

Pilgrims,

In the Nicene Creed, we profess, “We believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church:” these are the four marks of the Church. They are inseparable and intrinsically linked to each other. Our Lord Himself in founding the Church marked it with these characteristics, which reflect its essential features and mission. Through the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Church fulfills these marks. This week’s session we discuss the mystery of the Church, why we have the Church, what the Church’s role is in our faith, and apostolic tradition that has existed for over 2,000 years.

I. Homework:

- Following up from last week’s conversation on the saints and Mary and preparing for our Easter sacraments, I want you to begin praying and researching saints of the Church and think of a potential patron saint.

II. Brief Overview

Jesus founded the Church and gave it his own authority to carry out his mission of calling all people to be reconciled with his Father. For the sake of souls, the Holy Spirit guides the Church and protects her from error, so that our faith may have a sure foundation. The Church Jesus founded is done so on four marks: one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.. Apostolicity holds together the other three marks. Apostolicity is the guarantee of the one, true Church, in which our hope for Heaven may be assured of reaching its goal. This Church constituted and organized as a society in the present world, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter (the Pope) and by the bishops in communion with him.

III. A Prayer for the Week

St. Michael the Archangel is the guardian of the Church. Here is an short intercession we can say for this week for all the persecuted Christians throughout the world:

Father in the name of Jesus please protect His followers in every part of the world. Safeguard them physically, mentally, and spiritually, and turn the minds of their persecutors towards mercy and love.

IV. Scriptural readings

Gn: 12:1-3	God calls Abram and promises that by him all families will become blessed
Is 2:1-3	All the nations will flow to Zion, for from it shall come the law and word of God
Mt. 16:13-19	Jesus founds his Church on Peter and gives Peter the keys to the Kingdom
Mt 18:18	Jesus gives the apostles the authority to bind and loose
Mt. 28:16-20	Jesus commissions the apostles to extend and rule his Kingdom on earth by baptizing and teaching
Lk 6:13	Jesus chooses twelve disciples as his apostles
Lk 10:16	Those who hear the apostles, hear Christ, and those who reject them reject Christ
Jn 21:15-17	Jesus restores Peter to grace after his betrayal, and reconfirms his primacy
Acts 1:15-26	The apostles choose a successor to the apostolic office of Judas, the betrayer

Acts 2:1-2:42	The descent of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of the spread of the Church
Rom 16:25-26	The mystery has been fully revealed so that all may believe in and obey God
Eph. 2:11-22	The household of God, made up of all who are reconciled to God in Jesus' blood, is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets; Jesus is the cornerstone and the source of unity and holiness for the Church
Eph 3:1-12	Through the Church, the Spirit reveals the mystery of Christ and God's purpose
Eph. 4:4-6	There is one Church, one faith, one Baptism, and unity in the Blessed Trinity
1 Tm 3:15	The Church is the household of God, and is the support and guardian of the truth
2 Tm. 1:13-14	The bishop Timothy to guard the truth that the Holy Spirit had taught him
Ti 2:15	Titus is to teach with all authority
Rv. 21:1-22:5	The Church as the Heavenly Jerusalem and the Bride of Christ, of surpassing beauty.

V. Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)

75-79	Divine revelation is transmitted by the living apostolic Tradition
85-86	The role of the Magisterium and its relationship to the Deposit of Faith
551-553	Jesus commissioned the twelve apostles and gave them his authority, giving Peter authority to govern the Church
748-776	The Church: her names and symbols, why she exists, who founded her, her mission and end as both human and divine, her task of making saints
781-801	The Church: People of God, Body of Christ, temple of the Holy Spirit
811-865	The meaning of stating that the Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.
871-933	The composition and roles of the faithful: The hierarchy and ecclesial ministers, the laity, those in consecrated life.

VI. Bonus Materials

- Article from Kenneth Whitehead from Catholic Answers
- Short break down of the four marks of the True Church

Embrace this pilgrimage and let the Holy Spirit come into our lives. As always if you have any questions please ask any of us.

In Christ,
Bryan