

The Church

Part 3: The Indispensible Characteristics of
the Church

The Creed

*“...And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father: who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified: who spoke by the prophets. **In one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.** I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.”*

Review

- Four Indispensable Characteristics of the Church
 1. Unity and Uniqueness
 2. Holy

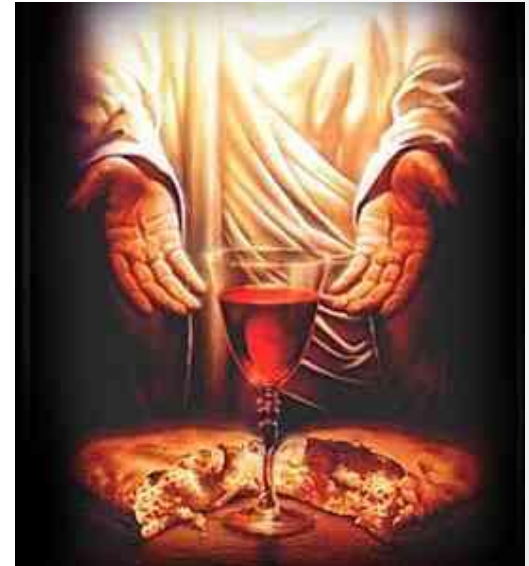


Catholicity

- Does not mean:
 - Roman Catholic
 - Geographically universal
 - Identical in form
- Identical in faith and life
 - “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (Eph. 4:4-6)

Catholicity

- Identical in faith and life
 - “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.” (Jn. 6:53)
 - *“In the Eucharist the body of Christians becomes the Body of Christ.”* (V. Kesich)



Catholicity

- The local Church is also universal
- We are members of His Body, not member of His parts
 - “Likewise greet the church that is in their [Priscilla and Aquila] house.” (Rom. 16:5)
- What is the relation of local Church to the Church elsewhere?

Catholicity

“...the Church manifests itself as a plurality of churches, each one of which is a part and a whole. It is because only in unity with all churches and in obedience to the universal Truth can it be the Church; yet it is also a whole because in each church by virtue of her unity with the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church [i.e. catholicity], the whole Christ is present...” (Fr. Alexander Schmemmann)

Catholicity

- **The Lord Christ's catholicity and our task**
- *"Wherever Christ is, there is the catholic church."* (St. Ignatius)
- Catholicity has been given to the Church, but its achievement is our task

Apostolicity or Apostolic Succession

- What is Apostolic Succession?
 - the unbroken pastoral lineage from the apostles
- *“The Church, having received this preaching and this faith, although scattered throughout the whole world, yet, as if occupying by one house, carefully preserves it. She also believed these points [of doctrine] just as if she had but one soul, and one and the same heart, and she proclaims them, and teaches them, and hands them down, with perfect harmony, as if she possessed one mouth.”*
(St. Irenaeus of Lyons)

Apostolic Succession

- “...contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” (Jude 3)
- Foundation of truth in the Church (St. Irenaeus)
 - Scripture
 - Rule of Faith (Canon of Faith)
 - Apostolic Tradition
 - Apostolic Succession
- Proof of that true faith is that the Church could point to a visible succession of teachers, presbyters, and bishops who taught the same things throughout the world.

Origins of Apostolic Succession

- Instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ
- “And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles.” (Lk. 6:13)



Why is Apostolic Succession so important?

1. Preserve and propagate the True Faith

- *"In no wise am I expounding my own opinion, but that which I have been taught by the fathers, without changing anything at all in their teaching." (St. Maximus the Confessor)*
- *"Whatever has been transmitted to us through the Law, and the prophets, and the apostles, and the evangelists, we receive and know and esteem highly, and beyond that we ask nothing more." (St. John of Damascus)*

Why is Apostolic Succession so important?

- *"Wherefore, brethren, let us plant ourselves upon the rock of faith and the Tradition of the Church, removing not the landmarks set by our holy fathers, nor giving room to those who are anxious to introduce novelties and to undermine the structure of God's holy ecumenical and apostolic Church. For if everyone were allowed a free hand, little by little the entire Body of the Church would be destroyed."* (St. John of Damascus)



Why is Apostolic Succession so important?

2. Protect the Church from self-proclaimed bishops and/or priests

- “And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.” (Heb. 5:4)
- Consider Judas’ replacement

3. Discipleship