

The Church – The Kingdom of God on Earth Catechetical Preparation

Consider the following statement: Jesus Christ began the Catholic Church and founded it upon the Apostles. Jesus is the head of His Church. The true Church of Jesus Christ can be identified by four marks: one, holy, catholic and apostolic.

Keeping the above statement in mind, read and meditate on the following passages:

Scripture:

Matt. 16:13-20 - “ you are Rock and on this rock I will build my Church.”

Matt. 18:15-18 – “ if he does not listen, summon another...if he ignores them, refer it to the church.”

Matt 28: 16-20 – “ All authority in heaven and on earth has been given me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nation.”

Lk. 10:16 – “He who hears you, hears me. He who rejects you, rejects me. And he who rejects me, rejects Him who sent me.”

Jn. 15: 1-11 – The Church is the Body of Christ – “ I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.”

I Cor. 1:10 – Church: a Sign of Unity

Eph 1:9-10 – Mystery of Church Unity “ ..all things in the heavens and on earth into one under Christ’s headship.”

Eph 5:5-27- Holiness of the Church “ Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her.”

Eph 2:19-21 – Apostolic Succession “..the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.”

Catechism:

CCC, 758-769 The Church’s Origin, Foundation, and Mission

CCC, 781-786 The Church – People of God

CCC, 787-796 The Church – Body of Christ

CCC, 797-798 The Church is the Temple of the Holy Spirit

CCC, 813-822 The Church is One

CCC, 823-829 The Church is Holy

CCC, 830-856 The Church is Catholic

CCC, 857-865 The Church is Apostolic

Key Terms:

Church – “ In Christian usage, the word “Church” has three inseparable meanings: the People that God gathers in the whole world, the particular or local church (diocese); and the liturgical (above all Eucharistic) assembly.

Catholic – “ one of the four marks of the Church... The Church is catholic or universal because she possesses the fullness of Christ’s presence and the means of salvation, and because she has been sent out by Christ to the whole of the human race.”

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Preparation :

Hymn: (Vs. 1-2) – *The Church's One Foundation* or *The King of Love My Shepherd Is*

First Reading: Acts 1:8-14

Psalm: Psalm 139

Gospel: Matthew 28: 16-20

Proclamation: **Jesus Christ began the Catholic Church and founded it upon the Apostles. Jesus is the head of His Church. The true Church of Jesus Christ can be identified by four marks: one, holy, catholic and apostolic.**

Explanation

I. All authority comes from Jesus – we read in Matt. 28:18

- Christ is the Head of His Church which is His Body – we call ourselves the Body of Christ.
- Christ was taken up to Heaven after He accomplished His mission
- However Christ dwells on earth in His Church
- The redemption is the source of authority that Christ, by virtue of the Holy Spirit, exercises over the Church.
- Raised to the Father's glory, in everything He is preeminent – especially in the Church through whom He extends His reign over all things.
- The Church is this Body of which Christ is the Head; she lives from Him, in Him, and for Him; He lives with her (the Church) and in her.

II. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit – to guard the Church from error and to ensure that the Church always remains what He intended.

- The church's accomplishment was the reason He was sent.
- John 14:26 Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, to lead the Apostles to all Truth – to teach them all things and remind them of all that Jesus had told them. The Apostles in turn were to teach us.
- John 20:20 Easter Sunday night, Jesus breathed on the Apostles and said, “ receive the Holy Spirit” – the Apostles were sealed with the Holy Spirit – the Promise of inheritance.
- From this hour onward, the mission of Christ and the Spirit becomes the mission of the Church
- What is this mission? – The Church is sent to announce, bear witness, make Present and spread the mystery of the communion with the Blessed Trinity.
- All the actions of Jesus' life was a preparation and building of His Church – His Church is called the Kingdom of God (or the Kingdom of Heaven) on earth.

III. The Church has 4 marks – you can recognize Jesus' Church by the unique form of the four marks: One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

- a) One – The Church is one in faith & the celebration of the sacraments, Pope
These teachings come from Christ and they cannot change or be interpreted outside of the teaching of Christ's Church.

- b) Holy – The Church is holy in her Founder and invisible Head – Christ, because she exists for the glory of God and the salvation/sanctification of humanity.
- c) Catholic –The Church is catholic (universal) because it faithfully teaches all that Christ taught and the Church is for all peoples, in all places, of all cultures, in all times.
- d) Apostolic – The Church is founded on the Apostles in 3 ways:
 - a. He chose 12 apostles – after the Ascension, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be My witnesses to the ends of the earth.
 - b. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the Church keeps and hands on the teaching – the Deposit of Faith she has heard from the Apostles – the same doctrine and way of life (Acts 2:42)
 - Matt. 13:11 – given the secrets
 - I Tim 6:20 – guard the Deposit
 - c. The Church continues to be taught, sanctified and guided by the Apostles until Christ returns, through their successors in pastoral Office = college of Bishops & Pope = Chief Shepherd of Church – Matt 16

IV. Jesus endowed His Community, the Church with a Structure -

- a) He chose the 12 Apostles with Peter as Head (Mt. 16: 13-20)
 - In the Gospel we read about the Church being founded on the rock – Peter
 - Matthew 16
 - Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God
 - Jesus makes Peter the keeper of the keys
 - Peter is appointed as Shepherd of the entire Flock of Christ
- b) The Apostles are chosen witnesses of the Lord after His Resurrection:
 - their office has a permanent aspect
 - Christ promised to remain with them always. The divine mission entrusted by Jesus to them will continue to the end of time. Since the Gospel, they handed on the lasting source of all life for the Church. They took care to appoint successors.
- c) The Apostles gave to their successors their own position of teaching authority – binding and loosing. The Bishops have by divine institution taken the place of the Apostles as pastors of the Church.
 - The Pope and the Bishops in union with him make up the teaching authority of the Church – the Magisterium.

Application :

1. In what ways, in the past few weeks have your actions shown that you desire to be a closer follower of Jesus?
2. What is the Church?
3. When do you become a member of the Church?
4. When did the Church begin?
5. What is meant by the Body of Christ?
6. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church?
7. What are the four marks of the Church? Briefly describe each one.
8. What does the Church mean to me personally?
9. What was my understanding of the Church before RCIA and now?
10. What sinful habits is God calling you away from, which may be blocking you from coming closer to Him?

Conclusion :

Closing Prayer:

Hymn (Vs. 3-4)- *The Church's One Foundation* or *The King of Love My Shepherd Is*

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**Jesus Christ began the Catholic Church and founded it upon the Apostles. Jesus is the head of His Church. The true Church of Jesus Christ can be identified by four marks:
one, holy, catholic and apostolic.**

I. All authority comes from Jesus

II. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit

III. The Church has 4 marks

a)

b)

c)

d)

IV. Jesus endowed His Community, the Church with a Structure

The Nicene Creed

We believe in One God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ
the only Son of God
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, one in
Being with the Father.

Through Him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
He came down from heaven:
(Bow) By the power of the Holy Spirit
He was born of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered, died, and was buried.

On the third day He rose again
in fulfillment of the Scriptures;

He ascended into heaven and is seated
at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son He is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Questions :

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