

A Easter 4 Homily
John 10:1-10 May 14-15, 2011

Will it be door #1, Door #2, or Door #3? You hear those words, and you can easily imagine a talk show host presenting that question to a game show contestant. The contestant has been given a chance to exchange a modest prize for a chance at a grand prize. Suspense builds as the contestant tries to make up her mind as the audience shouts advice. Two doors hide gag prizes or the word “ZONK!” meaning: “You lose!” Behind one of the doors is the grand prize. It is something very valuable, like a vacation, a car, or a large amount of cash. The contestant has a one in three chance to choose correctly.

Door #1, Door #2, or Door #3? Is there a trick involved in choosing, or is it simply a matter of chance?

Now shift your attention from the game show scenario to what Jesus says in this weekend’s Gospel. Jesus describes Himself as the door. He is the door that leads to the most desirable gift. And choosing Jesus is different than the game show procedure. The ones who designed the game show tried to mask the grand prize. Jesus declares His desire for everyone to choose Him, and He does nothing to conceal Himself as the gateway to the grandest prize of all: Eternal life with God.

We also heard Jesus describe Himself as the shepherd of those who enter the sheepfold properly. They are the ones who enter through the gate. He points out how different He is than the thief or robber who try to steal the sheep.

When considering how Jesus describes Himself as the door or the gate, we need to realize He is a gate who swings out and is able to swing in. Not only do the followers of Christ come into the sheepfold through Him, they are also led out by Him.

As the author Barbara Reid describes so well (on p. 30 of the May 2-9 issue of *America* magazine): “All who are led in by Him find in the embrace of a believing community a place of refreshment and rest, a space where wounds can be healed and where all can be nourished by God’s Word and at God’s table.”

We don't just remain in that sheepfold and rest, though. We are also led out to find pasture. That's where the work of God gets done. That pasture is where you and I are called by God to spend most of our time. Truly, Christ is the gate who opens in and out. He leads us in to refreshment, and out to do God's work.

We've reached the Fourth Sunday of Easter. For many people, Easter was simply a Sunday three weeks ago. It is important to remember that the Easter Season continues all the way through Pentecost Sunday, which is the weekend of June 11-12.

More important than how long the Easter Season lasts is the fact that the Risen Christ calls us to remember Him as the one who broke down the gates of death by conquering death and sin by His resurrection. The open tomb is truly a reminder of this ultimate victory, a victory no prize on earth could ever match.

As we pray this week, simply remember this week that the Lord invites us to let Him be the gate that leads us to refreshment, and to remember that He is the gate that leads us out to do the work of God.

With Jesus, there is no trick to choosing the right door. The world and its ways will constantly try to trick us. But Jesus stands wide open before us. He constantly calls us to come in by means of the right door, and that door is Jesus Himself. May we follow Him attentively.