

The reading is from John's gospel chapter 10, verses 1 to 6, 14 to 16, and verse 27.

Jesus said:

'Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.

The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice.

He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.

But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognise a stranger's voice.'

Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them...

'I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me – just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the sheep.

I have other sheep that are not of this sheepfold. I must bring them also.

They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd...

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.'