

Worksheet 12

“One Catholic Church”

Answer Sheet

How and why did God establish the Catholic Church?

- God prepared His people through the covenants with Abraham, Moses, and David, and through the preaching of the prophets.
- All of this preparation reached its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who is the fullness of God’s Revelation.
- Jesus established the Church to continue His saving mission in the world.
- Through the Church, Christ remains present and active in history by:
 - proclaiming the Gospel
 - celebrating the sacraments
 - gathering believers into one Body
 - leading people into communion with God
- God established the Church so that the grace won by Christ might be offered to all nations and so that the Kingdom of God might grow in the world.
- In the life of the Church, especially in the sacraments, heaven and earth are joined in a real though still incomplete way, and God shares His divine life with us.

What is the difference between partial participation in truth and the fullness of Revelation, and how does this relate to Catholics and non-Catholics?

- Full Revelation means the complete and definitive self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ.
- God has spoken fully in His Son, and there will be no new public Revelation beyond Him.
- The Catholic Church faithfully preserves and hands on this Revelation through Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and the teaching office of the Church.
- Other Christians and even non-Christians can possess elements of truth and goodness.
- The Catholic Church teaches that whatever is true and good in other religions or communities can be seen as a preparation for the Gospel or a reflection of God’s light.
- For example, when another religion teaches justice, charity, or reverence for God, Catholics can recognize those as genuine goods.
- However, the fullness of the means of salvation subsists in the Catholic Church, because she possesses the fullness of sacramental life, apostolic teaching, and ecclesial communion established by Christ.
- This does not mean non-Catholics are cut off from all grace. God can work in their lives, and they can be related to the Church in ways known fully to God.
- But Catholics believe that the fullness of Christ’s revelation and the ordinary fullness of the means of grace are found in the Catholic Church.

What does it mean to be holy, and who is the supreme model of holiness in the Church?

- To be holy means to be set apart for God and transformed by His grace.
- Holiness is not only moral goodness, but participation in the life of God.
- The heart of holiness is love — love of God and love of neighbor.
- As we grow in charity, obedience, purity of heart, and self-giving love, we grow in holiness.
- The supreme model of holiness is Jesus Christ, because He is holiness itself in human flesh.
- The Church is holy because Christ her founder is holy, because the Holy Spirit dwells within her, and because she is given holy teachings, holy sacraments, and holy gifts.
- At the same time, the members of the Church are still sinners in need of ongoing conversion.

How is the Church universal, and how is this related to unity?

- The Church is universal — or catholic — because Christ sent her to all peoples in every place and every age.
- She is open to every race, language, nation, and culture.
- The Catholic Church includes many legitimate traditions, spiritualities, languages, and liturgical expressions.
- This universality does not destroy diversity, but gathers it into one communion.
- The Church's unity comes from her common faith, common sacraments, common worship, and communion in Christ.
- Even though Catholics around the world may worship in different rites or cultural forms, they remain united in the same Lord, the same faith, and the same baptism.
- This unity is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit, who binds the Church together in Christ.

What does it mean when we say that the Church is apostolic?

- The Church is apostolic because she is founded on the Apostles chosen by Christ.
- Before His Ascension, Jesus sent the Apostles to preach the Gospel and make disciples of all nations.
- The Church remains apostolic because she continues to hand on the teaching of the Apostles faithfully.
- She is also apostolic because the authority entrusted by Christ to the Apostles has been handed down through their successors, the bishops.
- This passing on of apostolic authority is called apostolic succession.
- Through apostolic succession, the Church remains connected across time to the mission and authority Christ gave the Apostles.
- The Church is also apostolic in her mission, because she continues to go forth into the world through preaching, teaching, prayer, liturgy, and works of charity.