bible always sees children as a gift from  
God - children are never seen as a burden - we must thank our parents, our mothers, for being open to being parents,  
to being mothers, to saying yes to life

In the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, we hear about Paul and Barnabas trouncing around what is now Turkey -  
even though they are over 500 miles from Israel, there are Jews living there, so much so that there is a Jewish  
synagogue there - Paul and Barnabas' preaching about Jesus Christ was so persuasive and popular that people were  
crowding around them - the Jewish leaders were again jealous, just as they were jealous of Jesus Himself

Because the Jews rejected Paul and Barnabas' teaching about Jesus Christ, they turned their message to the Gentiles, to the  
non-Jews - because the Jews rejected the message, Paul and Barnabas began to turn to the rest of the known world to  
spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ - out of local rejection comes the spreading of the Gospel to all nations - out of a  
local bad comes great world-wide good - again, God is an expert at bringing good from bad

Along with Mother's Day, we are celebrating the Fourth Sunday of Easter, also known as Good Shepherd Sunday - Jesus is  
the Good Shepherd - Jesus says if we are His sheep, we will know His voice and we will follow Him

Now we all know the voice of our mother - some of us haven't heard our mother's voice for years - others of us heard it two seconds ago telling us to behave at Mass - but we know our mother's voice - we know that we belong to her - we know that she loves us

Now do we know the voice of Jesus, the Good Shepherd? - do we take time to listen to Jesus? - the surest way to hear Jesus voice is to listen to His Word, the Bible - we read from the Bible at every Mass - however, we should be reading from the Bible every day - if you read the Bible everyday and spend some quiet time with God each day, I promise it will radically change your life - way back in 1995, I went from swearing all the time, to not swearing at all basically overnight once I started reading the Bible every day

We can also hear the voice of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, in the advice of friends or a spouse - we can hear the voice of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, in the voice of our children

Nobody's life is perfect - not even famous people - not even Meghan Markle, former US actress, now the Duchess of Sussex and new mother

But Jesus promises that if we hear His voice and follow Him, we will have eternal life and that we will never perish

Even if our life is filled with tragedy after tragedy, we must not despair - no matter what our life is like now, if we hear Jesus' voice and follow Him, He will give us eternal life and we will never truly perish

At least in Jesus' time, being a shepherd was not an 8-5, Monday through Friday job - being a shepherd required a person to be with the flock 24/7 - sheep without a good shepherd were vulnerable prey for predators, such as wolves and thieves - if a sheep strayed from the fold it could easily get lost, fall into a ravine, or become injured

It is good for the sheep to be obedient to the voice of the shepherd - by obeying the shepherd the sheep stay out of danger - it is good for us to be obedient to the voice of Good Shepherd - by obeying the Good Shepherd, we sheep are far less likely to do anything that is dangerous to the well-being of our souls - usually it works out better for us when we are obedient to the voice of our mothers - so too, it works out better for us when we are obedient to the voice of Jesus and follow Him

The mark of Satan is disobedience - the mark of Jesus is obedience - Jesus was obedient to God the Father even unto death, death on a Cross - however, He did it out of love for us - again, if we ever want to begin to understand the power of God, look at the Cross - talk about bringing good from bad - out of the death of God, the One without sin, comes the salvation of all of us who are sinners

There are many voices in the world vying for our obedience - there are many voices out there asking us, begging us, to follow them - they all promise us happiness - Jesus, the Good Shepherd is the only One who can make good on that promise of happiness for eternity

No matter how good or bad your life is, Jesus is the Good Shepherd - He loves us - He is an expert in making good come from bad - today, hear His voice and follow Him, be obedient to Him - you will not be disappointed that you did so either now or for all eternity