



Archdiocesan Program

WHY CATHOLIC?

STRENGTHENING FAITH ... MAKING DISCIPLES



THE PROFESSION OF FAITH

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH

Biblical Reflection: Jn 17:1-26

In Christian usage the word “church” designates the liturgical assembly, but also the local community or the whole universal community of believers. These three meanings are inseparable.

“The Church” is the People that God gathers in the whole world. She exists in local communities and is made real as a liturgical, above all a Eucharistic, assembly. She draws her life from the world and the Body of Christ and so herself becomes Christ’s Body. (CCC 752)

The Church is both visible and spiritual, a hierarchical society and the Mystical Body of Christ. She is one, yet formed of two components, human and divine. That is her mystery, which only faith can accept. (CCC 779)

Jesus Christ is the one whom the Father anointed with the Holy Spirit and established as priest, prophet, and king. The whole People of God participates in these three offices of Christ and bears the responsibilities for mission and service that flow from them. (CCC 783)

The Church on earth is endowed already with a sanctity that is real though imperfect. In her members perfect holiness is something to be acquired: “... all the faithful, whatever their condition or estate – though each in his own way – are called by the Lord to that perfection of sanctity by which the Father himself is perfect”. *Lumen gentium* 11, ¶3. (CCC 825).

The Church is apostolic: She is built on a lasting foundation: “the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (Rev 21:14). She is indestructible (cf. Mt 16:18). She is upheld infallibly in truth. Christ governs her through Peter and the other apostles, who are present in their successors, the Pope and the college of bishops. (CCC 869)

...“Henceforward the Church, endowed with the gifts of her founder and faithfully observing his precepts of charity, humility and self-denial, receives the mission of proclaiming and establishing among all peoples the Kingdom of Christ and of God, and she is on earth the seed and the beginning of that kingdom” *Lumen gentium*, 5 (CCC 768)

Questions for discussion:

- What does the Church mean to me?
- Do I consider myself a committed member of the Church? How do my actions and all aspects of my life confirm this affirmation?
- As a member of the Church, I share the offices of Christ as priest, prophet and king, what does this imply in my daily life? In what sense I think and behave differently from those who are not members of the Church?
- What does to be a saint mean to me? What do I have to do to grow in sanctity?

Further reading: Catechism of the Catholic Church, numbers 748-945

