When I first moved to Waterloo about a year ago now, I really needed to rely on my GPS to get me around the city. But unfortunately – as you are all well aware – the entire city was under construction last summer to make way for the LRT, and the GPS that’s built into my car led me into a lot of dead ends. The GPS in my car is great at what it does, but it wasn’t smart enough to get me around the construction.

So, I discovered Google Maps on my cell phone, and I realized I had a new trusted friend. Unlike the GPS in my car, Google Maps was fed by ‘*live*’ data, and knew where the construction was, and also knew where there were traffic jams. And even when it seemed to lead me in strange directions on roads that just didn’t seem right, I soon began to trust this app on my phone, because it never steered me wrong, and was always able to navigate me around the construction and traffic jams.

We have many ‘*voices*’ in our lives. They all guide us somewhere. But there is only *one* voice that offers ‘*live*’ navigation, and that’s the voice of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

In our gospel, Jesus paints the image of him being the ‘Good Shepherd’, and that his sheep listen to his voice, and follow him, because we trust that he knows the way. But like any sheep, in order to learn to trust our Shepherd, we need to learn to *trust* his voice. And we learn to trust his voice by *experience*. We begin to trust when we begin to see how abiding by the teachings of the gospel will set us on the right path. And through experience in following the ways that our Lord leads us, we come to see that he is like that faithful GPS which navigates us around life’s trouble spots, even if we don’t quite understand why it seems to be making us take a big detour.

But, to really trust the voice of the Good Shepherd, we do have to become *acquainted* with it. [] Scripture guides us in this quest. But how much dust has accumulated on your bible? There is wisdom in the teachings of the Church which Christ himself has commissioned to preserve all of his commands and instructions. How much thought do we give to the Church’s 2000 years of collected wisdom? The saints are set before us as role models – when was the last time we read about the life of a saint, and learned from their example in following Christ? The liturgy of the Church is truly the living voice of God in our day, yet 70-80% of Catholics stay away from Sunday Mass.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He does lead us to green pastures, but we do have to learn to trust where he leads us, and to learn to trust where he leads is to learn to listen for his voice. When people tell me that they don’t get anything out of church, or they don’t think Jesus is relevant, I usually ask if they’ve every spent any time listening to his voice? Have you honestly ever put in time to sit at the feet of our Lord, and really *listen* – to really wrestle with what he says and challenges us with, to see the wisdom in it, and to really consider where that path could lead? Because you know what? You just might come to know as billions of other Christians have come to know over time, that Jesus can navigate us through the peaks and valleys of this life if we can just place our trust in him, and listen to the voice of the one who truly is the Good Shepherd.

The regular shepherds – I’ll call them the ‘other’ voices in our lives – only have one goal in mind – to fatten up the sheep so they can take them to market. They care for the sheep for a time, but there is no long-term plan other than to live for the moment – they are the thieves and robbers spoken about in the gospel.

But Jesus isn’t just a ‘regular’ shepherd. He is the *Good* Shepherd. [He knows his sheep by name. One lesson that I learned from friends that were in the 4H Club growing up, was when they raised a calve for a 4H showing, they named those calves – they became pets – and it’s really difficult to take a cow to market when you’ve given it a name and it’s become a pet.]

Jesus knows his sheep, and he wants his sheep to know him, because the one thing that the Good Shepherd offers to us that ‘regular’ shepherds can not is that his sheep will *never die*. When we learn to listen to and trust the voice of the Good Shepherd there is only ***one*** place that he will lead us – he will take us upon his shoulders and lead us to God. He will lead us to eternal life.