

## *The Marks of the Church: The Church Is Catholic*

### **Q. 178. Why is the Church catholic or universal?**

The Church is catholic or universal because Christ established it to proclaim all of His teaching to all men, at all times, and in all places.

Jesus said, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15). “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Jesus spoke of the growth of His Church when He gave us the parable of the mustard seed. “The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches” (Matthew 13:31-32).

#### ***Sacred Scripture***

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations.” *Matthew 24:14*

#### ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***

**1202** The diverse liturgical traditions have arisen by very reason of the Church’s mission. Churches of the same geographical and cultural area came to celebrate the mystery of Christ through particular expressions characterized by the culture: in the tradition of the “deposit of faith,”<sup>21</sup> in liturgical symbolism, in the organization of fraternal communion, in the theological understanding of the mysteries, and in various forms of holiness. Through the liturgical life of a local church, Christ, the light and salvation of all peoples, is made manifest to the particular people and culture to which that Church is sent and in which she is rooted. The Church is catholic, capable of integrating into her unity, while purifying them, all the authentic riches of cultures.<sup>2</sup>

#### ***Splendor of Truth***

It is the task of the Church’s Magisterium to see that the dynamic process of following Christ develops in an organic manner, without the falsification or obscuring of its moral demands, with all their consequences. (*section 119*)

#### ***Vatican Council II***

All men are called to belong to the new People of God. This People therefore, whilst remaining one and only one, is to be spread throughout the whole world and to all ages in order that the design of God’s will may be fulfilled. *The Church, 13*

The special undertakings in which preachers of the Gospel, sent by the Church, and going into the whole world, carry out the work of preaching the Gospel and implanting the Church among people who do not yet believe in Christ, are generally called “missions.” Such undertakings are

*For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr: John Vianney and Fr: Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.*

accomplished by missionary activity and are, for the most part, carried out in defined territories recognized by the Holy See. *Missionary Activity* 6,

The period, therefore, between the first and second coming of the Lord is the time of missionary activity, when, like the harvest, the Church will be gathered from the four winds into the kingdom of God. For the Gospel must be preached to all peoples before the Lord comes (cf. Mk. 13:10). Missionary activity is nothing else, and nothing less, than the manifestation of God's plan, its epiphany and realization in the world and in history; that by which God, through mission, clearly brings to its conclusion the history of salvation. *Missionary Activity*, 9

### Q. 179. How long has the Catholic Church been in existence?

The Church has been in existence since the sacrificial death and Resurrection of Jesus. This took place about 33 A.D.

The Catholic Church has had a continuous existence of more than nineteen hundred years, and it is the only Christian institution of which this is true.



#### *Sacred Scripture*

And he went up into the hills, and called to him those whom he desired; and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach and have authority to cast out demons: Simon whom he surnamed Peter; James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James, whom he surnamed Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder; Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. *Mark* 3:13-19

#### *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**766** The Church is born primarily of Christ's total self-giving for our salvation, anticipated in the institution of the Eucharist and fulfilled on the cross. "The origin and growth of the Church are symbolized by the blood and water which flowed from the open side of the crucified Jesus."<sup>1</sup> "For it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth the wondrous sacrament of the whole Church."<sup>2</sup> As Eve was formed from the sleeping Adam's side, so the Church was born from the pierced heart of Christ hanging dead on the cross.<sup>3</sup>

*For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr. John Vianney and Fr. Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.*

**Summary Prayer**

*Heavenly Father, You will that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of Your truth. Send workers into Your great harvest, that the Gospel may be preached to every creature so that Your people may be gathered together by the Word of Life. Strengthened by the power of the sacraments, may all of mankind advance in the way of salvation and love, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.*

**Q. 180. Does the Catholic Church teach all the truths that Jesus Christ taught?**

Yes. The Catholic Church is the only Church which teaches all the truths that Jesus Christ taught. Many other Christian communities have rejected the sacraments of Penance and Anointing of the Sick, the Mass and the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, the spiritual supremacy of Peter and his successors, the popes, the efficacy of grace, and man's ability to merit grace and heaven. Some even question whether Jesus Christ is truly God. There is not a single truth that Jesus Christ revealed (whether personally or through His Apostles) which the Catholic Church does not still faithfully declare and teach.

**Sacred Scripture**

Preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths. *2 Timothy 4:2-4*

#E5-4

**Catechism of the Catholic Church**

**77** “In order that the full and living Gospel might always be preserved in the Church the apostles left bishops as their successors. They gave them ‘their own position of teaching author-

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**Sacred Scripture**

Q. 180. Mt 5:17-19; Jn 14:25-26, 16:12-15; 2 Tim 1:11-14.

**Catechism of the Catholic Church**

Q. 180. Paragraphs 74-79, 830-831, 838.

ity.”<sup>1</sup> Indeed, “the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved in a continuous line of succession until the end of time.”<sup>2</sup>

### ***Splendor of Truth***

The Magisterium carries out an important work of vigilance, warning the faithful of the presence of possible errors, even merely implicit ones, when their consciences fail to acknowledge the correctness and the truth of the moral norms, which the Magisterium teaches. (*section 110*)

Opposition to the teaching of the Church’s Pastors cannot be seen as a legitimate expression either of Christian freedom or of the diversity of the Spirit’s gifts. When this happens, the Church’s Pastors have the duty to act in conformity with their apostolic mission, insisting that the right of the faithful to receive Catholic doctrine in its purity and integrity must always be respected. (*section 113*)

### ***Doctrine • Moral • Worship Exercise*** (see Appendix B for answer key)

1. In the Creed we pray, “I believe in...the holy catholic Church.” Explain why the Church is catholic or universal.
2. As a member of the Catholic Church, how are you contributing to the proclamation of the Good News?
3. Make a deeper commitment to help the Church in its task of evangelization.

### ***Chapter Summary Prayer***

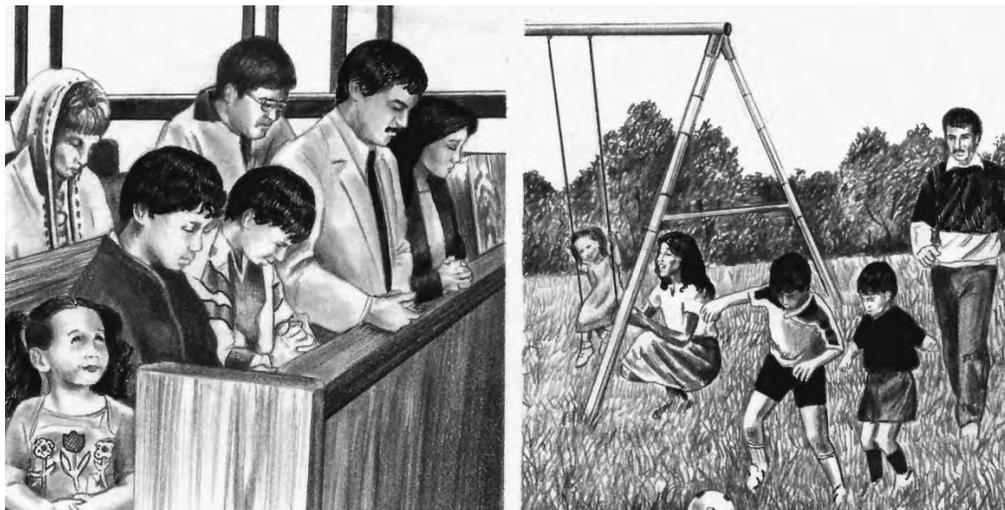
*Lord, glorify Your Name by increasing Your Chosen People as You promised long ago. In reward for their trust, may we see in the Church the fulfillment of Your promise.*

*It is through Your Church, generously endowed with gifts of grace and fortified by the Holy Spirit, that You send out Your Word to all nations. Strengthen Your Church with the best of all food and make it dauntless in faith. Multiply its children to celebrate with one accord the mysteries of Your love at the altar on high.*

*God our Father, You sent Your Son into the world to be its true Light. Pour out the Spirit He promised us in order to sow truth in men’s hearts and awaken in them obedience to the faith. May all men be born again to a new life in Baptism and so enter the fellowship of Your one holy people.*

*You command the seed to rise, Lord God, though the farmer is unaware. Grant that those who labor for You may trust not in their own work but in Your help. Remembering that the land is brought to flower not with human tears, but with those of Your Son, may the Church rely only upon Your gifts.*

*Strengthen the minds and hearts of missionaries with Your Spirit, and raise up a great company to help them from every nation. We ask this through Jesus Christ our only Savior. Amen.*



### Family Wisdom Library: Chapter 51

*See Appendix A for more references.*

#### **Q. 178. Why is the Church catholic or universal?**

*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 8, 9;*

*On the Dignity and Vocation of Women, John Paul II, sect. 27, 28;*

*On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World, John Paul II, sect. 25-26, 62-64;*

*The Relationship Between Faith and Reason, John Paul II, sect. 70, 71.*

#### **Q. 179. How long has the Catholic Church been in existence?**

*On the Dignity and Vocation of Women, John Paul II, sect. 28;*

*On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World, John Paul II, sect. 25, 61.*

#### **Q. 180. Does the Catholic Church teach all the truths that Jesus Christ taught?**

*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 8.*



## Thought Provokers

*Please see Appendix C for the answers.*

Q. 178: A. The Church founded by Jesus Christ is not called the Catholic Church in the Bible.

Where, then, does the term come from?

B. Is the fact that the term “Catholic” is not scriptural make it less valid than those scriptural terms which describe the Church, such as “the Body of Christ”?

Q. 179: How long will the Catholic Church remain on earth?

Q. 180: What one Catholic doctrine is rejected by every other Christian body?