

# +AGGIE CATHOLIC APOLOGETICS TEAM+

*Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence...  
- 1 Peter 3:15*

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## **The Church is Catholic** **November 10, 2014**

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*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and Lo, I am with you always, until the close of the age." – Matthew 28:19-20*

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**Let us take a look at the primary questions for this evening...**

### **What does "catholic" mean?**

*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."<sup>307</sup> 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"<sup>308</sup> 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<sup>309</sup> and will always be so until the day of the Parousia. – CCC 830*

### **How is the Church intuitively "catholic?"**

*"The Church of Christ is really present in all legitimately organized local groups of the faithful, which, in so far as they are united to their pastors, are also quite appropriately called Churches in the New Testament. . . . In them the faithful are gathered together through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, and the mystery of the Lord's Supper is celebrated. . . . In these communities, though they may often be small and poor, or existing in the diaspora, Christ is present, through whose power and influence the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church is constituted."<sup>312</sup> – CCC 832*

*Particular Churches are fully catholic through their communion with one of them, the Church of Rome "which presides in charity."<sup>315</sup> For with this church, by reason of its pre-eminence, the whole Church, that is the faithful everywhere, must necessarily be in accord.<sup>316</sup> Indeed, "from the incarnate Word's descent to us, all Christian churches everywhere have held and hold the great Church that is here [at Rome] to be their only basis and foundation since, according to the Savior's promise, the gates of hell have never prevailed against her."<sup>317</sup> – CCC 834*

### ***Who belongs to the Catholic Church?***

*"All men are called to this catholic unity of the People of God. . . . And to it, in different ways, belong or are ordered: the Catholic faithful, others who believe in Christ, and finally all mankind, called by God's grace to salvation."<sup>320</sup> – CCC 836*

### ***How does the Church address non-Christians?***

*To reunite all his children, scattered and led astray by sin, the Father willed to call the whole of humanity together into his Son's Church. The Church is the place where humanity must rediscover its unity and salvation. The Church is "the world reconciled." She is that bark which "in the full sail of the Lord's cross, by the breath of the Holy Spirit, navigates safely in this world." According to another image dear to the Church Fathers, she is prefigured by Noah's ark, which alone saves from the flood.<sup>334</sup> – CCC 845*

### ***How does its "catholicity" impact the Mission of the Church?***

*The missionary mandate. "Having been divinely sent to the nations that she might be 'the universal sacrament of salvation,' the Church, in obedience to the command of her founder and because it is demanded by her own essential universality, strives to preach the Gospel to all men":<sup>339</sup> "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and Lo, I am with you always, until the close of the age."<sup>340</sup> – CCC 849*

### **References:**

*New American Bible.* <http://uscgb.org/bible/>

*CCC 830-856. Catechism of the Catholic Church.*

[http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc\\_css/archive/catechism/ccc\\_toc.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/ccc_toc.htm)