

Four Characteristics of the Church Ecclesiology for today's Catholics

“We believe in One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church”—Creed
Real but Imperfect

“Unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity are dynamic realities that depend on the foundational work of Christ and on his continued presence and activity through the Holy Spirit.”—Cardinal Avery Dulles

I. The Church as One

- A. Pauline letters: unity of communion and fellowship (1 Cor 16:19, Rm 12:4-5, 1 Cor 12, 2 Cor 6:16, Gal 3:27-28, Eph 2-4). Share same Gospel message and bond of love (“koinonia”) showed concretely in the care of the poor.
- B. Acts of Apostles: One baptism, one faith, one fellowship, one Eucharist (Acts 2:41-42). Reconcile Jews and Gentiles.
- C. Johannine Writings: Belong to one shepherd (Jn 10:16), Believe in Jesus through the word of his disciples (Jn 17:20-23), “koinonia” requires the reception to the same “apostolic faith” based on the witness of the apostle and safeguarding visible unity. (1 Jn 1:3)
- ★ D. Patristic/Early Church: Unity as communion with one’s local Bishop along with faith and Eucharist. 1. Leadership 2. Faith 3. Sacraments. Also: letter of recommendation, ordination of bishop with others, public profession of faith, Bishop of Rome grows in importance.
- ★ E. Church, “Churches” and Ecclesial communities
 - ★ 1. “Church”—Body of Christ united in Spirit on earth (militant), purgatory (suffering), and in heaven (saints).
 - ★ 2. “Churches”—particular churches in union with Bishop of Rome. Roman Catholic diocese/parishes, eastern rite Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox share theological communion (faith and sacraments) but not juridical communion (separated from Church of Rome).(Lumen Gentium 14,23,28)
 - ★ 3. Ecclesial Communities—“not full reality of Church where not full reality of eucharist”, real but imperfect communion: Protestants.
 - ★ F. Catholic Principles of Ecumenism
 - 1. Religious liberty: those seeking and adhering to truth are seeking God.
 - 2. One Church has always existed as a visible institution.
 - 3. The one Church of Christ subsists in the catholic Church (LG 8).
 - 4. Charisms exist outside visible boundaries of Catholic Church and are forces impelling towards Catholic unity (LG 8).
 - 5. All churches are instruments of salvation and grace (LG 15).
 - 6. Church always in need of purification (LG 8)
 - 7. Unity and diversity based on respect and freedom.
 - 8. charity and understanding.
 - 9. Shared Prayer, life, mission and theology.

II. Church is Holy

- ✱ A. Proceeds from Eschatological character but also pilgrim church (LG 39, 48).
 1. Only God is Holy (Is 6:3, Lev 19:2).
 2. Creatures made holy by participation in God and for God (Dt 7:6, Ex 19:6, Lev 19:1-4).
 3. Gift and Task (1 Cor 1:2, 1 Pt 1:2, 14-16; 2: 9-12).
- ✱ B. Holiness of formal elements: through paschal mystery of Christ and sending of the Spirit (Eph 4:10-12) faith, sacraments, and charismatic and hierarchal gifts. Objectively and effectively because from Christ alone.
- C. Holiness of people:
 1. consecration/baptism (Ex 19:5-6, 1 Pt 2:5-9, LG 10).
 2. grace and virtue/sanctifying grace (Eph 4:1-3, LG 14, 40).
- D. Churches holiness is fruit of Christ's sacrifice as he has united the Church indissolubly to himself, and has endowed us with the abiding gift of the Holy Spirit. (LG 39).
- E. Formal elements are always holy even if leaders or members sin (pilgrim church).

III. Church is Catholic

- A. Universal, oneness and rich variety: St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. Polycarp, Cyril of Jerusalem.
- B. Gift and Task: Church of all races and cultures (Acts 10, LG 13).
- ✱ C. Trinitarian sources: Father desires rich unity (Jn 11:52, Heb 1:2), early church sees universality of Christ (1 Tim 2:5, acts 4:12, Jn 1:14-17, col 1:9, Eph 1:22), Holy Spirit is principal of unity in gifts (1 Cor 12:11, LG 4).
- D. Universality of races, nations, and cultures (LG 13).
- ✱ E. Unity in rich diversity (LG 13, 23).
- ✱ F. Relationship with all humanity (LG 13)
 1. Catholics: belong in varying degrees. (LG 14)
 2. Other Christians: various bonds of theological communion. (LG 15)
 3. Other religions: related to the church (LG 16). Ordinary means and extraordinary means of salvation.
 4. Universal call to salvation, particular call to belong to the Church.

IV. The Church is Apostolic

- ✱ A. Twelve apostles specific group in call, constitution, and mission (Mt 10:1-4, Mk 3:13-19, Lk 6:12-16, Jn 6:70).
- ✱ B. Specific mission lead by Peter as primary witnesses after resurrection (Mt 18:18, Mt 16:18-19, Jn 13:20, Mt 28:18-20, Mk 16:15-16, Lk 24:45-49, Jn 20:21-23, Acts 1;8).
- ✱ C. Paul's ministry of teaching (Rm 6:17, 2 Thess 2:15), hand on traditions (1 Cor 11:32, 1 Cor 15:3), and exercising authority (2 Cor 10:8, Gal 4:19).
- D. Increasing primacy of Peter and Church of Rome in Patristics.
- E. Apostolicity of faith and ministry (sign and guarantee of faith)
- ✱ F. Bishops leadership and teaching for unity and charity.
- G. Apostolic mission to the world.