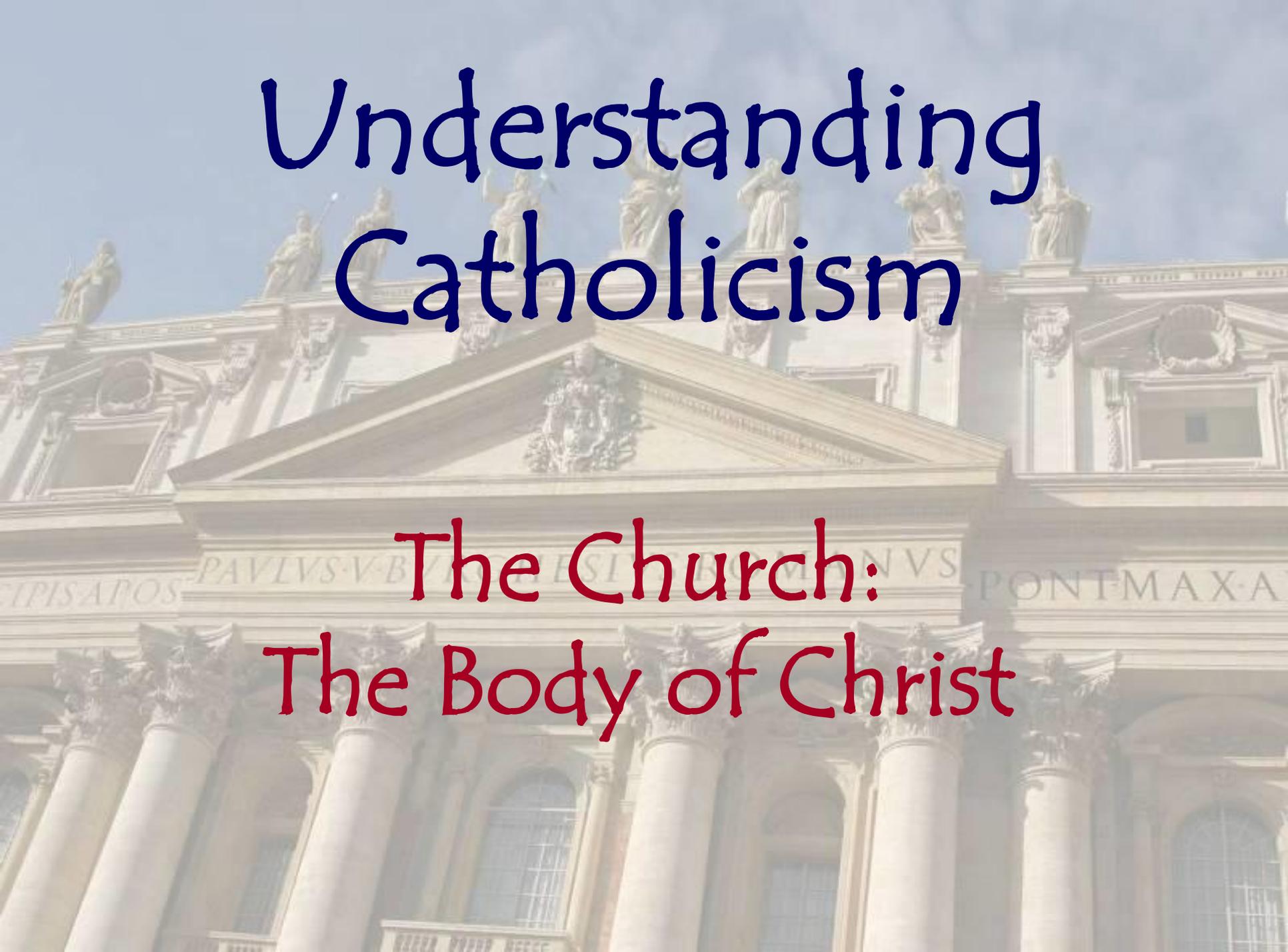
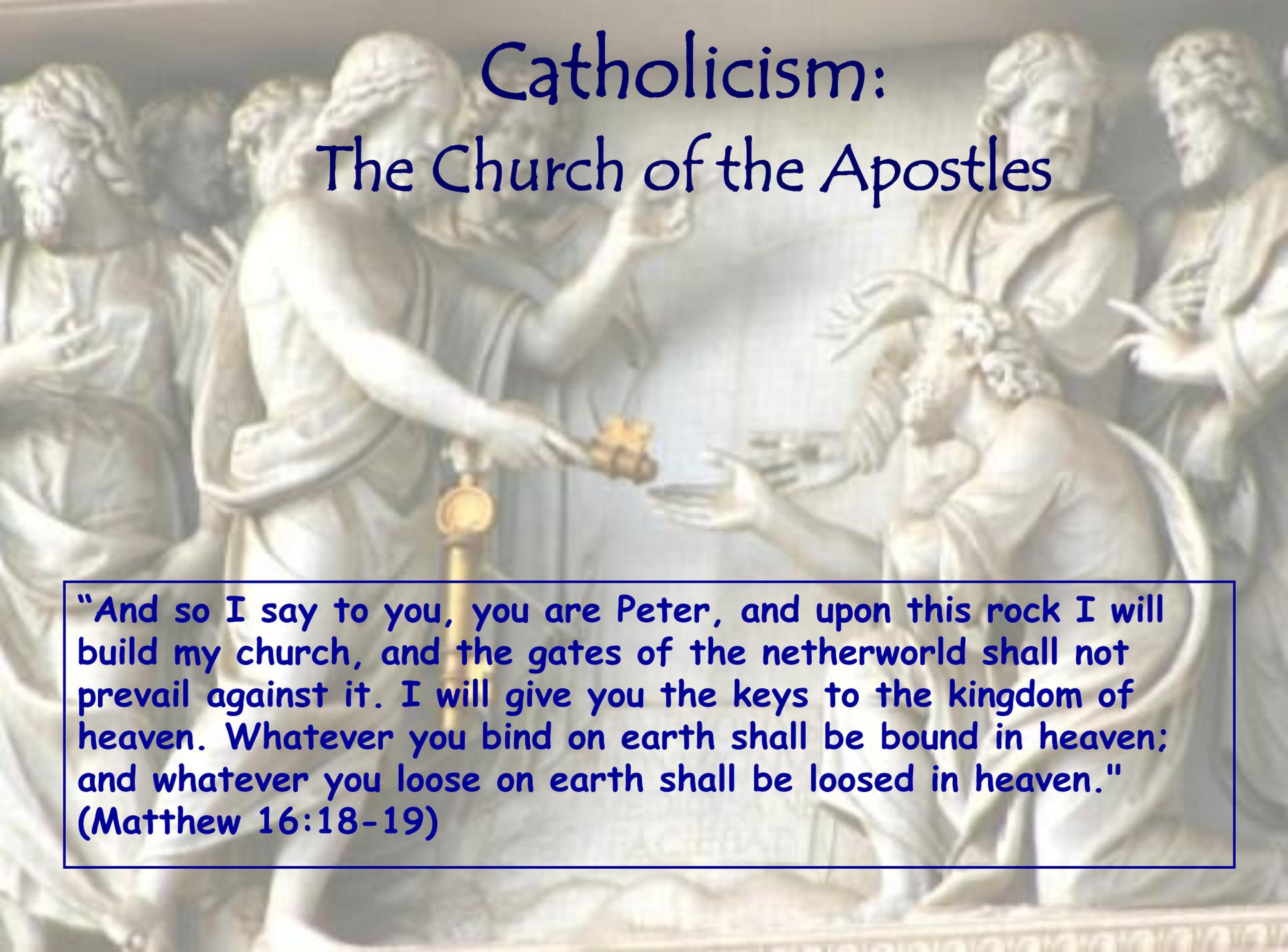


# Understanding Catholicism



The Church:  
The Body of Christ



# Catholicism: The Church of the Apostles

**"And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."  
(Matthew 16:18-19)**

# Why the Catholic Church?



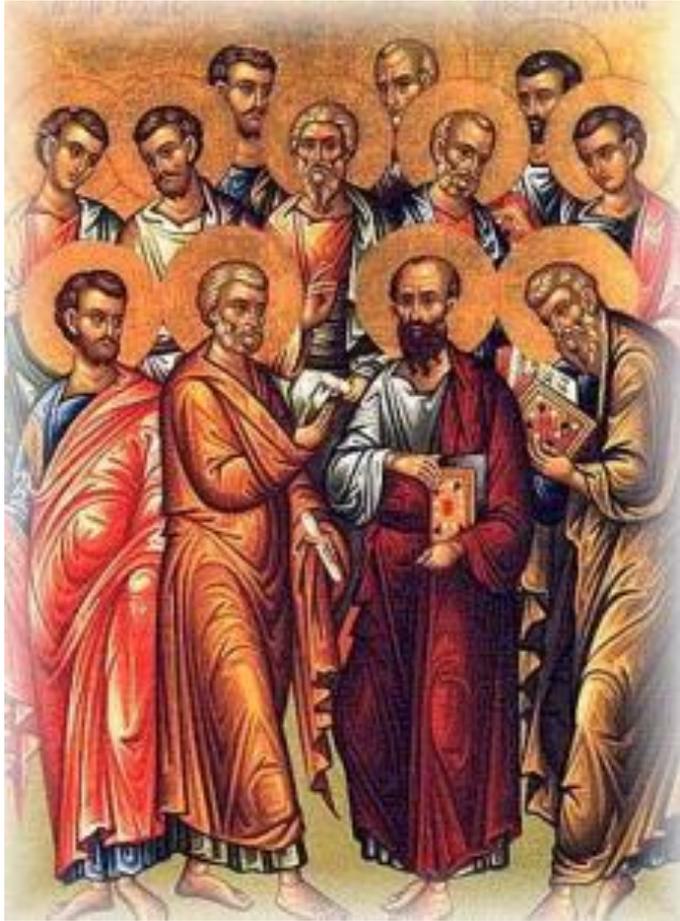
- † An Unbroken History
- † Four Marks of the True Church
- † Seven Sacraments
- † Communion of Saints
- † Three Legs to Stand on
- † Apostolic Succession
- † Holy Mass - the Eucharistic Sacrifice

# An Unbroken History



- ✝ Jesus established His Church as a *visible* organization
- ✝ Jesus chose Peter to be the first in authority among the apostles
- ✝ Jesus intended for His Church to continue teaching the *Gospel* with His authority until the end of time
- ✝ The Apostles chose others to be bishops (Greek meaning "an overseer") as their successors
- ✝ The Catholic Church has existed continuously since the time of the Apostles

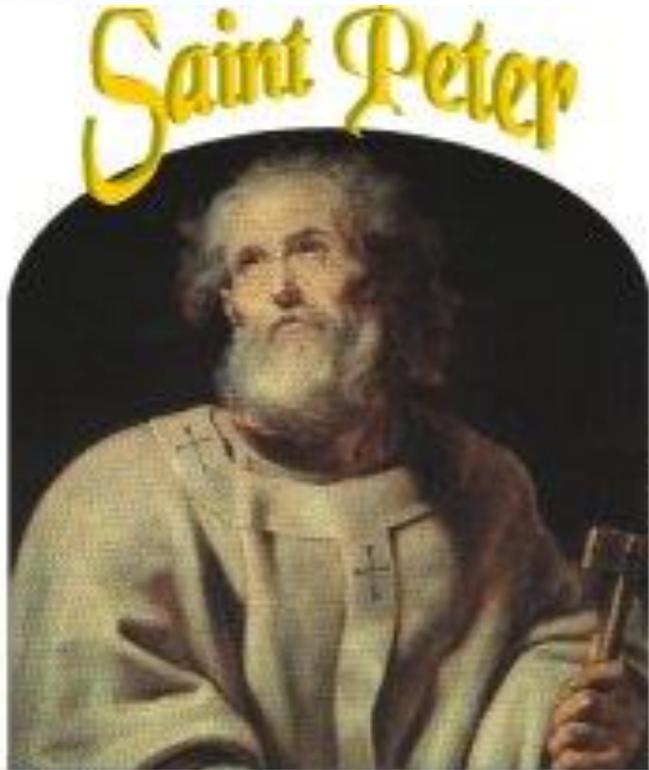
# A Visible Church



- † Jesus established His Church as a *visible* organization
- † Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid." (Mt 5:14)
- † He chose twelve men to be the foundation stones upon which the Church was built, with Jesus being the cornerstone (Eph. 2:20)
- † Jesus is God's definitive Word, there will be no further Revelation after Him
- † The definitive *deposit of faith* was given to the Twelve Apostles who passed it on to their successors (the bishops of the Catholic Church)

# An Earthly Head

- ✝ Jesus chose Peter to be the first in authority among the apostles
  - ✓ It was upon "this rock" (Peter) that Christ promised He would build His Church
  - ✓ It was to Peter alone that Christ gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven
  - ✓ He promised Peter infallibility (the inability to err when teaching in matters of faith and morals) when He said, "whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Mt. 16:18-19)



Upon This Rock...

# A Continuous Church



- ✠ Jesus intended for His Church to continue teaching the Gospel with His authority until the end of time.
  - ✓ Jesus is like the wise man who built His house (the Church) on a rock (Peter), "...it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock." (Mt. 7:24-27)
  - ✓ He promised the gates of hell would not prevail against it when He said, "... you are Peter (Kephah - Rock), and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it." (Mt. 16:18)

# A Continuous Church



- † Jesus commands His followers to take disputes involving religious matters to the Church for resolution (Mt. 18:15-18)
  - ✓ He would not instruct us to do such a thing if He knew that the Church would fall into total apostasy and become corrupted
  - ✓ The Church must, out of necessity, always exist in order for Jesus to give such a command
- † Jesus promised that He would be with His Church until the end of time
  - ✓ "...I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt. 28:19-20)

# A Continuous Church



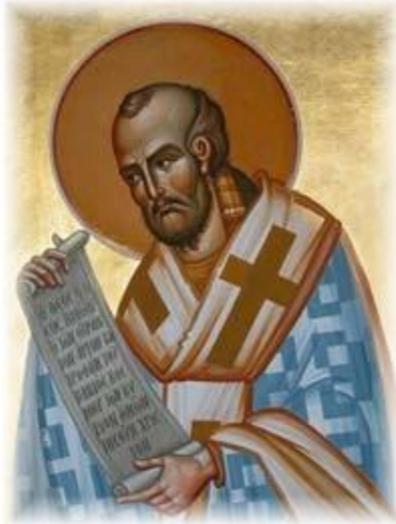
- ✠ St. Paul tells us that the Church is the pillar and ground (bulwark or foundation) of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15)
  - ✓ These are very strong words used to indicate strength, stability, and permanence
  - ✓ In order to be the pillar and foundation Paul speaks of, the Church must be a permanent teacher of truth, not a temporary household build upon sand only to be rebuilt later
- ✠ Jesus said, "Every one then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock;" (Mt. 7:24-27)

# Witness of the Early Church Fathers



- ✠ Jesus Christ founded a society, with Himself its Head, which is to last forever and which is called His Church
  - ✓ There are four distinguishing marks of the one true Church founded by Christ
  - ✓ The Church was hierarchically constituted
  - ✓ Among the Apostles, Peter received from Christ the primacy of jurisdiction in the Church
  - ✓ Supreme power over the whole Church belonged to the Bishop of Rome as successor of Peter

# Witness of the Early Church Fathers



- † Bishops of the Catholic Church are the legitimate successors of the Apostles
- † Bishops of the Catholic Church are the legitimate successors of the Apostles
- † The Church is infallible in transmitting the teachings of Christ
- † The Roman Pontiff enjoys infallibility when he teaches *ex cathedra*
- † Bishops gathered in an ecumenical council have always been acknowledged as infallible judges of the faith
- † The Fathers knew all of our seven Sacraments

# Witness of the Early Church Fathers



- † Mary is truly the Mother of God (*theotokos*)
- † Mary conceived as a virgin (*virgo ante partum*)
- † Mary was a virgin during the birth (*in partu*)
- † Mary remained a virgin after the birth of Christ (*virgo post partum*)
- † Mary is the New Eve, the co-operatrix in the mystery of the redemption
- † Mary was conceived immaculate, i.e., without the stain of original sin

# Witness of the Early Church Fathers



- † Sacred Tradition is a true source of revelation
- † The Mass is a true Sacrifice offered for adoration, thanksgiving, propitiation (appeasement or satisfaction), and supplication (prayers of petition)
- † Belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist
- † Communion of Saints (intercessory prayers)
- † The existence of purgatory where the dead undergo temporary punishment
- † The souls in purgatory can be aided by the prayers of the living

# The Nicene Creed

The creed defined at the Council of Nicaea declares the Church to be:

† One

✓ Jn 10:16, 17:17-23; Eph 4:3-6;  
1Cor 1:10, 4:4, 12:13; CCC 866

† Holy

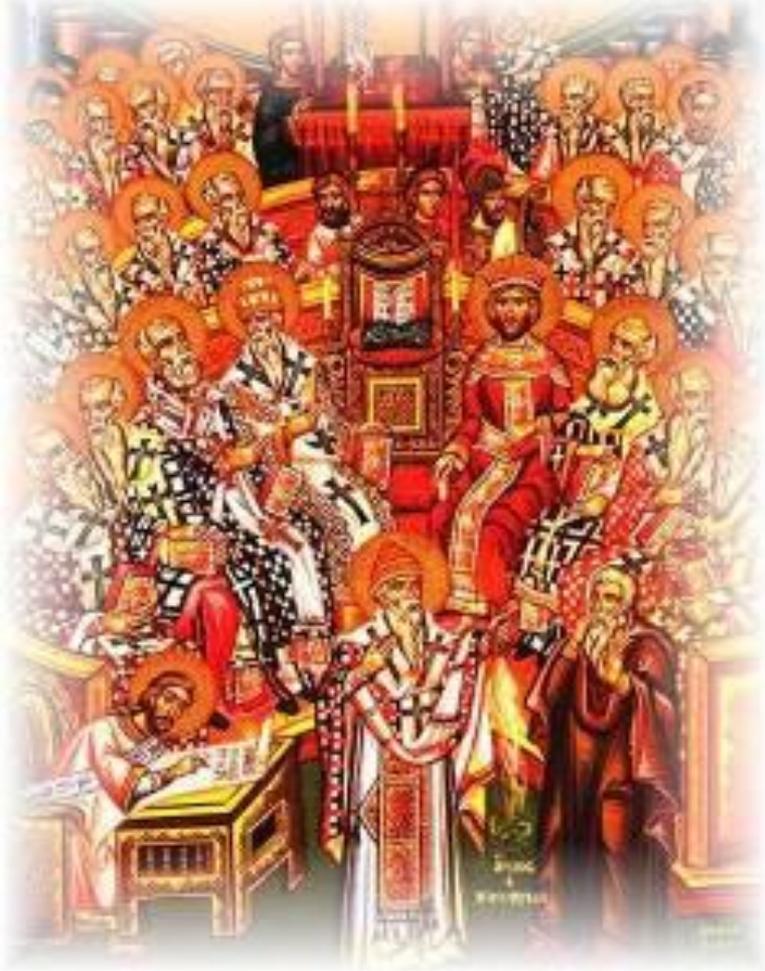
✓ Jn 17:17, 19; Ti 2:14; CCC 867

† Catholic

✓ Mt 24:14; Mk 16:15; Acts 1:8; CCC  
868

† Apostolic

✓ Jn 15:16, 20:21; Mt 16:18, 28:18-  
20; Eph 4:11; Tit 1:5; CCC 869



# The Church is ONE

The Church of the apostles was definitely *one*.

- ✠ Paul wrote: "There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all." (Eph 4:4-5)
- ✠ Paul linked this primitive unity to the Church's common Eucharistic bread: "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of one bread" (1 Cor 10:17)
- ✠ Jesus promised at the outset that "there would be one flock, one shepherd." (John 10:16)



# The Church is ONE



## Unity in belief

- ✝ Same teachings and traditions that were given to the Twelve Apostles (John 10:11-16, John 21:15-17)

## Unity in worship

- ✝ Christ prayed "that they may be one" (John 17:11, John 17:22-23)

## Unity in government or leadership

- ✝ One visible head of government and leadership, the Apostolic College with Peter and his successors as its head (Lk 22:32; Jn 21:17; Eph 4:11; CCC 813)

# The Church is ONE

Jesus' prayer at the Last Supper stresses Church unity:

- † "And now I will no longer be in the world, but they are in the world, while I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one just as we are." (John 17:11)
- † "I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me." (John 17:20-21)
- † "And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me." (John 17:22-23)

# The Church Teaches the Truth



St. Paul wrote:

"...you should know how to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, *the pillar and foundation of truth.*"

All Christian factions can't teach the truth if they are disunited. At best, only one can be the source of truth. To be the "pillar and foundation of the truth," the Church must be one, just as it was during apostolic times.

# The Church is HOLY

The Church of the apostles was holy:

- ✠ Among other things, this means it had the all-holy God himself as author. "...upon this rock ***I will build my Church.***"
- ✠ It doesn't mean that all of its members are no longer sinners and have themselves become all-holy. From its beginning the Church, on her human side, has been composed of sinners.
- ✠ The Church was founded for no other reason than to continue Christ's redemptive and sanctifying work in the world. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Tim. 1:15)



# The Church is HOLY

✝ Holiness in its founder - Jesus Christ

✝ Holiness in its principles

✓ Jesus prayed for the holiness of His Church, to "Sanctify them" (John 17:17), "consecrated in truth" (John 17:19)

✝ Holiness in its members

✓ Consisting of His own sheep who have been purified for Him as an acceptable people (Titus 2:14)

✓ There will be both holy and unholy people in the Church until the end of times (Mt 13:3-8, 24-30)

✝ Holiness in its miracles

✓ (Healings, Eucharistic miracles, the Incorruptibles, etc.)

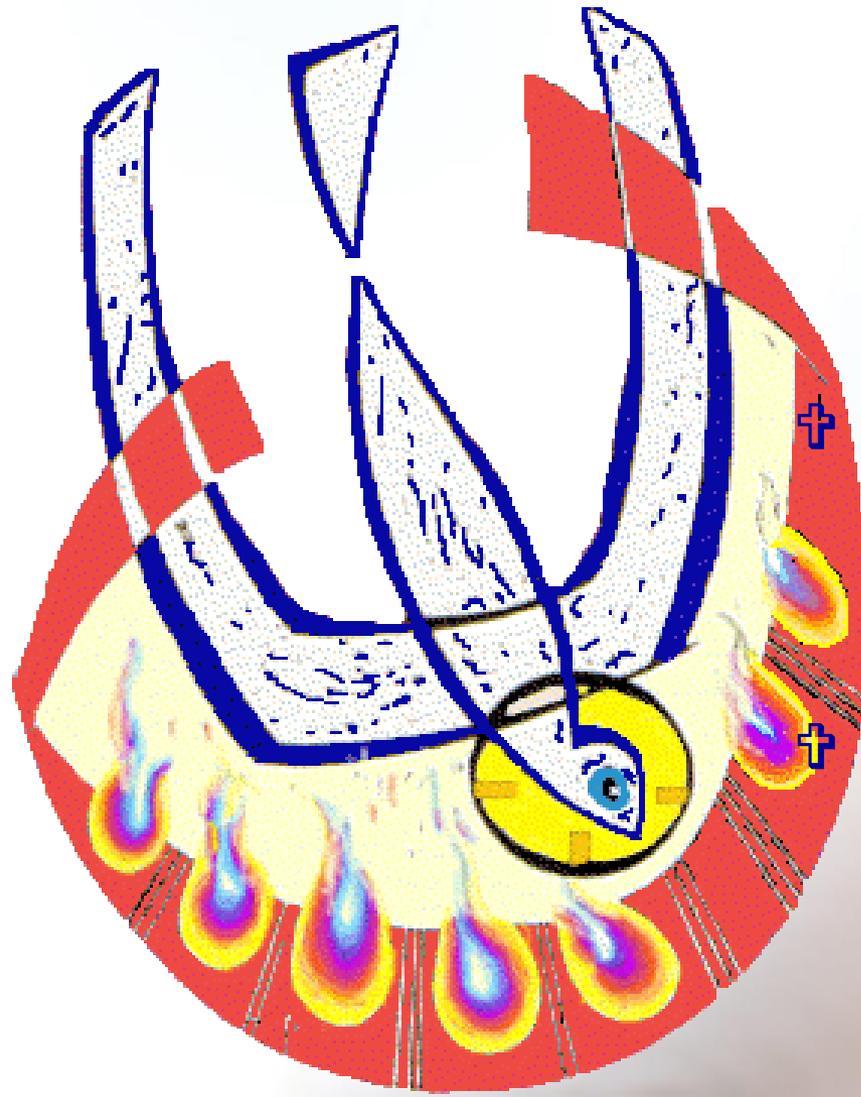


# The Church is HOLY

† Because it is "holy," the Church from the beginning has been endowed with the sacramental means to help make *holy* the sinners who are found in her ranks.

† Like the Church, the sacraments were instituted by Jesus Christ for the purpose of giving God's grace to His People.

† The Church, then, has been given the seven sacraments along with the Word precisely *in order* to be able to help make sinners holy.



# The Church is HOLY

† The holiness of the Church, of which the creed properly speaks, has always had reference to her divine Founder and to what the Church was founded by him with the power and authority to do, not with the condition of her members.

† It was in this sense that Paul was able to write, "Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the Church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:25-27)



# The Church is CATHOLIC

- ✝ The third mark of the one true Church is that the Church is *Catholic* or "universal."
- ✝ It refers as much to the fullness of the faith which it possesses as it does to the undeniable extension in both time and space which has characterized it virtually from the beginning.



# The Church is CATHOLIC



- ✝ At the very beginning, of course, it was no doubt difficult to see how the "little flock" (Luke 12:32) of which the Church then consisted could by any stretch of the imagination qualify as "universal."
- ✝ Still, just as the embryo contains in germ the whole human being, so the Church already contained the universality that would quickly begin to manifest itself.

# The Church is CATHOLIC

- ✝ From the Greek word *katholikos* meaning general or universal
  - ✓ St. Ignatius of Antioch to the Smyrnaeans around A.D. 110: "Wheresoever the bishop shall appear, there let the people be, even as where Jesus is, there is the Catholic Church."
- ✝ The Catholic Church consists of a universality in time and in place
  - ✓ The gospel will continue to be preached throughout the whole world until the end of time (Mt. 24:14), to the whole creation throughout all the world (Mk. 16:15), and by the power of the Holy Spirit to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8)



# The Church is CATHOLIC



- ✠ At the moment of her birth, the Church was already catholic, already universal.
- ✠ It's no accident that the Holy Spirit came down upon the Church at Pentecost when "there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from *every nation under heaven*" (Acts 2:5).
- ✠ It was to them that the Holy Spirit enabled the apostles to speak in the languages of all these nations - a powerful sign that the Church is destined for all men everywhere. Many accepted the faith then and there and presumably began to carry "the Catholic Church" back to the four corners of the earth.

# The Church is CATHOLIC



- ✝ The Catholicity of the Church resides as much in the fact that the Church is for everybody at all times as it does in the fact that it was indeed destined to spread everywhere throughout the whole world.
- ✝ Within a few years of the foundation of the Church, Paul was writing that "the word of truth . . . in the whole world . . . is bearing fruit and growing."  
(Col. 1:5-6)

# The Church is APOSTOLIC



- ✝ Finally, the Church that issued from the commission of Christ to the apostles was necessarily *apostolic*.
- ✝ Christ founded the Church upon the apostles and in no other way: "Did I not choose you, the twelve?" he asked them (John 6:70).
- ✝ The apostles understood perfectly well that they did not set themselves up in their own little community, as we sometimes today see "gospel churches" set up in store fronts or in the suburbs. The New Testament teaches, "One does not take the honor upon himself" (Heb. 5:4).

# The Church is APOSTOLIC



- ✝ The Church started out as "apostolic" so the question is whether the apostles had the power and authority to pass on to others what they had received from Christ.
- ✝ We have already seen that they very definitely *did* have this power and authority; the New Testament evidence is clear about that. The subsequent historical evidence is equally clear that they did pass it on to successors (the bishops).
- ✝ Indeed there are already references in the New Testament itself to the appointment of bishops by the apostles, and the appointment of further bishops by *them* (Titus 1:5-9).

# The Church is APOSTOLIC

- ✠ The true church must always teach the identical doctrines that were originally delivered to it by Peter and the Apostles (Mt. 28:18-20)
- ✠ Her ministers must derive their powers from the Apostles by an uninterrupted chain of succession
- ✠ Peter is the rock upon which Christ built His Church (Mt. 16:18) (the successor of Peter is the Bishop of Rome)
- ✠ Any church claiming to be Christ's own must be able to trace its lineage in unbroken continuity back to the apostles (only the Catholic Church can make this claim)



# The Church is APOSTOLIC



- ✠ What Church descends in an unbroken line from the apostles of Jesus Christ (and also, not incidentally, possesses the other essential notes of the true Church of which the creed speaks)?
- ✠ What Church, if any, is headed by a single recognized designated leader, just as the apostles of Jesus plainly functioned, on the evidence of the New Testament, under the headship of Peter?

✠ Any body claiming to be the Church of Christ must be able to demonstrate its apostolicity through an organic link with the original apostles on whom Christ manifestly established his Church. Nothing less than this could qualify as the "apostolic" Church which Jesus founded.

# The Church is APOSTOLIC



† Jesus said, "He who hears you, hears me" (Luke 10:16). Do we take these words seriously today? Do we listen to the teachings of the successors of the apostles, the bishops, in union with and under the successor of the apostle Peter, the pope, as if these teachings were the words of Christ himself?

- † In using these words, Jesus declared that the apostles and their successors would speak for him in the serious business of gathering in and sanctifying his people and leading them toward the salvation he offers.
- † Jesus intended that the fullness of his grace should come to his people in a Church that, from the beginning, was what the creed still calls it today: One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.

# Apostolic Succession



- † Jesus chose the Twelve Apostles to receive the fullness of the gospel teachings (Mt. 10:2-4, Mk. 3:16-29, Lk. 6:13-16, Acts 1:13)
- † He chose Peter to be the first in authority among the apostles (Mt. 16:18-20, Lk. 22:32, Jn 21:17, Mk 16:7, Lk 24:34)
- † Upon "this rock" (Peter) Christ promised He would build His Church
- † He promised the gates of hell shall not prevail
- † Peter alone was given the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 16:18-20)

# Apostolic Succession



- ✝ Apostolic Succession was first demonstrated in Acts 1:20-26 when Matthias was chosen to replace Judas
- ✝ Every validly ordained bishop in the Catholic Church can trace his priesthood authority back through history to one of the Twelve Apostles
- ✝ This authority has been passed on in an unbroken chain of ordinations by the laying-on of hands from the Apostles to their successors, the bishops, and to their successors, other bishops

# Apostolic Succession

- ✝ The bishops of the Catholic Church are the successors to the Apostles in a continuous line of apostolic succession
- ✝ The Catholic Church has existed continuously since the time of the Apostles
- ✝ The Catholic Church was founded as a divinely inspired earthly organization by Christ upon Peter, the rock
- ✝ No other Christian church can trace its authority unbroken back to the original apostolic source



# Catechesis does this by:



- † Being part of our continual conversion
- † Fostering our ongoing understanding of the sacraments (where Christ is really present) and fostering our participation in the life of the Church
- † Being everyone's responsibility
- † Accompanying everyone's dyings and risings with resurrection faith
- † Making connections between the Gospel and today's world

# A Catechesis inspired by the Baptismal Catechumenate:



- † Initiation is important.  
Sacraments are important.
- † Whole community is responsible for catechesis
- † Baptismal spirituality is the perspective
- † Relevant in a particular place and time
- † Process of formation and a school of faith that takes place gradually



# Catechesis inspired by the Baptismal Catechumenate is:

- † Fruitful blend of instruction/formation
- † Gradual
- † Unfolds
- † Incorporates
- † Deepens
- † Reflective
- † Lifelong
- † Makes people different (holy)



# Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

**WORD**

**Scripture and  
Tradition**

**WORSHIP**

**All forms of prayer**

**COMMUNITY**

**More than social**

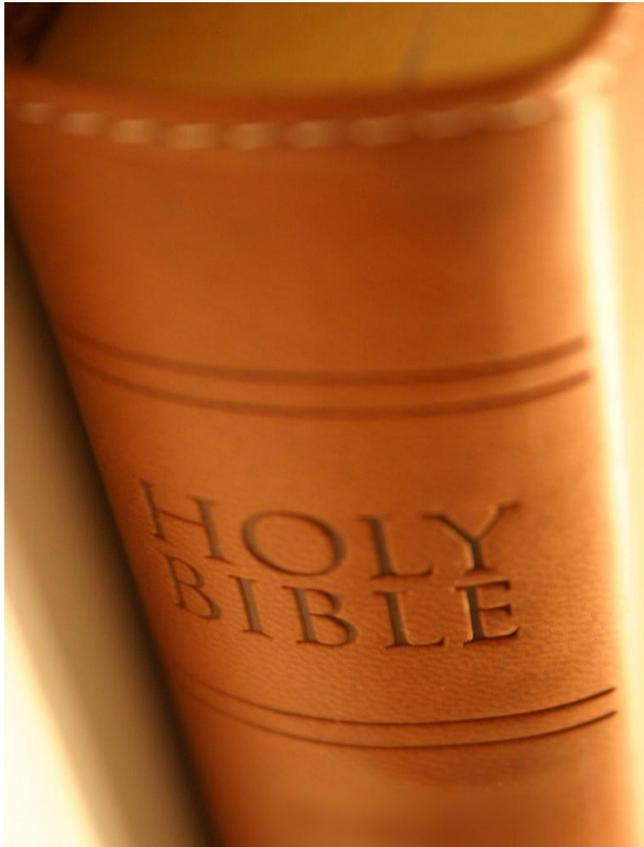
**WITNESS**

**Incarnates the  
message**

# Word

## Scripture

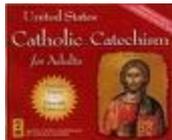
- † 3-year cycle
- † Used liturgically
- † Includes comfort and challenge
- † Has multiple layers of meaning
- † Homilies and reflections inculturate it
- † Compels a response: conversion that leads to action



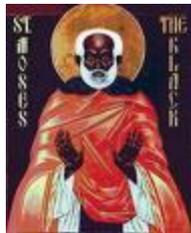
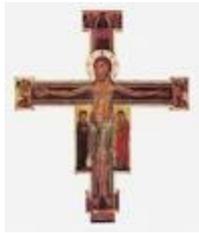
# Word

## Tradition

- † Handed on linked to the scriptures
- † Accesses doctrinal heritage
- † Comforts and challenges
- † Has multiple layers of meaning and so benefits from teaching
- † Compels conversion that leads to action



# The Church Worships



- † Right and duty that flows from baptism
- † Reaches its pinnacle in the Eucharist - the source and summit of Christian life
- † Happens in community
- † Ritual gesture, posture, language and symbols
- † Sign of unity and instrument of peace
- † Tells the salvation story gradually
- † Centers on Christ's saving work
- † Has expressions tied to the culture in which it is taking place
- † Leads to mission
- † Private prayer and devotionals part of our rich treasury

# The Church is Community



- † Everything that goes on proclaims what we believe
- † Everyone's actions proclaim what we believe
- † The first place to carry out the corporal and spiritual works of mercy
- † We are part of a universal church, a diocesan church, a vicariate church AND we are linked to all baptized believers

# The Church is Called to Witness



- † The obligation of all the baptized
- † Flows from the Eucharist
- † Supported by a body of teaching: Catholic Social Teaching
- † Gives hands and feet to our proclamation that God's reign is here and now
- † Harbinger of hope