

## Session 5: What is the Catholic Church?

HYMN: The Church's One Foundation



The Church's one foundation  
is Jesus Christ, her Lord.  
She is His new creation  
by water and the word.  
From Heaven He came and sought her  
to be His holy bride;  
with His own Blood He bought her  
and for her life He died.

Elect from every nation,  
yet one o'er all the earth;  
her charter of salvation  
one Lord, one faith, one birth.  
One holy name she blesses,  
partakes one holy Food,  
and to one hope she presses,  
with every grace endued.

Though with a scornful wonder  
men see her sore oppressed,  
by schisms rent asunder,  
by heresies distressed.  
Yet saints their watch are keeping;  
their cry goes up — "How long?"  
And soon the night of weeping  
shall be the morn of song.

'Mid toil and tribulation  
and tumult of her war,  
she waits the consummation  
of peace for evermore,  
'till with the vision glorious  
her longing eyes are blest,  
and the great Church victorious  
shall be the Church at rest.

PRAYER: See Eph 1:17-19.

Let us pray: O God,  
grant us a spirit  
of wisdom and insight  
to know You clearly.  
Enlighten our innermost vision,  
that we may know the great hope  
to which You have called us,  
the wealth of Your glorious heritage  
to be distributed  
among the members of the Church,  
and the immeasurable scope  
of Your power  
in us who believe.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
Your Son,

Who lives and reigns with You  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.

— Amen

FIRST READING: Is 22:15,19-23

A Reading from the Book of the  
Prophet Isaiah

Thus says the LORD,  
the God of hosts,  
to that official, Shebna,  
master of the palace:

I will thrust you from your office  
and pull you down from your station.  
On that day I will summon  
my servant Eliakim, son of Hilkiah;  
I will clothe him with your robe,  
and gird him with your sash,  
and give over to him your authority.

He shall be a father to the  
inhabitants of Jerusalem,  
and to the House of Judah.

I will place  
the key of the House of David  
on his shoulder;  
when he opens, no one shall shut;  
when he shuts, no one shall open.

The Word of the Lord

— Thanks be to God

SECOND READING: Mt 16:13-19

The Lord be with you.

— And with your spirit

A Reading from the holy Gospel  
according to Matthew

— Glory to You, O Lord

When Jesus went into the region  
of Caesarea Philippi,  
He asked His disciples,  
"Who do people say  
that the Son of Man is?"

They replied,  
"Some say John the Baptist,  
others Elijah,  
still others Jeremiah  
or one of the prophets."

He said to them,  
"But who do you say that I am?"

Simon Peter said in reply,  
"You are the Messiah,  
the Son of the living God."

Jesus said to him in reply,  
"Blessed are you,  
Simon son of Jonah.  
For flesh and blood  
has not revealed this to you,  
but My heavenly Father. —

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"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."  
The Gospel of the Lord  
— *Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ*

IN BRIEF: WHAT THE CHURCH TEACHES

The Catholic Church  
is the union of all the faithful  
under one head, Jesus Christ.

Christ gave the Catholic Church  
divine authority to teach  
when He said,

"Go and teach all nations."

We know that the Church cannot err  
in what she teaches  
about faith or morals,  
because Christ promised  
that the Holy Spirit  
would teach her all things;  
and that He Himself  
would be with her always.

On earth,  
the Church has a visible head:  
the Bishop of Rome,  
who is Christ's *Vicar*, or deputy.  
He has this position  
because he is the successor  
of St. Peter,  
to whom Christ said,  
"You are Peter,  
and upon this rock  
I will build My Church."

The Bishop of Rome is called *Pope*,  
which signifies "Father,"  
for he is the spiritual father  
of all Christians.

He is also their shepherd,  
because Christ made St. Peter  
the shepherd of the whole flock  
when He said,  
"Feed My lambs; feed My sheep."

He is also their teacher,  
for Christ prayed  
that St. Peter's "faith"  
might never fail  
and commanded him  
to "confirm" his brothers.

When we call the Pope *infallible*,  
we mean that he cannot err when,  
as shepherd and teacher

of all Christians,  
he defines a doctrine  
concerning faith or morals  
to be held by the whole Church.

Christ's Church  
has four characteristics  
by which we may know her.

She is *one*,  
because all her members  
agree in one faith,  
all offer the same sacrifice  
(that is, the Mass),  
all have the same Sacraments,  
and all are united under one Head.

She is *holy*  
because her Head is holy,  
she teaches a holy doctrine,  
offers to everyone  
the means of holiness,  
and is distinguished by the holiness  
of many thousands of her children.

She is *catholic*  
(or universal)  
because she exists in all ages,  
teaches all nations,  
and is the one source  
of salvation for all.

She is *apostolic*  
because she holds the apostles'  
doctrines and traditions  
and because she derives her powers  
from them,  
through the unbroken succession  
of her pastors.

BIBLE READING

Ex 19-40

In this week's Bible reading,  
you will see how God

1) *fed* His people in the desert,  
2) gave them His *law*,  
and

3) taught them how to *worship* Him.

By "The Light Of Faith,"  
which we will talk about next week,  
we see that today,  
through the Catholic Church,  
God

1) *feeds* us with His Son's Body,

2) keeps His *law* unerringly  
before our eyes,  
and

3) shows us how to *worship* Him.

By "freedom of religion,"  
the Church means

"freedom from coercion."

We are not free

to worship God however we like,  
for He Himself has shown us  
how to worship Him

"in spirit and in truth."

## What is the Catholic Church?

### Introduction

There are many parallels between the passages we have just read — keys of the kingdom, binding and loosing, opening and shutting. Jesus must have intended them, and the disciples must have noticed them.<sup>1</sup> Let us explore them.

### 'Master of the palace'

Under King Hezekiah,<sup>2</sup> Shebna has been "master of the palace": the king's delegate, deputy, vicar, vizier,<sup>3</sup> or regent.<sup>4</sup> A regent is not king, but the king *endorses* his decisions:<sup>5</sup> when "he opens, no one shall shut, when he shuts, no one shall open."<sup>6</sup>

God is now transferring the regency from Shebna to Eliakim: a transfer He signifies by giving Eliakim his predecessor's robe and sash<sup>7</sup> and placing "the key of the House of David" on Eliakim's shoulder.<sup>8</sup>

King David had died in 971 BC. Hezekiah, his fourteenth successor, became king in 715 BC. By then, "the key" of David's House must have been transferred many times. Evidently, "master of the palace" was an enduring *office*.<sup>9</sup>

### 'Keys of the kingdom'

In the second passage, Jesus gave Simon a new name: "Rock,"<sup>10</sup> translated as "Peter." Among the Jews, this change was important, for a person's name signified *what* he was as well as *who*.<sup>11</sup> Henceforth Simon-Peter would be the *rock* on which *Jesus* would build *His* Church.

In giving Peter this role, Jesus spoke as the Messiah, for Peter had just recognized Him as such<sup>12</sup> and Jesus had accepted the title.<sup>13</sup> And from the prophecies, all the Jews knew that the Messiah — the One Who would restore the Kingdom of Israel<sup>14</sup> — would be a descendant<sup>15</sup> of King David.<sup>16</sup> For example,

1 See the talk "Who is Jesus Christ?" Appendix.

2 King of Judah c 716-687 BC. See Is 36:3,11,22, 37:2; 2 Kgs 18:18,26,37, 19:2.

3 For example, King Uzziah "was a leper to the day of his death. He lived in a house apart, while Jotham, the king's son, was vizier and regent for the people of the land" (2 Kgs 15:5). See also 1 Kgs 18:4; 2 Kgs 10:5; 2 Chr 26:21. A modern equivalent for "vizier" is "viceroy," from the Latin *vice* ("in place of") plus the Old French *roy* ("king"), now spelled *roi*. The British rulers of India were called viceroys.

4 From the Latin *regere* ("to rule"): "a person appointed to administer the kingdom during the minority, absence, or incapacity of the monarch." For example, in 1811, King George III of England was declared unfit to rule because of insanity and his oldest son was designated regent. His regency lasted until 1841, when his father died and he became King George IV.

5 For example, when attacked by Assyria, King Hezekiah sent Eliakim to negotiate for him (see 2 Kgs 18:18).

6 Is 22:22. The same position existed in nearby countries. For example, the Egyptian Pharaoh (c 1720 BC) said to Joseph, "You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people shall dart at your command. Only in respect to the throne shall I outrank you. Herewith I place you in charge of the whole land of Egypt" (see Gn 41:40-41,44).

7 With similar symbols the Egyptian Pharaoh (c 1720 BC) appointed Joseph his vizier: he "took off his signet ring and put it on Joseph's finger." (The British Museum possesses the gold signet ring of the Egyptian Chief Steward Sheshonq, from about 500 BC.) "He had him dressed in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck. He then had him ride in the chariot of his vizier" (see Gn 41:42-43).

8 Keys and locks are thought to have been invented about 4000 BC, probably by the Egyptians, possibly also by the Chinese. Being very long (up to 60 cm) and angled or curved, keys were carried over the shoulder.

9 Similarly, we speak of the "office" of Prime Minister, which continues to exist even when there is, temporarily, no person occupying it, as when the Prime Minister dies "in office."

10 In Greek, *Petros*; in Hebrew, *Kepha*.

11 For example, the angel Gabriel told Mary to name her Son "Jesus," which means "Saviour," because He would "save His people from their sins" (Mt 2:21). God gave the name "Solomon" to David's son, because he would "be a peaceful man" (1 Chr 22:9). God changed Abram's name to Abraham because he would be "the father of many nations" (Gn 17:5) and Jacob's name to Israel, which means "God persists" (see Gn 35:10).

12 See Mt 16:16.

13 See Mt 16:17.

14 See the talks on "Who is Jesus Christ?" and "The History of Our Salvation."

15 In the Bible, any direct male descendant is called a "son." For example, Matthew starts his Gospel with "a family record of Jesus Christ, son of David" (Mt 1:1).

16 That is why, when Jesus asked the Pharisees, "What is your opinion about the Messiah? Whose son is He?" they answered "David's" (Mt 22:42). That is why those who believed that Jesus was the Messiah addressed Him as "Son of David" (Mt 9:27, 15:22, 20:30, 21:9), while those who were not sure asked, "Might not this

- Isaiah had foretold that the Messiah would be "a shoot" that would "sprout from the stump of Jesse" — David's father.<sup>17</sup>
- God had said to King Ahaz of Judah,<sup>18</sup> "Listen, O house of David!... The Lord Himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel,"<sup>19</sup> meaning "God is with us."
- God had promised that David's "house" and "kingdom" would "endure forever"; that his "throne" would "stand firm forever."<sup>20</sup>

In accepting the title "Messiah," then, Jesus confirmed that He was the promised Descendant and everlasting Heir of King David. And, speaking as the true King of Israel, He said He would entrust to Peter "the keys of the Kingdom."<sup>21</sup>

Thus Jesus, the King, was making Peter "master of the palace": His regent or vizier.<sup>22</sup>

But it was not just Peter Jesus was empowering. He said that "the gates of the netherworld" — "the jaws of death" — would "not prevail against" His Church.<sup>23</sup> In other words, His Church, which He would build on Peter, would continue after Peter's death. Accordingly, just before His Ascension, He promised His apostles<sup>24</sup> that He would be with them "until the end of the world."<sup>25</sup>

Jesus, then, speaking as the Heir of King David, Whose Kingdom would stand forever, in which the office of regent or vizier had already endured from one generation to the next, was establishing the same kind of office for His Church.

### Peter's authority

Speaking of that office, Jesus told Peter that whatever he declared "bound" or "loosed" on earth would be "bound" or "loosed" in Heaven.<sup>26</sup>

"Binding" and "loosing" were terms used by Jewish rabbis. They meant "forbidding" and "permitting." The historian Josephus says that these were powers the Pharisees claimed as theirs by tradition.<sup>27</sup>

"This does not mean that, as the learned men, they merely decided what, according to the Law, was forbidden or allowed," says the *Jewish Encyclopedia*; it means that "they possessed and exercised the power of tying or untying a thing" by "their divine authority."<sup>28</sup> And it is "in this sense," it says, that "Jesus, when appointing His disciples to be His successors, used the familiar formula. By these words He effectively invested them with the same authority as that which He found belonging to the scribes and Pharisees."<sup>29</sup>

Jesus was promising, then, that God in Heaven would confirm Peter's binding and loosing on earth. But "God is light; in Him there is no darkness."<sup>30</sup> God *could not* confirm something wrong. Jesus' promise, then, meant that Peter's binding and

be David's son?" (Mt 12:23).

17 See Is 11:1-9.

18 King 736-716 BC.

19 Is 7:13-14

20 See 2 Sm 7:16.

21 Mt 16:19

22 Later, in answer to a question from Peter, Jesus referred to "that faithful, farsighted steward whom the master will set over his servants to dispense their ration of grain in season" (Lk 12:42). His words may have reminded Peter of Joseph, whom the Egyptian Pharaoh had recognized as "a wise and discerning man" (Gn 41:30) and put "in charge" of his palace (Gn 41:40) and "the whole land of Egypt" (Gn 41:41). When famine came, "Pharaoh directed all the people to go to Joseph" (Gn 41:55); "it was Joseph, as governor of the country, who dispensed the rations to all the people" (Gn 42:6). See also Acts 7:10-12.

23 See Mt 16:18.

24 His twelve closest followers, chosen by Himself (see Mt 10:204; Mk 3:13-19; Lk 6:12-15; Jn 1:35-49).

25 Mt 28:20

26 See Mt 16:19.

27 For example, they had the authority to free prisoners and bring home the exiled. In fact, "they differed in nothing from lords" (Josephus: *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XIII, Chapter XVI, 2).

28 For example, "they could, by the power vested in them, pronounce and revoke an anathema [a solemn condemnation] upon a person." Jesus was referring to this power when He said that the scribes and Pharisees "bind up heavy loads, hard to carry, to lay on other men's shoulders, while they themselves will not lift a finger to budge" [that is, loose] them" (Mt 23:2-4), as they had the power to do (*Jewish Encyclopedia*: "Binding and Loosing").

29 *Jewish Encyclopedia*: "Binding and Loosing"

loosing would be free from error.<sup>31</sup>

### Apostolic authority

When Jesus asked, "Who do you say that I am?"<sup>32</sup> He addressed all His apostles ("you" plural). But after Peter's reply, He addressed Peter alone ("you" singular, formerly "thou" or "thee").<sup>33</sup> He gave Peter *alone* the keys of His Kingdom.<sup>34</sup>

However, He also gave *all* His apostles the power to "bind" and "loose."<sup>35</sup> And, the night before He died, He confirmed it. "You are the ones who have stood loyally by Me," He said. "I for My part assign to you [plural] the dominion My Father has assigned to Me. In My kingdom you will eat and drink at My table, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."<sup>36</sup>

Jesus, therefore, speaking as King David's everlasting Heir, was giving His apostles real authority: to bind, to loose, and to judge without error.

### Successors

Now Jesus had promised His apostles that "the jaws of death," or "the gates of the netherworld," would not "prevail" against His Church.<sup>37</sup> He had also told them to "make disciples of all the nations,"<sup>38</sup> something they could not possibly do in one lifetime. They must have realized, then, that in giving them apostolic authority, Jesus had created an office that would outlast them.

Accordingly, one of the first things they did after Jesus' Ascension was elect a successor to Judas.<sup>39</sup> "Peter stood up" and quoted from the Psalms: "May another take his office."<sup>40</sup> Then he added, "It is entirely fitting, therefore, that one of those who was of our company while the Lord Jesus moved among us ... should be named as witness with us to His Resurrection."<sup>41</sup>

So "they nominated two." Then they prayed: "O Lord,... make known to us which of these two You choose for this apostolic ministry"<sup>42</sup> — the ministry of an *apostle*. Then they "drew lots between the two men," and "the choice fell to Matthias, who was added to the eleven apostles."<sup>43</sup>

About 60 years later — before the death of the last apostle, John<sup>44</sup> — Clement of Rome, Peter's third successor, told the people of Corinth<sup>45</sup> that the apostles had

30 1 Jn 1:5

31 From now on, Jesus confirmed Peter's decisions. For example, when the tax collectors asked Peter whether or not Jesus paid the temple tax, Peter replied, "Of course He does." Later, Jesus corrected Peter, but He did not let him down: He told him to pay the tax "for fear of disedifying" the tax collectors and gave him the means to pay it (see Mt 17:24-27). Accordingly, Clement of Alexandria (150 - c 213 AD) called Peter "the chosen, the pre-eminent, the first of the disciples, for whom alone and Himself the Saviour paid tribute" (*Who is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?* IV). Similarly, the Holy Spirit waited for Peter to finish relating what God had told him about the Gentiles before descending on the Gentiles for the first time (see Acts 10:9-48).

32 See Mt 16:13-16.

33 This is clear in the Greek, where singular and plural are different: "I say to thee, thou art Peter,... I will give thee the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever thou bindest on earth shalt be bound in Heaven; and whatever thou loosest on earth shalt be loosed in Heaven" (Mt 16:18-19).

34 Jesus questioned all the apostles, but it was Simon alone to Whom God the Father revealed the answer. Then Jesus continued, "I, for My part, declare to thee..." It seems to have been *in consequence of His Father's choice of Simon* that Jesus said, "Thou art Peter..."

35 See Mt 18:18; Jn 20:22-23.

36 Lk 22:29; see also Mt 19:28. Jesus' words must have recalled the prophet Daniel's vision of "one like a son of man" receiving "dominion, glory, and kingship" from "the Ancient One" (see Dn 7:13-14), to which Jesus had referred when He claimed that He, as "the Son of Man," would judge the world (see Mt 25:31-32), and which He confirmed when, just before His Ascension, He said that "full authority" had been given to Him "both in Heaven and on earth" (Mt 28:18). Jesus' words must also have recalled what King David said to his son and heir Solomon shortly before he died: "Be kind to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and have them eat at your table" — the king's table. "For they received me kindly when I was fleeing your brother Absalom" (1 Kgs 2:7; see also 2 Sm 9, 15-18).

37 Mt 16:18

38 Mt 28:19

39 Who had been one of their number and "had been given a share" in their "ministry" (see Acts 1:17).

40 Ps 109:8

41 See Acts 1:15-22.

42 See Acts 1:24.

43 See Acts 1:23-26.

not only appointed successors, but also given "instructions that when these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed them in their ministry."<sup>4 6</sup>

### Presbyters

So, by "going" themselves and appointing successors as they went, the apostles set out to "make disciples of all the nations."<sup>4 7</sup>

They organized the earliest churches — what we would now call *dioceses*<sup>4 8</sup> — like Jewish synagogues. Each was administered by an "overseer" (or in Greek, *episkopos*,<sup>4 9</sup> from which came the Anglo-Saxon *biscop* and thence our word "bishop"<sup>5 0</sup>) and a board of "elders" (or, in Greek, *presbyteroi*,<sup>5 1</sup> from which comes the Old English *preost* and thence our word "priest"<sup>5 2</sup>).

In the *Acts of the Apostles*, which covers events 33-63 AD, it is not always easy to distinguish presbyters from overseers — priests from bishops.<sup>5 3</sup> However, from about 107 on, the title "bishop" became restricted to the leader of the presbyters, while the presbyters acted as bishops' representatives and assistants, taking on the roles of today's priests.

### Deacons

The apostles also established the office of "deacon," or (in Greek) *diakonos*, meaning "servant" or "minister."

"The Twelve<sup>5 4</sup> assembled the community of the disciples and said, 'It is not right for us to neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. Look around among your own number, brothers, for seven men acknowledged to be deeply spiritual and prudent, and we shall appoint them to this task. This will permit us to concentrate on prayer and the ministry of the word.'

"The proposal was unanimously accepted by the community." They selected seven men and "presented" them "to the apostles, who first prayed over them and then imposed hands on them."<sup>5 5</sup>

### 'Organized religion'

From the unanimity of the apostles' preaching, their example, and "the institutions they established," it is clear that they were handing on "what they themselves had received," both directly from Christ and "at the prompting of the Holy Spirit."<sup>5 6</sup>

Writing to the people of Corinth in 95 or 96, Clement of Rome summed it up: "The apostles have preached the Gospel to us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ [has done so] from God. Christ therefore was sent forth by God, and the apostles by Christ."<sup>5 7</sup> Both these appointments, then, were made in an orderly way,

44 Thought to be about 100 AD.

45 In Greece.

46 Clement of Rome: *Epistle to the Corinthians*, 44, written in 95 or 96 AD.

47 Mt 28:19

48 From the Greek *diokesis* ("administration," "administrative division").

49 For example, Paul addressed "all the holy ones at Philippi, with their *episkopos* and deacons (Phil 1:1).

He wrote to Timothy that "whoever wants to be an *episkopos* aspires to a noble task (1 Tim 3:1), and to Titus that "the *episkopos*, as God's steward, must be blameless (Ti 1:7).

50 Our words "episcopal" ("having to do with a bishop"), "episcopate," and "episcopacy" ("the office or tenure of a bishop"), come from the Greek *episkopos*.

51 For example, Paul and Barnabas "installed *presbyteroi*" (see Acts 14:23) in each church they set up. When the disciples in Antioch wanted to send relief to the disciples in Judea, they dispatched it to "the *presbyteroi*" (see Acts 11:27-30). At the end of the Council of Jerusalem, a resolution was taken "by the apostles and the *presbyteroi*," in agreement with the whole church in Jerusalem (see Acts 15:22).

52 Today, a "presbyteral council" assists the bishop; in England a priest's house is called a "presbytery."

53 See Acts 20:17, 21:18, which use "presbyter"; Phil 1:1, which uses "bishop"; 1 Tim 3:1-2, 5:17-19, which use both; Ti 1:5,7, which uses both; Jas 5:14, which uses "presbyter"; 1 Pt 5:1,5, which use "elders"; and 2 Jn 1:1 and 3 Jn 1:1, in which John calls himself an "elder."

54 Judas had been succeeded by Matthias (see Acts 1:15-26).

55 See Acts 6:1-6. For other biblical references to deacons, see 1 Tim 3:8,10,12,13.

56 See CCC 76. Before "the day He was taken up to Heaven" Jesus had "instructed the apostles He had chosen through the Holy Spirit"; during the 40 days after His Resurrection He had spoken to them "about the reign of God" and told them to wait in Jerusalem for Baptism by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:1-5).

57 See Jn 20:21.

according to the will of God.<sup>58</sup>

"Having therefore received their orders," (*i.e.* having been *ordained*) "and being fully assured by the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and established in the word of God with full assurance of the Holy Spirit,<sup>59</sup> [the apostles] went forth proclaiming that the Kingdom of God was at hand. And thus preaching through countries and cities, they appointed ... bishops and deacons of those who should afterward believe."<sup>60</sup>

A few years later, Bishop Ignatius of Antioch (*c* 35-107 AD), *en route* to Rome for martyrdom, put it even more strongly.<sup>61</sup>

"We ought to receive every one whom the Master of the house sends to be over His household<sup>62</sup> as we would do Him Who sent him. It is manifest, therefore, that we should look upon the bishop even as we would upon the Lord Himself."<sup>63</sup>

"Let all reverence the deacons as an appointment of Jesus Christ, and the bishop as Jesus Christ, Who is the Son of the Father, and the presbyters as the Sanhedrin<sup>64</sup> of God and assembly of the apostles. Apart from these, there is no Church."<sup>65</sup>

What Christ started, then, was not what many people today mean by *Christianity* — an idea, a movement, a philosophy of life, a way of looking at things, an ideal that can be realized in many different ways.

*No*; what Christ founded was *His Church*. From the beginning, it was a strict and disciplined society.<sup>66</sup>

- Each diocese was headed by a bishop, a direct successor of an apostle, assisted by priests and deacons.
- To belong to the Church, you had to be baptized with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.<sup>67</sup>
- As a member of the Church, you participated<sup>68</sup> in a rite called the *Eucharist*.<sup>69</sup>
- The Church insisted on exact doctrine,<sup>70</sup> unbroken tradition,<sup>71</sup> and absolute

58 See Lk 22:29.

59 See Jn 14:25-26, 16:12-14.

60 Clement of Rome: *Epistle to the Corinthians*, 42. Also see 1 Cor 3:10-11; Eph 2:20-21.

61 In his letters to the various dioceses through which he passed: Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, Smyrna, and Philadelphia (see *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, "Ignatius, St.").

62 See Lk 12:42.

63 Ignatius: *Letter to the Ephesians*, 6

64 The supreme council and highest court of justice at Jerusalem in New Testament times (see *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, "Sanhedrin").

65 Ignatius: *Letter to the Trallians*, 3.

"You are my abiding and unshakable joy, especially if your members remain united with the bishop and with his presbyters and deacons, all appointed in accordance with the mind of Christ, Who, by His own will, has strengthened them in the firmness that the Spirit gives.... As sons of the light of truth, flee divisions and evil doctrines; where your shepherd is, follow him as his flock. For all who belong to God and Jesus Christ are with the bishop; all who repent and return to the unity of the Church will also belong to God, that they may live according to Jesus Christ. Do not be deceived, my brothers. If anyone follows a schismatic, *he will not obtain the inheritance of God's kingdom*; if anyone lives by an alien teaching, he does not assent to the passion of the Lord. Be careful, therefore, to take part only in the one Eucharist; for there is only one Flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and one cup to unite us with His Blood, one altar and one bishop with the presbyters and deacons, who are his fellow-servants" (Ignatius: *Letter to the Philadelphians*, "Greeting," 2-4).

"Study, therefore, to be established in the doctrines of the Lord and the apostles, that so all things, whatsoever you do, may prosper in both the flesh and the spirit; in faith and love; in the Son, and in the Father, and in the Spirit; in the beginning and in the end; with your most admirable bishop, and the well-compacted spiritual crown of your presbytery, and the deacons who are according to God. Be subject to the bishop, and to one another, as Jesus Christ to the Father, according to the flesh, and the apostles to Christ, and to the Father, and to the Spirit; that so there may be a union both fleshly and spiritual" (Ignatius: *Letter to the Magnesians*, 13).

66 See Hilaire Belloc: *Europe and the Faith*, "What Was the Church in the Roman Empire?"

67 See Mt 28:19; Mk 16:16; Acts 2:38,41, 8:12-13,38, 9:18, 10:48, 16:15,33, 18:8, 19:5, 22:16. Also see Justin (*c* 100 - *c* 165 AD): *First Apology*, 61, 65, written *c* 156 AD, in which he describes Baptism to the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius.

68 See Acts 2:42,46, 20:7,11, 27:35; 1 Cor 10:16. Also see Justin (*c* 100 - *c* 165 AD): *First Apology*, 65-67, written *c* 156 AD for the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius, in which he describes the Mass in detail.

69 Christ changed bread and wine into His Body and Blood, gave Them to His disciples to eat, and told them to continue doing what He had done. (See Lk 22:19-20, Acts 2:42, 20:7.)

70 See 2 Tim 4:2-4; Ti 1:9, 2:1; 2 Jn 9:1-11.

71 See 1 Cor 11:2, 15:2; 2 Thes 2:15.

unity.<sup>72</sup>

- Whenever wrong ideas<sup>73</sup> about Jesus or His teaching surfaced, the Church refined<sup>74</sup> her exposition of Who Jesus was and what He had taught.<sup>75</sup> After that, a Church member who held to a different idea was regarded as being *in schism*<sup>76</sup> — no longer "in communion" with the Church.<sup>77</sup>

Can we, then, accept "Christianity" or "the teaching of Christ," but oppose "organized religion"?

No.<sup>78</sup> The Church was founded as an organized body<sup>79</sup> — a distinct organism, a *corporation*<sup>80</sup> — by Christ Himself and maintained as such, from the beginning, by the apostles He had hand-picked,<sup>81</sup> taught,<sup>82</sup> promised to remain with always,<sup>83</sup> and sent His Holy Spirit to instruct.<sup>84</sup>

### Peter's role

How, in practice, did the organized Church maintain "exact doctrine, unbroken tradition, and absolute unity"? The answer is *through Peter*.

Jesus singled Peter out when He said that He would build His Church on him (singular) as on a rock.<sup>85</sup> He did it again when He said, "Simon, Simon!"<sup>86</sup> Remember that Satan has asked for you [plural], to sift you all like wheat.<sup>87</sup> But I have prayed for thee [singular] that thy faith may never fail. Thou in turn must strengthen thy brothers."<sup>88</sup> And He singled Peter out once more when He asked, "Simon, son of John, dost *thou* [singular] love Me?" When Peter answered, "Yes, Lord, You know that I love You," Jesus said, "Feed My lambs"; "Feed My sheep."<sup>89</sup>

We can see, therefore, that Peter had a certain *primacy*.

- The apostles — always listed with Peter first<sup>90</sup> — are called "Peter and the eleven"<sup>91</sup> or "Peter and those with him."<sup>92</sup>
- Peter was always part of the "inner group" present on special occasions.<sup>93</sup>
- Peter was often the spokesman for the others.<sup>94</sup>
- At Christ's Resurrection, the angel said to the women, "Go now and tell His disciples and Peter."<sup>95</sup>
- Peter was the first apostle to see Christ after His Resurrection<sup>96</sup> and the first to

72 See Jn 17:20-21; Eph 4:3-6,11-13; 1 Cor 1:10; Phil 2:1-2. Also see the talk on "Divisions Among Christians."

73 Called "heresies," from the Greek *hairesis* ("choice"). See the talk on "Divisions Among Christians."

74 See Jn 14:25-26, 16:12-14.

75 See the talk on "Divisions Among Christians."

76 From the Latin and Greek *schisma* ("split" or "division"), from the Greek *schizein* (to "tear" or "rend").

77 See Mt 18:15-18; Rom 16:17; 1 Cor 5:1-5,11, 16:22; Gal 1:9; 1 Tim 1:20; 2 Jn 1:10-11.

78 "The Church has all the qualities of a true society. Christ did not leave this society indeterminate and without form. But just as it has its existence from Him, so too it has received its form of existence and its constitution according to His will and law" (Vatican I: *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ*, 3). "The true Church of Christ ... cannot be said to be diffused and distributed among the various Christian denominations; but it is an integrated unit, entirely coherent; and, in its conspicuous unity, it shows itself an undivided and indivisible body" (Vatican I: *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ*, 5).

79 The organs of a body comprise a body precisely because they are "organized."

80 From the Latin *corpus* or *corporis* ("body").

81 See Mk 3:13-19.

82 See Mk 4:33-34.

83 See Mt 28:20.

84 See Jn 14:25-26, 16:12-14.

85 See Mt 16:13-19.

86 Peter's original name.

87 See Jb 1:11, 2:4-5.

88 Lk 22:31-32

89 See Jn 21:15-17. Again, Jesus' words may have reminded Peter of Joseph, whom the Egyptian Pharaoh had named his vizier (see Gn 41:43) and to whom he directed the people to go for food (see Gn 41:55).

90 See Mt 10:2-4; Mk 3:16-18; Lk 6:13-16.

91 Acts 2:14, 2:37, 5:29, 10:45

92 Lk 9:32. Also see Mk 16:7; Acts 5:29-32.

93 For example, the raising of Jairus' daughter (see Mk 5:22-24,33-42), the Transfiguration (see Mt 17:1-8), and Christ's agony in the Garden of Gethsemane (see Mt 26:37).

94 See Mt 15:15, 17:4,24, 19:27; Lk 12:41, 18:28; Jn 6:68.

95 Mk 16:7

96 See Lk 24:34; 1 Cor 15:5.



perform a miracle in Christ's name after His Ascension.<sup>97</sup>

- Peter was the speaker after Pentecost<sup>98</sup> and when he and John were arrested.<sup>99</sup>
- Peter was the one God told that all foods were now to be considered clean and that the Church was for Gentiles as well as Jews.<sup>100</sup>

And we can see that the other apostles recognized and accepted Peter's primacy.

- When Peter and John heard that Jesus had risen, they started running to the tomb "side by side," but John "outran Peter" and got there first. He "bent down to peer in," but he did not go in until Peter had entered.<sup>101</sup>
- Peter was the one who initiated the election of a successor to Judas.<sup>102</sup>
- After "much discussion" about how to treat non-Jewish Christians, Peter "took the floor." When he had finished, "the whole assembly fell silent." In conclusion, James formally supported what Peter had said.<sup>103</sup>

Christ, then, singled Peter out from the other apostles and the other apostles knew and acknowledged his primacy among them.

### Role of Peter's successors

Peter was martyred about 64 AD in Rome,<sup>104</sup> where he spent his last decades. Like the other apostles, he had successors: Linus (64-76), Cletus (76-88), Clement (88-97),<sup>105</sup> etc., who became Bishops of Rome after him.

From the beginning, it was taken for granted that Peter's successors inherited his authority and primacy. Consequently, the Bishops of Rome did not express this claim continually, but only when it was challenged.<sup>106</sup>

For example,<sup>107</sup>

- Clement (88-97) wrote to schismatics in Corinth, "Submit yourselves to the presbyters, and receive correction so as to repent."<sup>108</sup> "If, however, any shall disobey the words spoken by [Jesus Christ] through us, let them know that they will involve themselves in transgression and serious danger."<sup>109</sup>
- Cornelius (251-253) quoted what certain schismatics said as they submitted to the Church: "We are not ignorant that there is one God; that there is one Christ the Lord whom we have confessed, and one Holy Spirit; and that in the Catholic Church there ought to be one bishop."<sup>110</sup>
- Julius (337-352) wrote to the opponents of Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria, "Do you not know that it is the custom to write to us first, and that here what is just is decided? Certainly if any suspicion ... had fallen upon the bishop of that city, the fact should have been written to this church [or diocese]."<sup>111</sup>
- Boniface (418-422) wrote to an illicit synod<sup>112</sup> of bishops<sup>113</sup> at Corinth, "There must be no withdrawal from our judgement. For it has never been allowed that that be discussed again that has once been decided by the Apostolic See"<sup>114</sup> —

97 See Acts 3:1-8. Also see Acts 5:15, 9:32-42.

98 See Acts 2:14-36, 3:12-26.

99 See Acts 4:8-12.

100 See Acts 10, 11.

101 See Jn 20:3-8.

102 See Acts 1:15-26.

103 See Acts 15:1-21.

104 See *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, "Peter, St."

105 All mentioned in Eucharistic Prayer 1.

106 "What a writer assumes that his readers know is a constituent part" of his writing. He may not put it into words, "but everything he does put into words draws meaning from it" (Frank Sheed: *God and the Human Condition* 1, IV, 2). Similarly, because there was agreement about the Holy Trinity, the Church did not state the doctrine formally until the fourth century. "No doctrine is defined till violated" (John Henry Newman: *An Essay on the Development of Human Doctrine*, Chapter IV, Section III, 4).

107 For other examples, see Appendix 1; also Joseph Ratzinger: *God and the World*, Part III, 16, "The Pope."

108 Clement of Rome: *Epistle to the Corinthians*, 57

109 Clement of Rome: *Epistle to the Corinthians*, 59

110 Cornelius to Bishop Cyprian of Carthage: *On the Return of the Confessors to Unity*, 2

111 Julius: *Letter to the Antiochenes*, XXII

112 From the Latin *synodus*, from the Greek *sunodos* ("meeting"), from the Greek *sun* ("together") plus *hodos* ("road, way, journey").

113 A lawful synod is a meeting of churchmen authorized by the Bishop of Rome.

114 From the Latin *sedes* ("seat"), meaning the seat of a bishop's apostolic authority. Similarly, we say

namely the Diocese of Rome.<sup>115</sup>

- Hormisdas (514-523) had some schismatic bishops sign a "formula" in which they promised to disavow "those separated from the communion of the Catholic Church, that is, those not agreeing with the Apostolic See."<sup>116</sup>
- And the rest of the Church acknowledged the primacy of the Bishops of Rome.
- At the end of the first century, the people of Corinth, in Greece, "consulted"<sup>117</sup> Bishop Clement of Rome about the strife in their diocese.
  - In 189, Bishop Irenaeus of Lyons wrote, "It is a matter of necessity that every church [or diocese] should agree with this church [Rome], on account of its pre-eminent authority."<sup>118</sup>
  - Around 250, Bishop Cyprian of Carthage called Rome "the chief church whence priestly unity takes its source."<sup>119</sup> "That [the Lord] might set forth unity," he wrote, "He established by His authority the origin of that unity, as having its origin in one man alone. No doubt the others were all that Peter was, but a primacy is given to Peter, and it is thus made clear that there is but one Church and one Chair.... If a man does not hold fast to this oneness of Peter, does he imagine that he still holds the faith? If he deserts the Chair of Peter upon whom the Church was built, has he confidence that he is in the Church?"<sup>120</sup>

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### Infallibility: the Pope

Finally, at the First Vatican Council (1870), the bishops summarized what the Church had always believed.

- According to the Gospel, the "primacy of jurisdiction over the whole Church of God was immediately and directly promised to and conferred upon" Peter "by Christ the Lord."<sup>121</sup>
- Peter's successors are "the bishops of the holy Roman See, which he established."<sup>122</sup>
- "Therefore, whoever succeeds Peter in this chair holds Peter's primacy over the whole Church according to the plan of Christ Himself."<sup>123</sup>
- The Bishop of Rome must be obeyed "not only in matters that pertain to faith and morals, but also in matters that pertain to the discipline and government of the Church throughout the whole world."<sup>124</sup>

Then the Council carefully defined what the Church means by the Pope's infallibility.<sup>125</sup> In simple language, she<sup>126</sup> means that "the Pope cannot err when,

that Ottawa is the "seat of government" for Canada or that a monarch "sits" on the throne. Originally, an "apostolic see" was one founded directly by one of the apostles. However, gradually, "the apostolic see" came to mean the see of Peter, often called simply *the apostle* (see the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*).

115 Boniface: *Letter XIII, to Bishop Rufus of Thessaly*, 2

116 Hormisdas: *Regula Fidei*, added April 15 517 to Letter IX to Bishop John of Nicopolis, December 13 516

117 Clement of Rome: *Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1

118 Irenaeus: *Against Heresies*, Book III, Chapter III, 2

119 Cyprian: *Epistle to Cornelius* (54), 14

120 Cyprian: *On the Unity of the Catholic Church*, 4-5. Not long afterward, Cyprian wrote to the Bishop of Rome, urging him to appoint a new bishop in France. "Let letters be directed by you into the province and to the people abiding at Arles," he said, "by which, [Bishop] Marcian being excommunicated" (for joining Novatian, who disagreed with the Church on certain concessions made to those who had compromised with paganism during persecution), "another may be substituted in his place, and Christ's flock, which even to this day is contemned ["despised," "treated with disregard"] as scattered and wounded by him, may be gathered together" (Cyprian: *Epistle to Stephen* (66), 3).

121 Vatican I: *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ*, 1

122 Vatican I: *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ*, 2

123 Vatican I: *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ*, 2

124 Vatican I: *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ*, 3

125 They asserted as a "divinely revealed dogma" that "the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra* — that is, when, acting in the office of shepherd and teacher of all Christians, he defines, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the universal Church — possesses, through the divine assistance promised to him in the person of St. Peter, the infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed His Church to be endowed in defining doctrine concerning faith or morals; and that such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are therefore irreformable because of their nature, and not because of the agreement of the Church" (Vatican I: *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ*, 4). "Supreme Pontiff" is a translation of the Latin *Pontifex Maximus*, originally the title of the pagan chief priest of Rome. Tertullian first used it satirically in criticizing Callistus, but from

as shepherd<sup>127</sup> and teacher of all Christians, he defines<sup>128</sup> a doctrine<sup>129</sup> concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole Church."<sup>130</sup>

When the Pope speaks as Peter's successor, we say he is speaking *ex cathedra*: "from the seat" of his authority; or that he is exercising the *magisterium*: the Church's authority to teach, which he possesses by virtue of his office.<sup>131</sup>

For the Pope to exercise the *magisterium* or speak *ex cathedra*, he must intend to declare that something is unchangeably true,<sup>132</sup> and he must speak as shepherd and teacher of *all* Christians, with the full weight of his apostolic authority,<sup>133</sup> not just for one segment of the people or as a private theologian.<sup>134</sup>

For example, in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* ("Priestly Ordination"), Pope John Paul II said, "In order that all doubt may be removed regarding a matter of great importance, a matter which pertains to the Church's divine constitution itself, in virtue of my ministry of confirming the brethren (see Lk 22:32), I declare that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgement is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful."<sup>135</sup>

In contrast, in *Jesus of Nazareth, Part One*, Pope Benedict says, "It goes without saying that this book is in no way an exercise of the magisterium, but is solely an expression of my personal search 'for the face of the Lord.'"<sup>136</sup>

However, even when the Pope is not clearly speaking *ex cathedra*, we must give his teaching "loyal submission of the will and intellect," respectfully acknowledging his "supreme teaching authority." We must "sincerely adhere" to his decisions according to his "mind and intention," made known "either by the character of the documents in question, or by the frequency with which the doctrine is proposed, or by the manner in which the doctrine is formulated."<sup>137</sup>

#### Infallibility: the bishops

Together, the Pope and the other bishops<sup>138</sup> make up the *College of Bishops*.<sup>139</sup> The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) explained that this College "has supreme and full authority over the universal Church," but only if it is "united" with the Pope, Peter's successor.<sup>140</sup>

The bishops are infallible in matters of faith and morals when, acting *all together* (usually when they are assembled in an ecumenical<sup>141</sup> council), they propose a teaching of faith or morals to be held by all Christians. They do not possess this infallibility unless they are in communion with the Pope,<sup>142</sup> but they are not the Pope's deputies.<sup>143</sup> Rather, his authority "confirms and defends" theirs.<sup>144</sup>

We must "revere" the bishops in communion with the Pope as "witnesses" of the truth, submitting to their decisions in matters of faith and morals "with a ready and

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the fifth century onward it was used as a title of honour for the Bishops of Rome. *Ex cathedra* is Latin for "from the seat," implying "from the seat of his authority."

126 In view of Eph 5:25, it is traditional to call the Church "she."

127 In Latin, *pastor*.

128 That is, verbalizes, clarifies; not "dreams up" or "makes up."

129 Any truth taught by the Church as necessary for acceptance by Christ's followers.

130 *The Penny Catechism*, 93. Notice that the Church does *not* mean that the Pope never makes mistakes, or that he is not a sinful or a stupid man. She means precisely what she said.

131 See John Hardon: *Modern Catholic Dictionary*, "Infallibility."

132 And therefore always has been true.

133 That is, as a successor of the apostle Peter.

134 See John Hardon: *Modern Catholic Dictionary*, "Infallibility."

135 For another example of such language, see the last paragraph of Appendix 2.

136 See Ps 27:8; Pope Benedict XVI: *Jesus of Nazareth, Part One*, Foreword.

137 See Vatican II: *Lumen Gentium*, 25.

138 The Pope is a bishop, distinguished from the others by the fact that he is the successor of Peter rather than one of the other apostles.

139 From the Latin *collegium* ("society of colleagues").

140 CCC 883

141 From the Greek *oikoumene* ("the whole inhabited world").

142 See CCC 883-884.

143 They are the successors of the apostles, who were appointed directly by Christ, not by Peter.

144 CCC 895. See Lk 22:32.

respectful allegiance of mind."<sup>145</sup>

### Infallibility: Christ

The Pope is a man. He may be weak, sinful, ignorant, tactless, biased, prejudiced, or stupid. For example, take the first Pope, hand-picked by Jesus Himself.

- When Jesus announced His approaching death,<sup>146</sup> Peter said, "May You be spared, Master! God forbid that any such thing ever happen to You!"<sup>147</sup> And Jesus replied, "Get out of My sight, you satan!"<sup>148</sup> You are trying to make Me trip and fall. You are judging not by God's standards but by man's."<sup>149</sup>
- Peter declared, "Lord, at Your side I am prepared to face imprisonment and death itself," but that night he denied three times that he even knew Jesus.<sup>150</sup>
- In His agony, Jesus begged Peter, James, and John to "stay awake" with Him, but they fell asleep.<sup>151</sup>
- When Jesus was arrested, "all the disciples deserted Him and fled."<sup>152</sup>

Jesus knew, then, that He could not depend on *Peter's* understanding, loyalty, or courage. But He had promised that He would build His Church on Peter and that His Father would send the Holy Spirit to guide His Church to all truth.<sup>153</sup>

*That is why we trust the Pope and the bishops in communion with him.*

It is *Christ's* Church, not the Pope's.<sup>154</sup> The Holy Spirit, sent by the Father at Christ's request,<sup>155</sup> ensures that the Pope and the other bishops exercise their authority "in the name of Jesus Christ."<sup>156</sup>

They are "not superior to the Word of God,"<sup>157</sup> but its servants; they cannot change it, add to it, or subtract from it.<sup>158</sup> At Christ's command,<sup>159</sup> with the help of the Holy Spirit,<sup>160</sup> they listen to it, guard it with dedication, and expound it faithfully.<sup>161</sup>

### The Church today

Today, we call the apostles' successors *bishops* and Peter's successor the Pope.<sup>162</sup> Pope Francis is the 266th Pope, Peter's 265th successor.

In general, a bishop is head of a *diocese* or *archdiocese*.<sup>163</sup> Currently,<sup>164</sup> there are 3,180 dioceses and 5,662 bishops worldwide. Canada has 70 dioceses and 165 bishops.<sup>165</sup> According to the 2021/2022 archdiocesan report, 446,670 Catholics live in the Archdiocese of Vancouver, which (roughly) covers the Lower Mainland.

Our archbishop is Archbishop Michael Miller CSB.<sup>166</sup> He has his *seat* or, in

145 See Vatican II: *Lumen Gentium*, 25.

146 See Mt 16:21.

147 Mt 16:22

148 The Hebrew *satan* means "to plot against another."

149 Mt 16:23

150 See Lk 22:33-34, 54-60.

151 See Mt 26:36-43.

152 See Mt 26:56.

153 See Jn 14:25-26, 16:12-14.

154 See Mt 16:18; Jn 10:11-15.

155 See Jn 14:16-17.

156 CCC 85

157 See the talk on "Divine Revelation."

158 That is why the Church says not that she *refuses* to ordain women priests, but that she *does not have the authority* to do so (see *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, 4).

159 "Go, and teach all nations ..." (Mt 28:19).

160 See Jn 14:15-17, 16:12-15.

161 See CCC 86. Also see Joseph Ratzinger: *God and the World*, Part III, 16, "The Pope."

162 The title "Pope," from the Latin *papa* ("father") was used in early times for any bishop (see Is 22:21).

However, in 1075 Bishop Gregory VII of Rome restricted its use to the Bishop of Rome (see Gregory VII: *Register*, Part 1, Book 2, *Dictatus Papae*, 11). Also see *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, "Pope, The." In the Eastern churches, "pope" is still widely used.

163 A diocese which has some (minimal) authority over neighbouring dioceses, called *suffragan* dioceses. Vancouver's suffragan dioceses are Kamloops, Nelson, Prince George, and Victoria.

164 As of May 18 2023.

165 The number of bishops is not the same as the number of dioceses because some bishops are retired — they are required by Church law to submit their resignation to the Pope when they reach age 75 — and some dioceses have such large populations that they have one or more auxiliary bishops.

Latin, *cathedra*, in Holy Rosary *Cathedral*, at Richards and Dunsmuir in Vancouver. The only former archbishop still living,<sup>167</sup> Adam Exner OMI,<sup>168</sup> is now called *archbishop emeritus*.<sup>169</sup>

Diocesan priests "depend on the bishops"<sup>170</sup> in the exercise of their powers. At ordination,<sup>171</sup> a priest promises to obey the bishop of his diocese and all his successors.<sup>172</sup> In general, a diocesan priest is the *pastor*<sup>173</sup> of a parish.<sup>174</sup>

According to the 2021-2022 archdiocesan report, the Vancouver Archdiocese has 105 diocesan priests in 77 parishes. Also working in the archdiocese are 99 active and retired "religious" priests.<sup>175</sup>

Permanent deacons<sup>176</sup> assist pastors in various ways. In the Middle Ages, their office declined in importance, but in 1964 the Second Vatican Council restored it as "a proper and permanent rank of the hierarchy."<sup>177</sup> Archbishop Miller inaugurated a four-year program of studies for permanent deacons in the Vancouver Archdiocese February 22 2011. According to the 2021-2022 archdiocesan report, the Vancouver Archdiocese has 34 permanent deacons.

Bishop, priest, and deacon are the three ordained ministries<sup>178</sup> in the Church. However, for completeness, we mention *cardinals*: usually bishops who, in special ways, assist the Pope in governing the Church. Cardinals under the age of 80 take part in the meeting that elects a new Pope, called a *conclave*.<sup>179</sup>

Currently,<sup>180</sup> there are 222 cardinals worldwide, of whom 122 are under 80. Canada has three: Cardinals Thomas Collins of Toronto; Gérald Lacroix ISPX<sup>181</sup> of Québec City; and Marc Ouellet PSS,<sup>182</sup> Prefect Emeritus of the Vatican Dicastery for Bishops, all of whom are under 80.

166 "Congregation of St. Basil"

167 Archbishop August 15 1991 — January 10 2004.

168 "Oblates of Mary Immaculate"

169 "Honourably discharged from service," from the Latin *emereri* ("earn").

170 CCC 1564

171 That is, given the orders and powers of a priest.

172 Moreover, when he "takes possession" of a parish, he swears the following in the presence of his bishop:

"I, [name], firmly believe and profess each and every thing that is expressed in the Creed, namely [the whole Nicene Creed in detail]. With firm faith I believe also all that is contained in the Word of God, whether written or handed down in Tradition, which the Church, either in solemn judgement or by its ordinary and universal teaching authority, sets forth for our belief as revealed by God. I also firmly accept and hold each and every thing definitively proposed by the Church concerning its teachings on faith and morals. Moreover, I adhere with religious submission of intellect and will to the teachings which either the Roman Pontiff or the College of Bishops enunciate in the exercise of their authentic teaching authority, even if they do not intend to proclaim those teachings by a definitive act."

In addition, he swears, "I, [name], on assuming the office of [...], promise that in my words and actions I shall always preserve communion with the Catholic Church. With great care and faithfulness I shall carry out the duties which bind me to the Church, both universal and particular, in which I have been called to serve, according to the requirements of the law. In fulfilling the charge entrusted to me in the name of the Church, I shall hold fast to the deposit of faith in its entirety, I shall faithfully hand it on and expound it, and I shall avoid any teachings opposed to that faith. I shall follow and foster the discipline common to the whole Church, and I shall observe all ecclesiastical laws, especially those contained in the *Code of Canon Law*. I shall follow with Christian obedience what the sacred pastors as authentic doctors and teachers of the faith declare, and what they as rulers of the Church prescribe. I shall also faithfully assist the diocesan bishops, so that the apostolic work to be exercised in the name and by the mandate of the Church be carried out in the communion of the same Church. So help me, God, and these, His holy Gospels, which I touch with my hand."

173 Latin for "shepherd."

174 However, at any time, some diocesan priests are retired and some parishes have associate or assistant pastors as well as pastors.

175 Priests who belong to religious orders or communities, distinguishable by the letters after their names.

176 Deacons who do not intend to become priests. All priests are ordained deacons about a year before they are ordained priests.

177 Vatican II: *Lumen Gentium*, 29

178 See the talk on "Mass: Sacrament and Sacrifice."

179 From the Latin *con* ("with") plus *clavis* ("key"), referring to the "locked room" where the meeting is held.

180 As of May 18 2023.

181 "Secular Institute of Pius X"

182 "Society of St. Sulpice"

**Infallibility in action**

How does the Pope prepare an infallible statement? Does he hear God talking to him? Does he just start teaching, trusting God to stop him if he goes wrong?

First, consider how God worked with the evangelists in writing the Gospels.

On the one hand, "God is the Author of Sacred Scripture,"<sup>183</sup> for He "inspired the humans authors of the sacred books."<sup>184</sup> On the other hand, while "He employed them in this task," they "made full use of their own faculties and powers so that, though He acted in them and by them, it was as true authors that they consigned to writing whatever He wanted written, and no more."<sup>185</sup>

It seems that *God wrote it* and *men wrote it* are both true.<sup>186</sup>

Analogously, it is claimed that Oscar Wilde said, "The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it," although it was actually said by Lord Henry Wotton, a character in Wilde's book.<sup>187</sup> *Wilde said it* and *Lord Henry said it* are both true.

Think of God as our Author<sup>188</sup> and us as His characters. He is our Creator; He made us out of nothing.<sup>189</sup> Our own reality is just what He projects into us of His reality. We cannot do anything apart from Him, for He is the very ground of our being. Separation from Him would mean annihilation.<sup>190</sup>

Like an author with his characters, God can be present in us without pushing us out of the way. His presence in us is non-contrastive, non-interruptive, non-competitive, non-invasive, non-violent. It literally *lets us be*. However, even with our analogy, we cannot understand precisely *how* this is possible.<sup>191</sup>

How, then, does the Holy Spirit keep the Pope from error as he researches<sup>192</sup>

183 CCC 105.

184 CCC 106.

185 CCC 106. Similarly, in the exercise of the special charism that God imparts to prophets to make them spokesmen of His revelation, "the prophet's gifts and character are not bypassed: they provide the vehicle by which God's word is communicated. But the substance of the message is of divine origin. Thus, it is in connection with the charism of prophetism that the divine inspiration of the human authors of the Scriptures is to be understood." (However, "with the conclusion of the apostolic revelation, manifestations of prophetic gifts must be judged with reference to Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium.") See *Our Sunday Visitor's Catholic Encyclopedia* and the talk on "Catholic Spiritualities."

186 See the talk on "Divine Revelation," Appendix 3.

187 Oscar Wilde: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 2

188 See Wis 13:5; Acts 3:15.

189 See Gn 1:1.

190 See C.S. Lewis: *Prayer: Letters to Malcolm*, XIII. "Where can I go from Your spirit? from Your presence where can I flee? If I go up to the heavens, You are there; if I sink to the nether world, You are there" (Ps 138:7-8). "To walk out of His will is to walk into nowhere" (C.S. Lewis: *Perelandra*, 9).

191 Robert Barron: *The Priority of Christ*, 11-12. "Because God brought the whole of the finite universe into existence (see Gn 1:1), God must be other in a way that transcends any and all modes of otherness discoverable within creation" (Robert Barron: *The Priority of Christ*, 11).

"God is capable of a non-invasive and non-interruptive intimacy with what He has made... His non-contrastive and non-competitive quality allows Him to be present to another in such a way that the other is enhanced by the intimacy of the divine presence" (Robert Barron: *The Priority of Christ*, 12).

"God becomes a Creature without ceasing to be God and without overwhelming the Creature He becomes. Were God only relatively other than the world, and not absolutely other, this sort of nonaggressive unity would be impossible" (Robert Barron: *The Priority of Christ*, 3).

"As universal transcendent Cause, God is not only the Cause of existence but also the Cause of causes. God's action does not displace or supplant the activity of creaturely causes, but enables them to act according to their natures and, nonetheless, to bring about the ends He intends. In freely willing to create and conserve the universe, God wills to activate and to sustain in act all those secondary causes whose activity contributes to the unfolding of the natural order that He intends to produce... True contingency in the created order is not incompatible with a purposeful divine providence. Divine causality and created causality radically differ in kind and not only in degree. Thus even the outcome of a truly contingent natural process can nonetheless fall within God's providential plan for creation" (International Theological Commission: *Communion and Stewardship: Human Persons Created in the Image of God*, 68-69; see the talk on "A Place for Science in the Catholic Faith," Appendix 2).

"The truth that God is at work in all the actions of His creatures is inseparable from faith in God the Creator. God is the First Cause Who operates in and through secondary causes: 'For God is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure' (Phil 2:13). Far from diminishing the creature's dignity, this truth enhances it. Drawn from nothingness by God's power, wisdom, and goodness, [the creature] can do nothing if it is cut off from its origin, for 'without a Creator the creature vanishes'" (Vatican II: *Gaudium et Spes*, 36).

Thomas Aquinas asks whether God operates in the operation of nature (*De Potentia*, 3, 7) and answers simply, "O Lord... all that we have done You have done for us" (Is 26:12).

192 For example, consider the "research" that preceded Pope Paul VI's 1968 *Humanae Vitae* ("On Human Life"),

and proclaims a truth of faith or morals? Paraphrasing what we know about the evangelists, we can say that the Holy Spirit *guarantees* any authoritative papal teaching, for He guards the Pope from error. However, in preparing to proclaim that teaching, the Pope makes full use of his own faculties and powers, so that "the Holy Spirit said it" and "the Pope said it" are both true.<sup>193</sup>

Conversely, the Pope's use of his own abilities, limited as they are by weakness, sinfulness, ignorance, *etc.*, does not exclude the Holy Spirit's action. Even merely human motives do not invalidate his pronouncements.<sup>194</sup>

### What is the Church?

God saves and sanctifies humans "not as individuals, without any bond or link between them," but rather as "a people." At Mount Sinai, He chose the Israelites, descended from Abraham.<sup>195</sup> Now He calls together a race that is united not by physical ancestry, but by His Spirit.<sup>196</sup>

In Latin, "Church" is *ecclesia* ("assembly"), from the Greek *ekklesia* ("those called out").<sup>197</sup> In Greek, the Old Testament uses *ekklesia* for the Hebrew *qahal*: the assembly of the chosen people before God.<sup>198</sup> By using the same word (*ekklesia*) for itself,<sup>199</sup> "the first community of Christian believers" identified itself as "heir to that assembly."<sup>200</sup>

The Church, then, is "the people that God gathers" out of the world.<sup>201</sup> Indeed, the very word — from the German *Kirche* — comes from the Greek *Kyriake* ("what belongs to the Lord").<sup>202</sup>

Primarily, "the Church" means those who are "fully incorporated" into its society, who accept all its "means of salvation" and its "entire organization" and are thus "joined" in its "visible structure" under the Pope and the bishops.<sup>203</sup>

However, the Church is "joined in many ways" to those who are baptized but "do not profess the Catholic faith in its entirety or have not preserved unity or communion" under the Pope.<sup>204</sup>

Ultimately, the Church is related to "all mankind,"<sup>205</sup> for in order "to reunite all His children, scattered and led astray by sin," God the Father calls "the whole of humanity together into His Son's Church." The Church is "the world reconciled," the place where humanity rediscovers "its unity and salvation."<sup>206</sup>

in which he reiterated, with pastoral compassion, the Church's teaching on the immorality of contraception. The practice had been condemned most recently in Pope Pius XI's 1930 *Casti Connubii*, but when the new oral contraceptive pill came on the market in 1961, the question was raised whether it, too, was immoral, since, unlike other contraceptive methods, it did not seem to affect outward sexual behaviour. Accordingly, on April 27 1963, Pope John XXIII established a six-member Pontifical Commission on Population, Family, and Birth-Rate. After Pope John died June 3 1963, Pope Paul VI, elected June 21 1963, expanded the commission's membership and, early in 1964, initiated a confidential enquiry on the subject among the world's bishops. On June 23 1964, he expanded the commission's membership again and announced its work. In the spring of 1965, the commission's 19 members were made "advisers" to an executive committee of 16 bishops, and over the next few years, membership expanded to 72. In 1967, the Pope asked the Vatican Secretary of State to poll the 199 bishops participating in the first Rome Synod of Bishops, and 26 of them responded.

193 For example, when the apostles had decided how to treat Gentile converts, they wrote to them, "It is the decision of the Holy Spirit, and ours too..." (see Acts 15:7-28).

194 For example, in 1529 King Henry VIII of England asked Pope Clement VII to declare his marriage to Queen Catherine null, and the Pope refused. At that time, the Pope was the prisoner of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, Catherine's nephew. However, the Pope's bias — if any — did not invalidate his decision.

195 See Ex 19.

196 See CCC 781. "Flesh begets flesh; Spirit begets spirit" (Jn 3:5-7).

197 From the Greek *ekkalein* ("call out of").

198 See Dt 31:30; Jgs 20:2; 1 Chr 13:2; Ps 149:1; Mic 2:5.

199 See 1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13; Phil 3:6 (where *ekklesia* means the universal community of believers);

1 Cor 1:2, 16:1 (where it means the local assembly of believers); and 1 Cor 11:8, 14:19, 28, 34, 35 (where it means the worshipping, liturgical assembly). See the talk on "Liturgy: Public Worship."

200 See CCC 751.

201 CCC 752.

202 See CCC 751.

203 Including those who do not, in fact, "persevere in charity" and are therefore "not saved." See CCC 837.

204 See CCC 838. Also see the talk on "Divisions Among Christians."

205 See CCC 836. Also see the talk on "Divisions Among Christians."

206 See CCC 845.

**Who is the Church?**

Finally, the Church is Christ's bride,<sup>207</sup> presented to Him "as a chaste virgin" given "in marriage to one Husband."<sup>208</sup>

Jesus identified Himself as the Bridegroom. Asked why His disciples did not fast like John the Baptist's, He said, "How can the guests at a wedding fast as long as the groom is still among them?"<sup>209</sup> When "the groom is taken away, then they will fast."<sup>210</sup> When John heard that his own disciples were "flocking" to Jesus, he said, "It is the groom who has the bride. The groom's best man waits there, listening for him, and is overjoyed to hear his voice. That is my joy, and it is complete."<sup>211</sup>

Now among the Jews, bride and groom lived apart after the betrothal — which made them man and wife — until the formal home-taking, about a year later. During that time, they prepared for the wedding.<sup>212</sup> Accordingly, Jesus told His apostles, the night before He died,<sup>213</sup> "I am indeed going to prepare a place for you, and then I shall come back to take you with Me, that where I am you also may be."<sup>214</sup>

John the evangelist has a vision of that home-taking in the Book of Revelation.

He sees Christ, Whom John the Baptist had called the "Lamb of God,"<sup>215</sup> as "a Lamb standing, a Lamb that had been slain."<sup>216</sup> He hears "a great crowd" shouting, "This is the wedding day of the Lamb;"<sup>217</sup> His bride has prepared herself for the wedding. She has been given a dress to wear made of finest linen, brilliant white": the "virtuous deeds of God's saints."<sup>218</sup> And, invited to meet "the woman who is the bride of the Lamb,"<sup>219</sup> he sees the "new Jerusalem, the holy city ... beautiful as a bride prepared to meet her husband."<sup>220</sup>

This is the Church — "the people God gathers,"<sup>221</sup> with whom He "shall dwell" always.<sup>222</sup> Her gates are "the twelve tribes of Israel"; her foundations are "the twelve apostles of the Lamb."<sup>223</sup>

As a faithful Husband, Christ confides in His Church, telling her things He tells no one else<sup>224</sup> and giving her everything He has, including His Holy Spirit.<sup>225</sup> Ultimately, it is only through her that His gifts reach us.<sup>226</sup>

For her part, the Church trusts her Lord's fidelity. She knows that He does not give anyone access to Himself except, somehow, through her.<sup>227</sup> She knows that He will never go back on His marriage covenant with her, no matter how faithless she seems to be because of the sins of her children.<sup>228</sup>

This "nuptial union of Christ and the Church" is "a great mystery," Paul says.<sup>229</sup>

207 See CCC 796.

208 See 2 Cor 11:2.

209 Mk 2:18-20

210 Mt 9:14-15; see Lk 5:33-35.

211 Jn 3:28-30.

212 See the *Jewish Encyclopedia*.

213 When, at His Last Supper, He betrothed the Church to Himself, making her one Flesh (see Gn 2:24; Mk 10:6-7) with Him by giving her His Body to eat. See the talks on "Matrimony" and "Mass: Sacrament and Sacrifice."

214 Jn 14:3

215 Jn 1:29-30

216 Rv 5:6; see also Rv 5:6,8,12-13, 6:1,3,5,7,9,12,16, 7:9-10,14,17, 8:1, 12:11, 13:8, 14:1,4,10, 15:3, 17:14, 19:7,9, 21:9,14,22-23,27, 22:1,3.

217 See the talk on "Matrimony."

218 See Rv 19:6-8.

219 Rv 21:9

220 Rv 21:2

221 CCC 752

222 See Rv 21:3,22-23.

223 Rv 21:12,14

224 St. Paul says that it is "through the Church" that God's wisdom "is made known" even "to the principalities and powers of Heaven" (see Eph 3:10-11).

225 See Acts 2:1-4; Jn 14:16-17,26.

226 See CCC 819.

227 See "Divisions Among Christians" and its Appendix.

228 Addressing a fellow-bishop, St. Paul said, "If we are unfaithful, He will still remain faithful, for He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim 2:13).

229 CCC 772; see Eph 5:32.



## Conclusion

The Church, "instituted by Christ"<sup>230</sup> and guaranteed indefectible by the Holy Spirit,<sup>231</sup> has "four marks by which we may know her"<sup>232</sup>: she is one,<sup>233</sup> she is holy,<sup>234</sup> she is catholic,<sup>235</sup> and she is apostolic.<sup>236</sup>

She is *apostolic* because, starting with Peter — the "Rock" on whom Christ said He would build His Church — it was the apostles who first gave her *structure*, like bones in a body, and it is their successors, the Pope and the other bishops, who maintain that structure. In fact, today's bishops have "taken the place of the apostles" in such a way that "whoever listens to them is listening to Christ and whoever despises them despises Christ and Him Who sent Christ."<sup>237</sup> Thus they give the Church her apostolic or *Petrine* dimension or profile.<sup>238</sup>

However, even though the Church is recognized primarily by her hierarchical<sup>239</sup> structure, she has a "higher"<sup>240</sup> and "much more important"<sup>241</sup> dimension, for her structure "is totally ordered to the holiness" of her members — as we shall see throughout this course — "and holiness is measured according to the great mystery in which the Bride responds with the gift of love to the gift of the Bridegroom."<sup>242</sup>

Now "in the hierarchy of holiness," it is Mary, Christ's Mother, who is the Church's prototype and model,<sup>243</sup> so we call this profile *Marian*. In Mary, the Church existed<sup>244</sup> even before Christ organized it, so the Marian dimension "precedes" the Petrine "both in God's plan and in time" — although the two are "closely united and complementary."<sup>245</sup> Accordingly, even though Mary does not have apostolic powers, the Church calls her "Queen of Apostles."<sup>246</sup>

The Church "will not be perfected in glory" until Christ comes again.<sup>247</sup> In the meantime, she has Popes who have lived in scandalous luxury and installed their children in lucrative Church positions; bishops who have had affairs with women and lied to cover up scandals; priests who are dictatorial, irritable, lazy, late or unprepared for Mass, liars or addicts or child-abusers; people whose phones ring in church; choirs that sing flat; and *ourselves*.<sup>248</sup>

*But these are the people Christ came to call*: sinners, not the righteous; the sick, not the healthy;<sup>249</sup> those who beg God's mercy, not those who say they do not need it.<sup>250</sup> This is Christ's Bride, for whom He "gave Himself up to make her holy, purifying her in the bath of water"<sup>251</sup> by the power of the word, to present to Himself a glorious Church, holy and immaculate, without stain or wrinkle.<sup>252</sup>

230 CCC 763-766

231 See CCC 797-798.

232 See *The Penny Catechism*, 94; see CCC 811-865.

233 "Because all her members agree in one faith, have all the same sacrifice and Sacraments, and are all united under one Head" (*The Penny Catechism*, 95).

234 Because her Head is holy, and "she teaches a holy doctrine, offers to all the means of holiness, and is distinguished by the eminent holiness of so many thousands of her children" (*The Penny Catechism*, 96).

235 From the Greek *katholikos* ("universal"), "because she subsists in all ages, teaches all nations, and is the one ark of salvation for all" (*The Penny Catechism*, 98).

236 "Because she holds the doctrines and traditions of the apostles, and because, through the unbroken succession of her pastors, she derives her orders and her mission from them" (*The Penny Catechism*, 99).

237 CCC 862

238 See Pope John Paul II: *Address to the Cardinals and Prelates of the Roman Curia* December 22 1987, 3.

239 From the Latin *hierchia* ("holy authority"), from the Greek *hierarchia* (the power of a *hierarches*, a "steward or president of sacred rites").

240 See Pope John Paul II: *Address to the Cardinals and Prelates of the Roman Curia* December 22 1987, 3.

241 Pope Francis: Interview published in *America*, November 22 2022

242 See CCC 773.

243 See CCC 773; Pope John Paul II: *Mulieris Dignitatem*, 27; and the talk on "Mary and Joseph."

244 See the talk on "Mary and Joseph."

245 See Pope John Paul II: *Address to the Cardinals and Prelates of the Roman Curia* December 22 1987, 3.

246 See the talk on "Mary and Joseph," Appendix 1.

247 See CCC 769.

248 "It is probably less safe to leave your umbrella at the door of a Catholic church than at the door of a Methodist chapel" (Ronald Knox: *In Soft Garments*, Chapter X "The Unholiness of the Church").

249 See Mk 2:17.

250 See Lk 18:9-14.

251 Image of both Baptism and the Jewish prenuptial ritual bath. (See the Jewish Encyclopedia.)

252 Eph 5:25-27

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### Appendix 1: "This is Peter"

"Meeting the Pope is always a profound experience," Archbishop Adam Exner OMI of Vancouver told *The BC Catholic* September 23 1993.

The archbishop had been in Rome September 13-20 with the other bishops of western and northern Canada for their *ad limina*<sup>1</sup> visits, which included private 15-minute interviews with Pope John Paul II. (*Ad limina* visits are made by the heads of dioceses to the Pope every five years.)

"Even on the human level the Pope is amazing," the archbishop said. "During your own personal interview, he makes you feel you're the only bishop in the world and your diocese the only one that's important. He has a way of making you feel completely comfortable. I was quite surprised when I walked in to find that he had a map of Canada on the desk in front of him. Putting his finger on Kamloops, Winnipeg, and Vancouver in turn, he said, 'You were here, and then you were here, and now you are in Vancouver.'"

"On the level of faith, it's a very different kind of experience," Archbishop Exner said. "You realize that the man you are talking to is the successor of Peter, to whom Jesus said, 'You are the rock and on this rock I will build My Church. To you I give the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Peter, do you love Me? Feed My lambs, feed My sheep. I have prayed for you that your faith may be strengthened; now go and strengthen your brethren.'"

"All these things run through your mind," the archbishop said. "And you realize that at this moment Peter's successor is strengthening one of his brethren."

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<sup>1</sup> Short for Latin *Ad Limina Apostolicorum* ("to the thresholds of the apostles").

## Appendix 2

## Early Claims to Papal Primacy

1) **Pope Callistus (217-222)** proclaimed remission of the sins of fornication and adultery after repentance. Tertullian, who by then had rejected Rome's authority, called the decree "peremptory" and described Callistus sarcastically as "the Pontifex Maximus" — that is, the bishop of bishops."<sup>2</sup> However, in his sarcasm, he made Callistus' claims clear: "I now inquire into your opinion, to see from what source you usurp this right to the Church. If, because the Lord has said to Peter, 'Upon this rock will I build My Church,' 'To you have I given the keys of the heavenly kingdom,' or, 'Whatsoever you shall have bound or loosed in earth, shall be bound or loosed in the heavens,' you therefore presume that the power of binding and loosing has derived to you, that is, to every church akin to Peter, what sort of man are you, subverting and wholly changing the manifest intention of the Lord, conferring (as that intention did) this personally upon Peter?"<sup>3</sup>

2) **Pope Stephen (254-257)** issued a decision about the validity of baptisms performed by heretics in which — according to Bishop Firmilian of Caesarea, who disagreed with it — he contended "that he holds the succession from Peter, on whom the foundations of the Church were laid."<sup>4</sup>

3) **Pope Siricius (384-398)** wrote that because of his office, a "greater zeal for the Christian religion" was incumbent upon him. "We carry the weight of all who are burdened," he said; "nay, rather the blessed apostle Peter bears these in us, who, as we trust, protects us in all matters of his administration, and guards his heirs."<sup>5</sup>

4) **Pope Innocent (401-417)** commended the African bishops for "preserving the examples of ancient tradition," and said, "You have confirmed that reference must be made to our judgement, realizing what is due the Apostolic See, since all of us placed in this position desire to follow the apostle from whom the episcopate itself and all the authority of this name have emerged. Following him, we know how to condemn evils as well as how to approve praiseworthy things." Guard "with your sacerdotal" — priestly — "office the practices of the fathers," who "thought that nothing whatever, even though it concerned separated and remote provinces, should be concluded unless it first came to the attention of this See, so that what was a just proclamation might be confirmed by the total authority of this See."<sup>6</sup>

5) **Pope Celestine (422-32)** sent the priest Philip as his delegate to the bishops at the Council of Ephesus. "There is no doubt, and in fact it has been known in all ages," Philip said, "that the holy and most blessed Peter, prince and head of the apostles, pillar of the faith, and foundation of the Catholic Church, received the keys of the kingdom from our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer of the human race, and that to him was given the power of binding and loosing sins, who down even to today and forever, both lives and judges in his successors. The holy and most blessed Pope Celestine, according to due order, is his successor and holds his place, and us he sent to supply his place in this most holy synod."<sup>7</sup>

6) **Pope Eugenius IV (1431-1447)** said at the Council of Florence (1431-1445), "We also define that the holy Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff holds the primacy over the whole world; the Roman Pontiff is the successor of blessed Peter, prince of the apostles, and the true vicar of Christ, the Head of the Church and the Father and Teacher of all Christians. To him was committed in blessed Peter the full power of tending, ruling, and governing the whole Church, as is contained also in the acts of ecumenical councils and in the sacred canons."<sup>8</sup>

1 Originally the title of the pagan chief priest of Rome.

2 Tertullian: *On Modesty*, Chapter 1

3 Tertullian: *On Modesty*, Chapter 21

4 Firmilian: *Letter to Bishop Cyprian of Carthage*, 17

5 Siricius: *Epistle I to Bishop Himerius of Terracina*, 1

6 Innocent: *Epistle 29 to the African Bishops*, 1

7 Philip to the Council of Ephesus, Session III

8 Council of Florence, Session 6, July 6 1439

### Appendix 3: Canon Law

The Church is "an integrated unit, entirely coherent; and, in its conspicuous unity, it shows itself an undivided and indivisible body."<sup>1</sup> In practice, this unity is maintained by Church law, called *Canon Law*. During the Church's history, there have been three major compilations of this law: 1) Gratian's Decree, put together about 1140 by an Italian monk; 2) the Code promulgated by Pope Benedict XV on May 27 1917; and 3) the Code promulgated by Pope John Paul II January 25 1983.

"During the course of the centuries, the Catholic Church has been accustomed to reform and renew the laws of canonical discipline so that, in constant fidelity to her divine Founder, they may be better adapted to the saving mission entrusted to her," Pope John Paul II said in the Apostolic Constitution *Sacrae Disciplinae Leges* ("Of the Sacred Discipline of Law"), addressed to all "members of the people of God."

The most recent reform, he said, was initiated by Pope John XXIII, but carried out by Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul I in a "collegial spirit"; that is, in consultation with the bishops of the whole Church, as well as with experts in theology, history, and canon law, "who were chosen from all over the world."

"The Code of Canon Law is extremely necessary for the Church," the Pope said. The Church must have norms to make its "hierarchical and organic structure" visible; to organize its exercise of the functions Christ entrusted to it, especially the exercise of its "sacred power" and "the administration of the Sacraments"; to regulate the relations among the faithful "according to justice based upon charity, with the rights of individuals guaranteed and well defined"; and finally, to sustain, strengthen, and foster initiatives undertaken for an ever more perfect Christian life.

The Pope recalled the "law contained in the books of the Old and New Testaments," from which "the whole juridical [and] legislative tradition of the Church" is derived. He noted that Christ said that He had not come to destroy the heritage of the Law and the Prophets, which had gradually been formed "from the history and experience of the People of God in the Old Testament," but "He brought it to completion"<sup>2</sup> so that "in a new and higher way, it became part of the heritage of the New Testament."

St. Paul teaches that justification<sup>3</sup> comes not from "the works of the Law," the Pope said, "but by means of faith."<sup>4</sup> However, St. Paul does not deny "the binding force" of the Ten Commandments<sup>5</sup> or "the importance of discipline in the Church of God."<sup>6</sup> In fact, the Pope said, the New Testament enables us to understand the connection between discipline and "the saving character" of the Gospel message.

The Code is not intended to be a substitute for faith, grace, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Pope said. Its purpose is to create the order necessary for their "organic development" in the life of the Church and the lives of individual Christians. Accordingly, he said, besides expounding the "hierarchical and organic structure of the Church" willed by Christ and based upon apostolic or ancient Tradition, the Code "must also lay down certain rules and norms of behaviour."

Trusting, therefore, in divine grace, "sustained by the authority of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, with certain knowledge, and in response to the wishes of the bishops of the whole world who have collaborated with me in a collegial spirit; with the supreme authority with which I am vested, by means of this Constitution, to be valid forever in the future, I promulgate the present Code as it has been set in order and revised," the Pope concluded. "I command that for the future it is to have the force of law for the whole Latin Church, and I entrust it to the watchful care of all those concerned, in order that it may be observed."

1 Vatican I (1869-1870): *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ*, 5, "The Visible Unity of the Church"

2 See Mt 5:17.

3 That is, making just, righteous, or holy.

4 See Rom 3:28; Gal 2:16.

5 See Rom 13:28; Gal 5:13-25, 6:2.

6 See 1 Cor 5, 6.