

Blessings and greetings in the sweet and Holy Name of Jesus:

When I was a young father it was always a treat for our family to go to MacDonald's Restaurant. As soon as possible after worship on the first day of our Vacation trip we started with lunch at the one and only MacDonald's in our small town. As we entered two young boys, who had been at worship with their parents earlier that Sunday, shouted out excitedly, "Look, there's God!" Everyone in the place, save my children, was amused.

Reflecting back on that incident gives one pause to think of those two boys and their faithful parents who made sure that they were in worship every Sunday and their sweet innocent delight in seeing their Pastor "out of contents."

The little ones knew me because they were accustomed to seeing me and hearing my voice as I was a part of their weekly life. It didn't take them too long to discover that I was not the Almighty.

I visited a newborn the other day. He was sleeping contentedly in his little hospital bed. As his mother and I were quietly talking he stirred. With delight and pride his mother said, "Do you see Pastor, he knows your voice." What a wonderful feeling it was to observe the joy of this mother and the faith from which she spoke! For she was referring to the Sunday's as she sat in worship with her baby growing in love and faith in her womb.

Jesus says ***"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow me."*** Much more than a Pastor and his people, the Good Shepherd has an intimate relationship with His followers and great love for them. This is, so much so, proven in the wonderful fact that He laid down His life for the sheep.

One begins to wonder how all our parents do not avail themselves of the opportunity to bring their children close to the

Master's voice. For the voice of God always comes through in the spoken word of God so much a part of our worship.

Remember the time when some faithful mothers were bringing their children to Jesus and Jesus' well meaning helpers were trying to stop them. They probably thought that there were better things that Jesus could do and that perhaps the mothers should be having their children do something else. Maybe hockey, ballet, soccer, etc... you get the picture. As you know Jesus said to them, ***"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God."***

Our children have to trust and receive the care of more than their parents. This is the way that the Kingdom of God comes to them. Their congregation and their Pastor as well as their Sunday school teachers and youth leaders need to have the opportunity to bless the little ones. If this is stopped from happening by benign neglect or even outright rejection by parents the Words of Jesus will ring true. ***"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea."***

Yes, it is at church and in worship that we all see God. He comes to us only through His Word and Holy Sacraments. There is no other way. Together we have to get out of the way and allow the children placed under our care, for such a little time, to see God!

Rejoicing in His days
Your pastor

