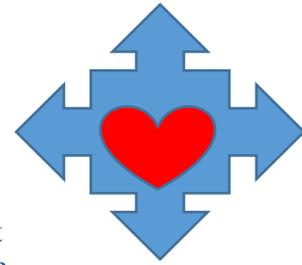


DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

17

Compendium to the Catechism: 167 – 176



Is the particular Church catholic ?

Every particular Church (that is diocese or eparchy) is catholic. It is formed by a community of Christians who are in communion of faith and of the sacraments both with their bishop, who is ordained in apostolic succession, and with the Church of Rome which “presides in charity” (Saint Ignatius of Antioch).

Who belongs to the Catholic Church ?

All human beings in various ways belong to or are ordered to the Catholic unity of the people of God. Fully incorporated into the Catholic Church are those who, possessing the Spirit of Christ, are joined to the Church by the bonds of the profession of faith, the sacraments, ecclesiastical government and communion. The baptised who do not enjoy full Catholic unity are in a certain, although imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church.

What is the relationship of the Catholic Church with the Jewish people ?

The Catholic Church recognises a particular link with the Jewish people in the fact that God chose them before all others to receive his Word. To the Jewish people belong “the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, the promises, and the patriarchs; and of their race according to the flesh, is the Christ” (Romans 9:4,5). The Jewish faith, unlike other non-Christian religions, is already a response to the Revelation of God in the Old Covenant.

What is the meaning of the affirmation “outside the Church there is no salvation” ?

This means that all salvation comes from Christ, the Head, through the Church which is His Body. Hence they cannot be saved who, knowing the Church as founded by Christ and necessary for salvation, would refuse to enter her or remain in her. At the same time, thanks to Christ and to his Church, those who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ and His Church but sincerely seek God and, moved by grace, try to do His Will as it is known through the dictates of conscience can attain eternal salvation.

Why must the Church proclaim the Gospel to the whole world ?

The Church must do so because Christ has given the command: “go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). This missionary mandate of the Lord has its origin in the eternal love of God who has sent His Son and the Holy Spirit because “He desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).

In what sense is the Church missionary ?

The Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, continues the mission of Christ Himself in the course of history. Christians must, therefore, proclaim to everyone the Good News borne by Christ; and, following His path, they must be ready for self-sacrifice, even unto martyrdom.

Why is the church apostolic ?

The Church is apostolic in her *origin* because she has been built on “the foundation of the Apostles” (Ephesians 2:20). She is apostolic in her *teaching* which is the same as that of the Apostles. She is apostolic by reason of her *structure* insofar as she is taught, sanctified and guided until Christ returns by the Apostles through their successors who are the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter.

In what does the mission of the Apostles consist ?

The word “Apostle” means “one who is sent”. Jesus, the One sent by the Father, called to Himself twelve of His disciples and appointed them as His Apostles, making them the chosen witnesses of His Resurrection and the foundation of His Church. He gave them the command to continue His own mission saying, “As the Father has sent me, so I also send you” (John 20:21); and He promised to remain with them until the end of the world.

What is apostolic succession ?

Apostolic succession is the transmission by means of the sacrament of Holy Orders of the mission and power of the Apostles to their successors, the bishops. Thanks to this transmission the Church remains in communion of faith and life with her origin, while through the centuries she carries on her apostolate for the spread of the Kingdom of Christ on earth.

It is essential that every Catholic has access to good Catechesis to be able to deepen their faith. The Diocese of Plymouth recommends the many Catechetical Workshops from 'Franciscan at Home,' for more information on access to these and online or real group sessions contact deborah.vankroonenburg@prcdtr.org.uk