

WE ARE HIS

THE LESSON: JOHN 10

*That it may please thee to rule and govern thy holy Church universal in the right way,
We beseech thee, good Lord.*

After the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the Holy Spirit was sent to indwell believers, and the Church was born. The first thing to know about “Church” is that the local building where people gather to worship is an imperfect visible expression of a deeper spiritual reality. When we talk about Church-with-a-capital-C, we’re talking about an *invisible* reality that transcends time and space and that encompasses all those who truly belong to Jesus.

Scripture uses a lot of metaphors in order to try to convey the mystery of the Church. We are the people of God, the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. We are compared to “living stones” that come together to form a spiritual house. We are “salt and light” in the world. And we are the flock of God, cared for by the Good Shepherd, Jesus himself. All of these images (and there are many more!) help us to better understand who we are and the mission to which we are called.

When we read the petition at the start of this lesson, did you notice that we did *not* say “*the* holy Church universal”, but instead we said, “*thy* holy Church universal”? At the heart of our identity as the Church is the One to whom we belong.

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Today’s lesson comes from the Gospel of St. John, in which the author gives an account of the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus. In the passage we’re about to look at, Jesus had just healed a blind man – and some of the Pharisees were angry about that. Now these leaders were *supposed* to be the shepherds that cared for the flock of God, but Jesus is calling them out as frauds.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

As the Church, we belong both to Jesus and to one another. First, spend some time in thanksgiving for Jesus your Good Shepherd. But second, spend some time reflecting on how you view the “other sheep” that you are united with in the Church. Does your attitude towards them reflect Jesus’ love? There are probably some people you are inclined to like and others that you are not. Ask God to help you to love his other sheep the way he does – especially those people you struggle to like.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect.

O God, who hast laid in Sion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, upon whom alone thou dost build the living temple of thy Church: Grant unto the work of thine own hands continual increase of glory and spiritual strength, and daily make thy people more meet for the eternal tabernacle of thy rest in the heavens; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Spirit, be honour and glory, now and for evermore. Amen.

(FROM THE OFFICE FOR LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE OF A CHURCH OR CHAPEL, BCP PAGE 680)

WE ARE HIS

JOHN 10: “UNSNATCHABLE”

Jesus said, ¹“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ²But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁷So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. ¹¹I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father...

²⁷My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. ³⁰I and the Father are one.”