

The Church Is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic

CC 811: "This is the sole Church of Christ, which in the Creed we profess to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic." These four characteristics, inseparably linked with each other, indicate essential features of the Church and her mission.

The Church Is One

- CC 813:**
1. The church is one because of her source.
 2. The church is one because of her founder
 3. The church is one because of her "soul": it is the Holy Spirit, dwelling in those who believe and pervading and ruling over the entire Church, who brings about that wonderful communion of the faithful and joins them together so intimately in Christ that he (Holy Spirit) is the principle of the church's unity."

Diversity – Many different liturgies (Byzantine, Eastern rite, etc.) but ALL ONE church (essence, seven sacraments, etc.)

CC 815 and Colossians 3:14: Above all, charity "binds everything together in perfect harmony." But the unity of the pilgrim Church is also assured by visible bonds of communion:

- ~ profession of one faith received from the Apostles; (directly from Jesus, who received it from the Father, taught about himself)
- ~ common celebration of divine worship, especially of the sacraments;
- ~ apostolic succession through the sacrament of Holy Orders, maintaining the fraternal concord of God's family. (Priests, bishops, cardinals, Holy Father (Great principal of unity))

CC 816: "The sole Church of Christ [is that] which our Savior, after his Resurrection, entrusted to Peter's pastoral care, commissioning him and the other apostles to extend and rule it. . . . This Church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, subsists in (*subsistit in*) the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him."

The Second Vatican Council's *Decree on Ecumenism* explains: "For it is through Christ's Catholic Church alone, which is the universal help toward salvation, that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained. It was to the apostolic college alone, of which Peter is the head, that we believe that our Lord entrusted all the blessings of the New Covenant, in order to establish on earth the one Body of Christ into which all those should be fully incorporated who belong in any way to the People of God."

Wounds of Unity –

Reformation is for deformed men and not doctrine!

CC 817: In fact, "in this one and only Church of God from its very beginnings there arose certain rifts, which the Apostle strongly censures as damnable...men of both sides were to blame...

Toward Unity –

CC 821: Certain things are required in order to respond adequately to this call:

- a permanent *renewal* of the Church in greater fidelity to her vocation; such renewal is the driving-force of the movement toward unity;
Renewal is for YOU, all of us, not just the religious!
- *conversion of heart* as the faithful "try to live holier lives according to the Gospel"; for it is the unfaithfulness of the members to Christ's gift which causes divisions;
Sin causes division
- *prayer in common*, because "change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and merits the name 'spiritual ecumenism;'"

- *fraternal knowledge of each other*;
- *ecumenical formation* of the faithful and especially of priests;
- *dialogue* among theologians and meetings among Christians of the different churches and communities;
- *collaboration* among Christians in various areas of service to mankind. "Human service" is the idiomatic phrase.

The Church Is Holy

CC 823: "The Church . . . is held, as a matter of faith, to be unfailingly holy. This is because Christ, the Son of God, who with the Father and the Spirit is hailed as 'alone holy,' loved the Church as his Bride, giving himself up for her so as to sanctify her; he joined her to himself as his body and endowed her with the gift of the Holy Spirit for the glory of God."

CC 826: Charity is the soul of the holiness to which all are called...

"Love is much more than an emotion or feeling, it is a decision."

The Church Is Catholic

CC 830-831

"catholic" means "universal"

The church is catholic in a double sense: First, the Church is catholic because Christ is present in her. Second, the Church is catholic because she has been sent out by Christ on a mission to the whole of the human race.

CC 834: Particular Churches are fully catholic through their communion with one of them, the Church of Rome "which presides in charity." "For with this church, by reason of its pre-eminence, the whole Church, that is the faithful everywhere, must necessarily be in accord."

Who belongs to the Catholic Church?

CC 836: "All men are called to this catholic unity of the People of God. . . . And to it, in different ways, belong or are ordered: the Catholic faithful, others who believe in Christ, and finally all mankind, called by God's grace to salvation."

"Outside the Church there is no salvation"

Re-formulated positively, it means that all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is his Body. Read **CC 846-848** for more info.

The Church Is Apostolic

CC 857: The Church is apostolic because she is founded on the apostles, in three ways:

- she was and remains built on "the foundation of the Apostles," the witnesses chosen and sent on mission by Christ himself;
- with the help of the Spirit dwelling in her, the Church keeps and hands on the teaching, the "good deposit," the salutary words she has heard from the apostles;
- she continues to be taught, sanctified, and guided by the apostles until Christ's return, through their successors in pastoral office: the college of bishops, "assisted by priests, in union with the successor of Peter, the Church's supreme pastor":

You are the eternal Shepherd
who never leaves his flock untended.
Through the apostles
you watch over us and protect us always.
You made them shepherds of the flock
to share in the work of your Son. . . .

Paragraph 4. Christ's Faithful—Hierarchy, Laity, Consecrated Life

The Hierarchical Constitution of the Church

The Lay Faithful

The Consecrated Life

IN BRIEF

Paragraph 5. The Communion of Saints

Communion in Spiritual Goods

The Communion of the Church of Heaven and Earth

IN BRIEF

Paragraph 6. Mary—Mother of Christ, Mother of the Church

Mary's Motherhood with Regard to the Church

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin

Mary—Eschatological Icon of the Church

IN BRIEF