

In the gospel according to Mark we heard, “When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd.”

Justin Timberlake, former Mouseketeer, in a 2006 interview with TV guide, admitted in his early years that he dabbled in drugs --- and said that he saw nothing wrong with it.

The singer was quite forthcoming about his use of controlled substances. “I’m just like everyone else, I get completely plastered. I’ve done my fair share of drugs. It’s just that I make sure there are no cameras around. What I really think is that I’ve never done anything that bad. I don’t show up drunk to functions and the drugs I do/ have been in my own private home.”

In the book of the prophet Jeremiah we heard, “Woe to the shepherds who mislead and scatter the flock of my pasture.”

Hollywood beauty Maria Bello in the same TV Guide interview insists she is one of the last celebrities to settle down and marry because she thinks it is impossible to be faithful to one partner for life. “The whole idea of monogamy is nonsensical to me. I suppose I understand the idea of a life long helpmate and friend; but when you have to stay sexually monogamous to this one person. I think it’s usually a big, fat lie. Read the statistics; Seventy percent of people are having affairs.” The actress did not give the source of her information. I find this quote interesting especially as we in the Catholic church celebrate the 50th anniversary of Pope Paul 6th’s encyclical *Humanae Vitae* this week, which carefully lays out the church’s views

on sexuality in the context of marriage.

In our world today there are many voices calling out to us, inviting us, luring us away from the voice of the shepherd.

We need to listen carefully for the voice of the shepherd, the Good Shepherd who is committed to our well being and our salvation. Just because a person is an actress, or a singer, or a celebrity of any kind does not necessarily make them a good shepherd. Their faces may be beautiful and their speech full of attractive words but listen carefully to the message they are sending and it soon becomes clear they walk with no clear direction.

For those of us who have been washed in the waters of Baptism, there is only one true shepherd and his voice proclaims a message that is loud and clear. His message is love and he leads us with a strong sense of direction. He

will take us places where we can be fed and nourished and where we can find peaceful rest for our souls. We need his direction as we journey through this life.

One example is Brittany McComb from Henderson, Nevada. As valedictorian of her graduating class, she wanted to share in her commencement speech the role that Christ played in her life. But school officials threatened to pull the plug on the microphone if she did not follow the approved text of her talk which deleted all references to Christ. Brittany said, “In my heart I couldn’t say the edited version of my speech because it wasn’t what I wanted to say. I wanted to say why I was successful, and what inspired me to keep going and what motivated me. It involved Jesus Christ for me. Period.” Needless to say, when it came time for the speech and Brittany mention the

word Christ school officials pulled the plug on the mike.

But Brittany continued without the microphone and finished her speech.

Some people become shepherds without even realizing it. Listen carefully to the voices that are in our world. We need to pray for guidance and strength as we strive to do what is right. Today we come to this Eucharistic table to be fed by our shepherd and encouraged in our journey of life. Be silent and listen, our shepherd is calling us.