



The Armor of Faith

Topic Summary: The Profession of Faith *One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church*



*“I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:18)
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Introduction

[Greeting:] → Welcome to “The Armor of Faith,” a show where we hope to bring our listeners closer to the Word of God and the blessings we receive through living in the fullness of the Catholic faith. My name is Doug and I will be your host as we discuss the blessings of the Church Christ built upon Peter.

I am joined today by my panel: [names]

Our panelists represent a rather broad background in catechesis gained in support of various parishes age, and spiritual interest groups. So, welcome to our panelists as well as to our listeners.

Let us open with a prayer:

Heavenly Father, we lift up our hearts in thanks and praise for this opportunity to open and share your Holy Word this day. We pray that You are with us and all our listeners as we share with one another the blessings of faith. We pray You will grant us wisdom and understanding as we seek to learn Your Holy Truth.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray.

Discussion:

Last time, we concluded a mini-series on the Holy Spirit within our **Profession of Faith** series. During our discussion, we mentioned that the Holy Spirit is a gift to us, a gift which sanctifies us and moves us in **faith**. We also mentioned that the Holy Spirit is a gift which comes bearing gifts which He distributes to each person as He wishes. (1 Corinthians 12:11) It is the Holy Spirit which brings us to the body of Christ and as scripture tells us, there are many parts, but only One body. (1 Corinthians 12:12) We are also told in John 14:26 that Jesus asked the Father

to send us an Advocate, the Holy Spirit to remind us of all which Jesus taught; therefore, as we seek to learn the truth of God, we may turn to the Holy Spirit to lead us. Indeed, we are told in 1 John 5:6, that *“The Spirit is the one that testifies, and the Spirit is truth.”*

It is the Holy Spirit which filled the disciples at Pentecost and guided the Apostles as Jesus sent them forth to *“make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit.”* (Matthew 28:19)

Today, we are going to discuss our belief in the **one, holy, catholic and apostolic church**; the **church** Christ built upon Peter. So, let's turn to that moment in scripture, where Jesus asks, *“Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”* (Matthew 16:13)

13 When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” (Matthew 16:13-14)

(Question 1: Here, we see a simple question. Even if we had not yet gotten to the books of Mark, Luke or John, from at least 15 previous chapters of Matthew, not to mention a few prophecies here and there in the Old Testament, we can pretty much say that by this point in the gospel of Matthew, we have a pretty firm understanding who Jesus is. So, what is the importance of this question by Jesus of His disciples, especially as they reply with such answers as John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets?)

15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter said in reply, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” 17 Jesus said to him in reply, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.

So, Jesus continues and says:

18 And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:18)

(Question 2: Here, Jesus makes the statement, *“upon this rock I will build my church.”* He continues and says, *“and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.”* Why is this moment significant to us?)

(Question 3: This verse of scripture is a stumbling block for denominations with founders who are not Jesus Christ, because this scripture reveals that it is Christ Himself who is the founder of His **church**. Some try to explain this passage away with interpretations such as, that Jesus was not talking about Peter as the mere pebble upon which Jesus would build His **church**, but that Jesus must have been pointing to a rock, a physical rock, in the distance. Another interpretation is that Jesus was referring to Himself as the rock. Given such explanations, what tells us to whom Jesus conferred authority to lead His **church** as Jesus prepared to go sit at the right hand of the Father?)

19 I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall

be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” 20
Then he strictly ordered his disciples to tell no one that he was the Messiah.
(Matthew 16:19)

19 *I will thrust you from your office
and pull you down from your station.*
20 *On that day I will summon my servant
Eliakim, son of Hilkiyah;*
21 *I will clothe him with your robe,
gird him with your sash,
confer on him your authority.*
*He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
and to the house of Judah.*
22 *I will place the key of the House of David on his shoulder;
what he opens, no one will shut,
what he shuts, no one will open.*
(Isaiah 22:19-22)

4 *When they arrived in Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church, as well as by the apostles and the presbyters, and they reported what God had done with them.* 5 *But some from the party of the Pharisees who had become believers stood up and said, “It is necessary to circumcise them and direct them to observe the Mosaic law.”* 6 *The apostles and the presbyters met together to see about this matter.* 7 *After much debate had taken place, Peter got up and said to them, “My brothers, you are well aware that from early days God made his choice among you that through my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe.”* (Acts 15:4-7)

(Question 4: In this passage from the book of Acts, we observe a matter under discussion by those within the early church. What does this moment reveal to us in relation to Matthew 16:19 where Jesus said, “I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven?”

(CCC: 751) The word “Church” (Latin *ecclesia*, from the Greek *ek-kalein*, to “call out of”) means a **convocation or an assembly**. It designates the **assemblies** of the people, usually for a religious purpose. **Ekklesia** is used frequently in the Greek Old Testament for the **assembly** of the Chosen People before God, above all for their **assembly** on Mount Sinai where Israel received the Law and was established by God as his holy people. By calling itself “Church,” the first community of Christian **believers** recognized itself as heir to that assembly. **In the Church, God is “calling together” his people from all the ends of the earth.** The equivalent Greek term **Kyriak**, from which the English word **Church** and the German **Kirche** are derived, means “**what belongs to the Lord.**”

(Question 5: This article of the Catechism of the Catholic Church provides us with some background as to the meaning of the word, “church.” As we reflect upon this, what does it reveal about the meaning and purpose of a church?)

1 I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, 3 striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: 4 one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:1-6)

(CCC: 752) In Christian usage, the word “**church**” designates the **liturgical assembly**, but also the **local community** or the **whole universal community of believers**. These three meanings are inseparable. “**The Church**” is the People that God gathers in the whole world. She exists in local communities and is made real as a liturgical, above all a Eucharistic, **assembly**. She draws her life from the **word** and the **Body of Christ** and so herself becomes **Christ’s Body**.

(Question 6: Here, we see “**church**” defined by the “**liturgical assembly**,” the “local community,” and the “whole universal community of believers.” As we reflect upon the passage I just shared from the book of Ephesians and this article from the **Catholic Church**, what appears to be the common theme and how do we reconcile that theme with the fact we appear to have some 4,000+ denominations, at least by someone's count, of those professing to be followers of Christ?)

(CCC: 789) The comparison of the **Church** with the body casts light on the intimate bond between Christ and his **Church**. Not only is she gathered around him; **she is united in him, in his body**. Three aspects of the **Church** as the Body of Christ are to be more specifically noted: the **unity** of all her members with each other as a result of their union with Christ; Christ as head of the Body; and the Church as bride of Christ.

20 “I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. 22 And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me. (John 17:20-23)

(CCC: 820) “**Christ bestowed unity on his Church from the beginning**. This unity, we believe, subsists in the **Catholic Church** as something she can never lose, and we hope that it will continue to increase until the end of time.” **Christ always gives his Church the gift of unity, but the Church must always pray and work to maintain, reinforce, and perfect the unity that Christ wills for her**. This is why Jesus himself prayed at the hour of his Passion, and does not cease praying to his Father, for the unity of his disciples: “That they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us, . . . so that the world may know that you have sent me.” **The desire to recover the unity of all Christians is a gift of Christ and a call of the Holy Spirit.**

(Question 7: We see that Christ desires His **Church** to be unified so we may all be one within the body of Christ, yet, as we have already discussed, there appear to be many divisions, not only external, but also internal. What do we believe drives these divisions and how might we set

about removing them?)

(CCC: 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, the **Church** is **catholic** 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.

1 When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. 2 And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. 3 Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. 5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. 6 At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. 7 They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, “Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how does each of us hear them in his own native language? 9 We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, 11 both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God.” 12 They were all astounded and bewildered, and said to one another, “What does this mean?” 13 But others said, scoffing, “They have had too much new wine.” (Acts 2:1-12)

(Question 8: An axiom I developed as I worked with a variety of organizations and teams over the years is that “communication is always the hardest piece,” for there are so many barriers and challenges towards ensuring that a message sent is the message understood, comprehended, and commonly acted upon by the recipients. As we reflect upon CCC 820 and 830 as well as what was experienced on the day of Pentecost after the resurrection (Acts 2:1-12), we see that the Holy Spirit enabled those who set out among the people to proclaim the gospel. For those who spoke and those who heard, the Holy Spirit allowed a common language spoken and heard. The question, then, for us removed by some 2000 years, is, in what ways may we allow the Holy Spirit to enable us and use us to help bring forth the unity Christ prayed for to His Father in heaven? (John 17:20-23))

(CCC: 873) The very differences which the Lord has willed to put between the members of his body serve its unity and mission. For “in the **Church** there is diversity of ministry but unity of mission. To the **apostles** and their successors Christ has entrusted the office of teaching, sanctifying, and governing in his name and by his power. But the laity are made to share in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ; they have therefore, in the **Church** and in the world, their own assignment in the mission of the whole People of God.” Finally, “from both groups [hierarchy and laity] there exist

Christian faithful who are consecrated to God in their own special manner and serve the salvific mission of the Church through the profession of the evangelical counsels.”

(Question 9: Here, we see referenced within the church a “diversity of ministry, but unity of mission.” We, who are commonly referred to as the laity, are not mere spectators or the audience in the pews, but are called to “share in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ.” So, in our last few minutes, let me ask, how might we share in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ?”

Quotes:

There are not a hundred people in America who hate the **Catholic Church**. There are millions of people who hate what they wrongly believe to be the **Catholic Church** — which is, of course, quite a different thing. – *Archbishop Fulton Sheen*

About Jesus Christ and the **Church**, I simply know they’re just one thing, and we shouldn’t complicate the matter. – *Saint Joan of Arc*

If I were not a **Catholic**, and were looking for the true **Church** in the world today, I would look for the **one Church** which did not get along well with the world; in other words, I would look for the **Church** which the world hated. – *Archbishop Fulton Sheen*

We’re **Catholics** before we’re Democrats. We’re **Catholics** before we’re Republicans. We’re even **Catholics** before we’re Americans, because we know that God has a demand on us prior to any government demand on us. And this has been the story of the martyrs through the centuries. – *Archbishop Charles Chaput*

In her voyage across the ocean of this world, the **Church** is like a great ship being pounded by the waves of life’s different stresses. Our duty is not to abandon ship but to keep her on her course. – *Saint Boniface*

Final Thoughts:

I was born and raised outside the **Catholic Church**. I was brought to the **Catholic Church**, not by one encounter or some grand epiphany, for I believe God has always been in my life, but for a long time I did not recognize the various ways He was calling to me. As I look back on my journey, it was through a long series of events and interactions with a variety of people that I was slowly brought to the point where I had to consider the direction of my **faith**.

The truth be known, I became a member of the **Catholic Church** before I fully comprehended why it was the right place. I was not looking for a **church**, nor did I fully understand why there are so many different denominations. In fact, I was raised, not necessarily by my parents, but by society, to look upon the **Catholic Church** as something suspect. I did not know history or the meaning of the fullness of **faith**. It was not until years later that I would encounter Matthew 16:18-19, though I know I had read it on at least three different times as I endeavored to read the Bible on my own.

As I look back on those verses, I observe that Christ established a **church** and He made the promise that the gates of the netherworld would not prevail against it. If I believe in Christ, then, it is His **church** I must find if I am to follow the fullness of His truth.

I have said on many occasions, “communication is the hardest piece.” It is God who desires to communicate with us, but it is the evil one who endeavors to ensure we do not get the message. If we are confused, let us not forget that Jesus asked the Father to send us an Advocate, the Holy Spirit, to remind us of all which Jesus taught. (John 14:26) Let us also remember that it is the Holy Spirit which testifies to the truth. (1 John 5:6) Let us, then, allow the Holy Spirit to guide us so we may fulfill our role within the **one holy, catholic, and apostolic church** which Christ built upon Peter.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we continue our Profession of Faith series and discuss our belief in one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

Let us conclude with a prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to open and discuss Your Holy Word. We pray that as we go our separate ways, You will continue to walk with us and help us to see how we may put on the armor of **truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation**, and the **Word** of the gospel not only for the benefit of our lives, but also the lives of all who cross our path. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

Thank you all and God bless.

Next Session: [The Profession of Faith: One Baptism for the Forgiveness of Sins](#)