

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH?

A church is Apostolic when it was and remains built on the "foundation of the Apostles", the witnesses chosen and sent on their mission by Jesus Christ Himself. With the help of the Holy Spirit dwelling within her, the Apostolic Church keeps and hands on the teachings, "the good deposit", the salutary words she has heard from the Apostles. The apostolic church continues to be taught, sanctified, and guided by the Apostles, through the apostolic line of succession of Popes, Bishops and priests, until Christ returns to claim His Kingdom.

JESUS COMMISSIONS HIS CHURCH TO THE CARE OF THE APOSTLES

PETER'S AUTHORITY: When they had eaten their meal, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these others do?" "Yes Lord" he said, "you know that I love you." At which Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

A second time he put his question, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" "Yes Lord," Peter said, "you know that I love you." Jesus replied, "Tend my sheep."

A third time Jesus asked him, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because he had asked a third time, "Do you love me?" So he said to him: "Lord, you know everything. You know well that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep." (Jn 21:15-17)

PETER THE ROCK: When Jesus came to the neighborhood of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples this question: "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptizer, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "And you," he said to them, "who do you say that I am?" "You

are the Messiah," Simon Peter answered, "the Son of the living God!" Jesus replied, "Blest are you, Simon son of Jonah! No mere man has revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. I for my part declare to you, you are 'Rock,' and on this rock I will build my church, and the jaws of death shall not prevail against it. I will entrust to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you declare bound on earth shall be bound in heaven; whatever you declare loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Mt 16:13-19) Jesus thus confirms Peter's authority, leaving him as head of the His new church on earth.

Jesus told them: "Go into the whole world and proclaim the good news to all creation. The man who believes in it and accepts baptism will be saved; the man who refuses to believe in it will be condemned. Signs like these will accompany those who have professed their faith: they will use my name to expel demons, they will speak entirely new languages, they will be able to handle serpents, they will be able to drink deadly poison without harm, and the sick upon whom they lay their hands will recover." The Eleven went forth and preached everywhere. The Lord continued to work with them throughout and confirm the message through the signs which accompanied them. (Mk 16:15-20)

..."In His name, penance for the remission of sins is to be preached to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of this. See, I send down upon you the promise of my Father. Remain here in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." (Lk, 24:47-49)

DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: When the day of Pentecost came it found them gathered in one place. Suddenly from up in the sky there came a noise like a strong, driving wind which was heard all through the house where they were seated. Tongues as of fire appeared, which parted and came to rest on each of them. All were filled with the Holy Spirit. They began to express themselves in foreign tongues and make bold proclamation as the Spirit prompted them. (ACTS, 2:1-4)

The One Holy and Apostolic Church has now been fully commissioned by Jesus Christ and put in the care of Peter and the Apostles, and with the promise that "...the jaws of death shall not prevail against it." (Mt 16:18)

MOST SPECIAL GIFT LEFT BY JESUS

The Most Special Gift to the Apostolic Church left by Jesus was the Holy Eucharist. We hear Jesus give His Discourse on the Bread of Life (The Holy Eucharist) in St. John 6:48-57: Jesus said to them: "I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate manna in the desert, but they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven for a man to eat and never die. I myself am the living bread come down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread he shall live forever; the bread I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world."

At this the Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can he give us his flesh to eat?" Thereupon Jesus said to them:

"Let me solemnly assure you, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. He who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has life eternal and I will raise him up on the last day.

For my flesh is real food and my blood real drink. The man who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the Father who has life sent me and I have life because of the Father, so the man who feeds on me will have life because of me."

JESUS Fulfills His Promise about the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, and instituted the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as we know it today and throughout time:

THE HOLY EUCHARIST: When the hour arrived, He took His place at table, and the apostles with Him. He said to them: "I have greatly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. I tell you, I will not eat again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Then taking a cup he offered a blessing in thanks and said: "Take this and divide it among you; I tell you,

from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the coming of the reign of God." Then, taking bread and giving thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying: "This is my body to be given for you. Do this as a remembrance of me." He did the same with the cup after eating, saying as he did so: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you." (Lk 22:14-20)

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass perpetuates the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross in an unbloody manner throughout the ages. Christ at the Last Supper offered up to God His Passion and Death for the redemption of mankind. By the words: "Do this for a commemoration of Me" He gave His Apostles and their successors not only the *power*, but the *command* also, to do what He Himself had just done. He made them priests and thereby perpetuated the Sacrifice of our Redemption in His Church.

At the consecration of the Mass, the Crucified Christ becomes present on the altar Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the form of the bread and wine, and is offered up once again in an unbloody manner to the Father.

As part of the power and authority which was passed on by Jesus to the Apostles, was the power to consecrate the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of our Lord during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

A study of both the Old and the New Testaments, will show that God has always used the laying on of hands to pass on His authority, power and blessings. This power to consecrate, which was given to the Apostles, was then passed on to future generations of bishops and priests by the laying on of hands by the bishops in the ordaining of new priests, thus establishing an Apostolic Line of Succession to this very day. This apostolic line of succession can be traced from current Catholic Priests back all the way to the Apostles. For example, a current priest can trace his line of succession, first to his Bishop who ordained him, then to the bishop that ordained his bishop, etc., right back to the Apostles.

Protestant ministers can not consecrate the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus, because the Apostolic Line of Succession was broken when Luther, who was a Catholic Priest, was excommunicated by the Church. Similarly with King Henry VIII and the Episcopal Church of England. The Apostolic line of succession was broken such that, even though an Episcopal service may look very much like the Catholic Mass, the power and authority to consecrate the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus, no longer exists.

THE ORIGIN OF THE BIBLE

In the early church the Gospels and Epistles of the New testament were read aloud to the congregation of Christians on the first day of the week for Holy Mass. All the Gospels and Epistles existed separately for hundreds of years, not to be found altogether in one place. It wasn't until 397 AD at the Council of Cartridge, that they settled as to which writings were to be used and collected together into what is now known as the New Testament. This was approved and confirmed by the Roman Pontiff, and so from that time on it was the undisputed catalogue of all the New Testament books, as we have them in the Catholic Bible today. The New Testament of the Bible is the Catholic Church's own book. It was written by her first Apostles and was preserved and guarded all down the ages by her Popes and Bishops.

It wasn't until the 16th century when Luther and his reformers took the original text of the Catholic New Testament and changed it into various Protestant versions. Luther, who was a Catholic Priest and subsequently excommunicated by the Catholic Church, formed his own church whose teachings were contrary to many teachings of the Catholic Church. He took the original New Testament of the Catholic Church and threw away many of its writings, for example, the Epistle of St. James, because it teaches that "faith without works is dead", which was contrary to his own views.

While the years of the reformation produced many dozens, if not hundreds of personal translations, the original Catholic version, the Latin Vulgate (translated into the Latin Vulgate, from the original languages, by St. Jerome (342-420AD)), which had been declared by the Council of Trent to be the authorized text of the scriptures for the church, stood it's ground. In 1582 an official New Testament in English for Catholics was translated from the Latin Vulgate (Rheims New Testament). And finally, in 1609 the New Testament in English was added to the Old Testament in English (Douay Old Testament), so that now Catholics had a complete Bible in English, which is called the Douay Rheims Version of the Holy Bible.

PETERS BOAT - A FINAL ANALOGY

The Fathers of the Church in their writings put the analogy of the Catholic Church as a "boat of salvation." There is only one church (boat) in which the authentic teaching of Jesus comes to us, and that boat belongs to Peter. This one boat is called the Catholic Church. It was founded by Jesus Christ Himself and will endure until the end of time. Though there are many other boats that claim to teach the message of Jesus, the Catholic Church is the only boat that was commissioned by Jesus. All the other boats may contain some aspects of truth but ultimately only the Catholic Church has the fullness of the saving message of Jesus Christ.

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