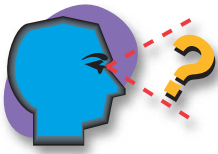


John



Responses to the Questions

NOTE: BE SURE TO ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS YOURSELF BEFORE READING THE ANSWERS IN ORDER TO MAKE THE MOST OF THIS STUDY.

Read John 10:1-42

1. The Church is the sheepfold as well as the flock. A sheepfold is an enclosure which might be a cave, a shed or an open area surrounded by some type of walls. Sometimes shepherds would gather branches to use to make an enclosure for their sheep. In the same way, the Church acts as a safe haven for Jesus' flock and the flock is also the Church in that the flock/the people make up the body of the Church. As the Catechism states, when Jesus gave Peter, our first pope, the keys to his Kingdom (the Church on earth), he also gave him and the apostles the authority to govern his people. He reaffirmed this when he later said to Peter, "feed my sheep"; "tend my flock". (John 21:16-17).
2. The shepherd is Jesus. According to St. Augustine (*Lectures on the Gospel of John*) the gatekeeper is the Holy Spirit (God the Father being the Owner) and we (Christians) are the sheep.
3. We hear Jesus through the voice of the Church, the Magisterium. Christ said, "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves." (Matt 7:15) In the word we can be confused by so many voices claiming to teach the truth. Jesus founded one Church and gave it his authority to teach and shepherd his flock. As his sheep, we know his voice through the teaching office of the church.
4. Jesus is the door. As he states in chapter 14: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one Comes to the Father except through Me." Jesus is the door to our salvation. The thief and robber Jesus refers to is anyone who would try to lead his flock astray with false teachings.
5. As this beautiful psalm states, with God as our shepherd, we lack nothing; he gives us rest, peace, comfort and we fear nothing because he is always with us. We have his solace in times of tribulation. He nourishes us with his own flesh and blood in the Eucharist, and anoints us through the priest when we're ill. We are filled with joy to the point of overflowing and he offers us eternal life with him. This is indeed the abundant life that Jesus came to give us.
6. A hireling is someone who is paid to do a job but the shepherd tends his flock out of love and is committed to them. The difference would be similar to that of a babysitter and a mother.
7. The other sheep were the gentiles (non-Jews). Jesus came to save all mankind.
8. He was referring to his upcoming passion – the crucifixion. He willingly gave his life for the world.



Responses to the Questions (cont.)

9. Yes, the Word of God always causes division among people. In the Gospel of Matthew 10:34 Jesus states: "I did not come to bring peace but a sword." This sword is what Scripture refers to as the "sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17). It divides people into two camps – those who believe and those who don't. It causes rifts between spouses, relatives and friends. We have free will meaning that we can choose whether or not to believe in Jesus.
10. Jesus responds that he *has* told them and not only told them but shown them through his miracles but they still refuse to listen or believe. He says the reason that they do not believe is because they are not of his flock. His flock recognize his voice (ordinarily through the Church) and are obedient to it.
11. No, this does not mean that you are assured of your salvation. It means that no one can take us away from Christ against our will. Everyone is subject to the possibility of falling away. This does not mean, however, that Catholics are not born again and can have no confidence. We are born again in baptism and we have assurance as long as we keep the commandments and are true to the teachings of the Church. We have the sacraments to help us when we fall but we should never be overly confident nor ever think we have a complimentary pass to sin. One has to keep the commandments and be obedient to the Church. St. Paul himself said: "but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified." (1 Corinthians 9:27) and "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Philippians 2:12)