

The Church

Mystical Body of Christ

Old Testament Preparation

- God's creation of the world to share His divine life
- God's promise to Abraham that he would be the father of a great nation
- Israel is established as the People of God
- Twelve tribes of Israel
- Israel broke its covenant with God
- The prophets announced the coming of a new and eternal covenant

Christ Prepares and Builds His Church

- Jesus gathered His flock
- Jesus taught his followers a “new way” of acting and a new prayer of their own
- Jesus gave his family a structure – His choice of the twelve with Peter as their head
- Jesus’ disciples share in His mission and power – and also in His lot

Pentecost

- The Holy Spirit came to the apostles so that He might continually sanctify and guide the Church
- The Church was openly proclaimed to the crowds by the apostles
- The Gospel was spread among the nations

The “Church”

- Latin “ecclesia” = the assembly of the Chosen people before God
- God gave His people laws, covenants, rituals, uniting them in love
- Not a merely human organization

The Mystical Body of Christ

- A sacrament of Jesus – a sharing in the very being and energy of Christ
- The body of Jesus with Christ as its head
- St. Paul: “He is the head of the body, the church (Col 1:18
- Jesus: “I am the vine, you are the branches.” (Jn 15:5)

The Fulfillment of Israel

- “Who do people say that I am? Simon responded:” You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God,” and the Lord said in reply, “Blessed are you, Son of Jonah! ... 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.” (Mt 16: 16-18)
- “The Way” – life of the early Christians (people learned to see with the eyes of Christ and to walk the path that Christ walked

Attributes of the Catholic Church

- One
- Holy
- Catholic
- Apostolic

“One”

- Its founder is one – “I believe in One God (the Creed)
- Liturgy, sacraments, devotions
- Commitment to our brothers and sisters through corporal and spiritual works of mercy
- Shared structure which comes from the apostles

“Holy”

- Christ is holy and the Church is Christ’s Mystical Body
- Traditions, Scriptures, Sacraments, Liturgy, Doctrinal teaching, Saints
- “We hold this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing power may be of God and not from us.”
(2 Cor 4:7)

“Catholic”

- Catholic (Greek = according to the whole)
- The internal integrity of the Church and its outreach to all peoples
- Universality

“Apostolic”

- The Church is grounded in the twelve people Christ chose to be His apprentices, His “apostles.”
- Apostolic tradition
- Infallibility of the pope

Sacred Scripture and Tradition

- Sacred Tradition – the oral transmission of the Word of God
- Sacred Scripture – God’s written Word
- Apostolic Tradition – all that the apostles received and learned from Jesus or learned through the guidance of the Holy Spirit which has been passed on to their successors, those they appointed as bishops
- New Testament – a product of Tradition

Church Teaching

**Word of God is transmitted to us
by SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION**