

## ECCLESIA

### A study on the Church

“The love of the Our Lord should at the same time be so strongly insisted upon.”

#### I. FAITH

- a. It is a necessity for salvation.
- b. God demands and unchangeable faith, not a faith that challenges His judgment.
- c. The Dominican will search out the reasons and causes, in faith, without doubt even if there is no discernible reason.

#### II. ECCLESIA. “a calling forth”

- a. writers after New Testament call it an assembly or meeting of believers
- b. Greek origin, from which the Latin language took the term.
- c. The origin of the word, “Ecclesia”, dates from the Athenians when summoning their assemblies by heralds.
- d. St. Augustine: “the Church consists of the faithful dispersed through the world.”
- e. The assembly of pagan believers in Ephesus are called a church (worshippers of Diana). Acts 19:39.
- f. It has come to signify Christian society only: Those who are called to the light of truth and knowledge of God.

#### III. THE CHURCH recognizes the grace and splendor of God because there is no other divine society.

- a. Other societies rest on reason and providence; but the Catholic church rests on the wisdom and counsel of Almighty God.
- b. Assembled faithful of the Old Testament were called a “synagogue”—a flock, because they look only to terrestrial or transitory things.

c. Other names: “House of God” “The pillar and foundation of truth.” I Timothy 3:15.

d. The flock of the sheep of Christ. Christ is the door and the Chief Shepherd. St. Paul says or calls the Church the spouse or “Bride of Christ.” “I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” II Corinthians 11:2. Marriage is seen as a symbol of Christ’s love for the Church where husbands are told to love their wives in like manner. Ephesians 5:32.

#### IV. Parts -- One Church, but parts thereof.

a. Church Triumphant. Most happy assembly of the blessed spirits in Heaven.

b. Church Suffering. Purgatory.

c. Church Militant. Society of all the Faithful dwelling on Earth. Wages eternal war on the foes of Eternal life: the world, the flesh, and the devil (Enemy).

i. good and bad.

The wicked are part of the Church “as the chaff is mingled with the grain on the threshing floor.”

d. Those not members of the Church.

i. Infidels. Never belonged to and never knew the Church; never partakers of any of the Sacraments.

ii. Heretics and schismatics. Excluded from the Church because they are separated from Her and “belong to her only as deserters belong to the army from which they have deserted.” They are subject to the Church’s jurisdiction.

a. heresy – a person who intends to assent to Christ’s teaching, but who actually assents to his own choice and opinion. It means “picking and choosing.” It is error and cannot be tolerated by the mind. Heresy is not tolerated, but the heretics are tolerated. *See*, Summa Theologica, 3a. VIII.

b. schism. A refusal to submit to the rule and jurisdiction of the sovereign pontiff; but different from heresy, in that a heretic embraces false doctrine.

- c. Apostates. Sin of unbelief or renouncing of the Faith. NOTE: schismatics may be members of the Church until such time that they are excommunicated by proper authority.
- d. Excommunicated persons are *not* members of the Church, until such time as they repent. Excommunication can be either automatic (“*Latae sententiae*”) or by decree.