

ΚΟΛΟΒΟΪΑ

COMMUNITY

*In all truth I tell you, I am the gate of the sheepfold.
All who have come before me are thieves and bandits,
but the sheep took no notice of them.*

I am the gate.

*Anyone who enters through me will be safe;
he will go in and out, and find pasture.*

The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy.

I have come so that they may have life, and have it to the full.

I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.

John 10

The ones “who have come before me” are alternative messiahs; the words Jesus uses of them should warn us that our Community *must* be built on the one Cornerstone. Other communities are easier to envisage, to sell to others, or to build. Ours is forbidden to be aligned on anything other than Jesus.

The sheep took no notice of them. The true Church cannot be faked up by makeshift substitutes; its daily bread recalls us to its true heart, and we must feed our ministry on this true bread *alone*. The virtue we require for this is *purity of heart*, which (the Beatitudes tell us) will enable us to see God. Jesus tells us:

Do not work for bread that cannot last. Work for bread that endures to eternal life, the kind of bread the Son of Man will give you: for on him the Father, God himself, has set his seal. (*Jn 6:27*)

It is essential that our Community should fulfil its vocation to display the face, the lineaments of Christ, with authenticity. Individuals err and fail constantly, which is sad. It is much more dangerous if the Community falls badly short; it can easily do this if it is fuelled by other intentions and motives than those of Jesus. As ordained ministers, this obviously affects us very intimately. We must be good (deputy) shepherds, listening to the discourse within the Community and registering false notes or ersatz visions, and recalling the Gospel, calling for prayer, listening to the Spirit. *We cannot do this if we ourselves are not inspired by the truth of Christ.*

Reading from Scripture

Two “windows” into early churches: **1** or **2 Timothy** are in the Pauline tradition, and evince powerfully the need to oversee the forces at work in the Community.

1 John is more meditative, written in the aftermath of schism, penetrating the spiritual bonds with Christ that govern the true church.