

811 The Church does not possess [the four characteristics] of herself; it is Christ who, through the Holy Spirit, makes his Church *one, holy, catholic, and apostolic*, and it is he who calls her to realize each of these qualities.

813 The Church is *one* because of her source: "...the unity in the Trinity"; because of her founder: for "the Word made flesh, the prince of peace, reconciled all men to God by the cross, restoring the unity of all in one people and one body"; and because of her "soul": the Holy Spirit, who brings about that communion of the faithful and joins them together intimately in Christ."

814 Among the Church's members, there are different gifts, offices, conditions, and ways of life. "Holding a rightful place in the communion of the Church there are also particular Churches that retain their own traditions." The great richness of such diversity is not opposed to the Church's unity. Yet sin and the burden of its consequences constantly threaten the gift of unity. and so the Apostle has to exhort Christians to "maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

815 What are these bonds of unity? Above all, charity "binds everything together in perfect harmony." But the unity of the pilgrim Church is also assured by visible bonds of communion: profession of one faith received from the Apostles; common celebration of divine worship..., apostolic succession through the sacrament of Holy Orders, maintaining the fraternal concord of God's family.

816 "The sole Church of Christ [is that] which our Savior, after his Resurrection, entrusted to Peter's pastoral care, commissioning him and the other apostles to extend and rule it... This Church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, subsists in (subsistit in) in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him."

817 In fact, "in this one and only Church of God from its very beginnings there arose certain rifts, which the Apostle strongly censures as damnable. But in subsequent centuries much more serious dissensions appeared and large communities became separated from full communion with the Catholic Church - for which, often enough, men of both sides were to blame." The ruptures that wound the unity of Christ's Body - we must distinguish heresy, apostasy, and schism - do not occur without human sin.:

821 The desire to recover the unity of all Christians is a gift of Christ and a call of the Holy Spirit. Certain things are required in order to respond adequately to this call: a permanent renewal of the Church in greater fidelity to her vocation; such renewal is the driving-force of the movement toward unity; conversion of heart as the faithful "try to live holier lives according to the Gospel"; for it is the unfaithfulness of the members to Christ's gift which causes divisions; prayer in common, because "change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and merits the name 'spiritual ecumenism'"; fraternal knowledge of each other; ecumenical formation of the faithful and especially of priests; dialogue among theologians and meetings among Christians of the different communities; collaboration among Christians in various areas of service to mankind.

823 "The Church...is held, as a matter of faith, to be unfailingly *holy*. This is because Christ, the Son of God, who with the Father and the Spirit is hailed as 'alone holy,' loved the Church as his Bride, giving himself up for her so as to sanctify her; he joined her to himself as his body and endowed her with the gift of the Holy Spirit for the glory of God"....

824 United with Christ, the Church is sanctified by him; through him and with him she becomes sanctifying. "All the activities of the Church are directed, as toward their end, to the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God." It is in the Church that "the fullness of the means of salvation" has been deposited. It is in her that "by the grace of God we acquire holiness." Thus, "the Church on earth is endowed already with a sanctity that is real though imperfect." In her members perfect holiness is something yet to be acquired.

830 The word "*catholic*" means "universal," in the sense of "according to the totality" or "in keeping with the whole." the Church is catholic in a double sense: first, because Christ is present in her. "Where there is Christ Jesus, there is the Catholic Church." In her subsists the fullness of Christ's body

united with its head; this implies that she receives from him "the fullness of the means of salvation" which he has willed: correct and complete confession of faith, full sacramental life, and ordained ministry in apostolic succession. the Church was, in this fundamental sense, catholic on the day of Pentecost and will always be so until the day of the Parousia. 831 Second, because she has been sent out by Christ on a mission to the whole of the human race.

833 The phrase "particular church," which is the diocese (or eparchy), refers to a community of the Christian faithful in communion of faith and sacraments with their bishop ordained in apostolic succession. These particular Churches "are constituted after the model of the universal Church; it is in these and formed out of them that the one and unique Catholic Church exists."

834 Particular Churches are fully catholic through their communion with one of them, the Church of Rome "which presides in charity." "For with this church, by reason of its pre-eminence, the whole Church, that is the faithful everywhere, must necessarily be in accord."

836-37 "All men are called to this catholic unity of the People of God." ... "Fully incorporated into the society of the Church are those who, possessing the Spirit of Christ, accept all the means of salvation given to the Church together with her entire organization, and who - by the bonds constituted by the profession of faith, the sacraments, ecclesiastical government, and communion - are joined in the visible structure of the Church of Christ, who rules her through the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops. Even though incorporated into the Church, one who does not however persevere in charity is not saved.

843-44 The Catholic Church recognizes in other religions that search, among shadows and images, for the God who is unknown yet near since he gives life and breath and all things and wants all men to be saved. Thus, the Church considers all goodness and truth found in these religions as "a preparation for the Gospel and given by him who enlightens all men that they may at length have life." In their religious behavior, however, men also display the limits and errors that disfigure the image of God in them: "Very often, deceived by the Evil One, men have become vain in their reasonings, and have exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and served the creature rather than the Creator. Or else, living and dying in this world without God, they are exposed to ultimate despair."

846 How are we to understand this affirmation ["Outside the Church there is no salvation"], often repeated by the Church Fathers? Re-formulated positively, it means that all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is his Body: "Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation: the one Christ is the mediator and the way of salvation; he is present to us in his body which is the Church. He himself explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and Baptism, and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through Baptism as through a door. Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it."

847-48 This affirmation is not aimed at those who, through no fault of their own, do not know Christ and his Church: "Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience - those too may achieve eternal salvation." "Although in ways known to himself God can lead those who, through no fault of their own, are ignorant of the Gospel, to that faith without which it is impossible to please him, the Church still has the obligation and also the sacred right to evangelize all men."

857 The Church is *apostolic* because she is founded on the apostles, in three ways: (1) she was and remains built on "the foundation of the Apostles," the witnesses chosen and sent on mission by Christ himself; (2) with the help of the Spirit dwelling in her, the Church keeps and hands on the teaching, the "good deposit," the salutary words she has heard from the apostles; (3) she continues to be taught, sanctified, and guided by the apostles until Christ's return, through their successors in pastoral office: the college of bishops, "assisted by priests, in union with the successor of Peter, the Church's supreme pastor."