

## Qualities of the Catholic Church

"And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Until we all meet into the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ; that henceforth we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive. But doing the Truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in Him who is the head, even Christ." (Ephesians 4:11-15)

### What kind of church did Jesus intend to establish?

A church that would be universal, united and holy, one that could not teach error and that could not be destroyed.

### 1. Which is the only church that has these qualities?

Only the Catholic Church.

### 2. What does the word "Catholic" mean?

It means "universal", embracing all.

### 3. Why is the Church of Jesus called "Catholic"?

Because it is:

- i. for all people
- ii. of all nations
- iii. of all times
- iv. it teaches all the doctrines of Jesus.

"Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20)

### 4. When was the name "Catholic" first used of the Church of Jesus?

In the year 110, by St. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, who wrote: "Where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church." (Ad Smyrn. 8:2)

"The Church is called Catholic by all Her enemies, as well as by Her own children. Heretics and schismatics can call the Church by no other name than Catholic, for they would not be understood, unless they used the name by which the Church is known to the whole world." (St. Augustine, 4th-5th Centuries, in De Vera Religione-"Concerning True Religion")

### 5. Is the Catholic Church spread all over the world?

Yes, its approximately 1,000,000,000 members are from all races and all colors and all sections of the world. The marvelous growth of the Church in spite of great obstacles and fierce persecution, is certainly a sign that it is the Church of Jesus Christ.

### 6. What is meant by the unity of the Catholic Church?

This unity means that all Catholics worldwide--

- i. Believe the same things,
- ii. Obey the same laws,
- iii. Receive the same Sacraments,
- iv. Worship at the same Holy Sacrifice of the Mass,
- v. Are all united under the same authority, that of the Pope in Rome.

"And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us." (John 17: 20-21)

### 7. Why is the Catholic Church holy?

It is holy because--

- i. Its Founder, Jesus Christ, is holy,
- ii. It teaches a holy doctrine.
- iii. It gives Its members what is needed to lead a holy life,
- iv. Thousands of Its members, from every walk of life, from every race and from every period of history, have become Saints.

### 8. Why cannot the Catholic Church ever teach error?

Because Jesus Christ promised to be always with His Church to protect it from error. "Going therefore, teach ye all nations... Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Matthew 28:19-20)

### 9. Has the Catholic Church ever changed its teaching?

No, for some 2,000 years the Catholic Church has taught the same things which Jesus Christ taught. "The Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth." (1 Timothy 3:15)

#### **10. Why can the Catholic Church never be destroyed?**

Because Jesus promised that... "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16:18)

"The God of Heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed." (Daniel 2:44)

#### **11. Has anyone ever tried to destroy the Church?**

Yes, as Jesus Christ foretold, many governments have tried without success to destroy the Church, and thousands of Catholics (martyrs) have died for the True Church. "They will deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And you shall be brought before governors, and before kings for my sake...and you will be hated by all men for My name's sake." (Matthew 10:17-22)

#### **FALSE SLOGANS**

1. "All religions are good."

There is only one religion, as far as God is concerned, since He established only one, not three hundred. All other religions were established by men who had no authority from God to start them. A religion is either true or false, just as a dollar bill is either genuine or counterfeit. Although a religion may have some truth, it is a false religion if it was established by a man.

2. "It does not make any difference what church you belong to."

It certainly does make a difference whether you belong to the one established by God or to one established by a man. It makes a difference whether you belong to the church that has everything necessary to lead you to Heaven, or not.

3. "All religions teach the same thing and believe in the same God."

All religions disagree on the important teachings of Jesus Christ. Some teach that He is God; others say He is not. Some teach that you have to be baptized to get into Heaven; others deny the necessity of Baptism. Some teach that Baptism really takes away sin, while others hold that it is only a symbol. If all religions believed in the same God, they would all have to teach the same things, since God cannot contradict Himself. God is not the author of confusion and contradiction, but of clear, unchangeable Truth. "Jesus Christ, yesterday and today, and the same forever. Be not led away with various and strange doctrines." (Heb. 13:8-9)

4. "It doesn't matter what you believe; it's how you act that counts."

It does matter, because you act according to your belief. It does matter whether you believe killing a person dying of an incurable disease is a sin or not, or whether marriage is to last until death or not. God has given the human race certain, definite truths to believe, and He expects everyone to believe them. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned." (Mark 16:16)

He told His Apostles: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations... teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:19-20)

#### **PRACTICAL POINTS**

1. You have an obligation to join the Catholic Church; otherwise, you do not have the fullness of truth available to you and that makes it a deterrent to getting to Heaven. However, joining the Church is a very serious step, because in so doing, you place yourself completely and forever under the authority of the Church in all things concerning religion. This means that you promise to believe everything the Church teaches, to worship the way the Catholic Church worships, and to obey all the laws of the Church.

2. It is not unreasonable to place yourself under the authority of the Catholic Church, because its authority is from God.

"He who heareth you, heareth Me; and he who despiseth you, despiseth Me; and he who despiseth Me, despiseth Him Who sent Me." (Luke 10:16)

3. By joining the Catholic Church, you can be sure of what you have to believe and do in order to save your soul, and you will be able to lead a good life and attain salvation with the graces flowing from the Sacraments and the countless other sources of spiritual strength provided by God's Church. Besides, you will have the peace of mind that comes only from knowing that you are doing God's will.

"For you were as sheep going astray; but you are now converted to the shepherd and bishop of your souls." (1 Peter 2:25)