



The Catholic Church



My Experience of the Catholic Church?

1. List four words that describe for you – personally – **your experience** with the Catholic Church:

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+ _____

2. If someone asked you: “*What is the **purpose** of the Catholic Church?*” – in TWO SENTENCES .. What would you say?

Sentence 1:

Sentence 2:

3. If someone asked you: “*Why do you want to renew your membership in the Catholic Church?*” - .. What would you say?

The Catholic Church: The Christian Community

The Catholic Church was begun by Jesus Christ to continue His mission.
Matthew 28: 16-20 / Matthew 18: 18-20

What is the meaning/purpose of the Catholic Church?

CCC# 737 - The mission of Christ and the Holy Spirit is brought to completion in the Church....

CCC# 738 - The Church is sent to announce, bear witness, make present and spread the mystery of the communion of the Holy Trinity (Word, Worship, Service)

CCC# 751 - The word CHURCH means "*assembly*":
.. ecclesia (Latin), Ekkalein (Greek)
... the assembly of the Chosen People before God.
The word CHURCH comes from Kirche (German), ...
...which means: "*what belongs to the Lord.*"

Cardinal Dulles offered several models for the Catholic Church:

+ PEOPLE OF GOD / BODY OF CHRIST

Community of faith, hope and charity
... continuing the ministry of Jesus in word, worship and service.

+ HERALD OF GOD'S WORD

proclaiming the Word of God

+ SACRAMENT

visible sign of God's presence ... means of grace

+ SERVANT

Called to minister to those in need, love of neighbor

+ COMMUNITY OF DISCIPLES OF JESUS

All baptized Christians, called by the Father to grow in Christ Jesus with a variety of gifts / charismas....united and strengthened by the Holy Spirit

+ INSTITUTION

Necessary for organization, unites the faithful, hierarchical in nature, Teaching office of the Church

The Four Marks of the Catholic Church

ONE ... Ephesians 4: 3- 5 CCC # 813-822

“Make every effort to keep among you the unity of Spirit through the bond of peace. Let there be one Body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God.”

The unity of the pilgrim Church is also assured by visible bonds of communion:

- + ONE profession of faith received from the Apostles
- + ONE apostolic succession through the sacraments of Holy Orders
- + ONE common celebration of divine worship, especially of the sacraments.

HOLY 1 Corinthians 3: 16-17 CCC # 823-829

“Do you not know that you are God’s temple, and that God’s Spirit abides within you? If anyone destroys this temple of God, God will destroy him. God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.”

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 heart that by grace of God we acquire holiness..

Hence the Church gathers sinners already caught up in Christ’s salvation but still on the way to holiness.

The Church, then, is the holy People of God, and her members are called “saints”.

CATHOLIC... Matthew 28: 19-20 CCC # 830-856

“Go, therefore, and make disciples from all the nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teach them to fulfill all that I have commanded you. I am with you always until the end of the world.”

The word “catholic” means “universal”

The Church is catholic because she has been sent out by Christ on a mission to the whole of the human race. All men are called to belong to the new People of God.

APOSTOLICEphesians 2: 19-22 CCC # 857-865

“Therefore you are no longer strangers or sojourners, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of the household of God. You are the house built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, and whose cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. In him the whole structure is joined together and rises to be a holy temple in the Lord. In him you too are being built to become a sanctuary in which God lives by his Spirit.”

The Church is apostolic because she is founded on the apostles. She was and remains built on the foundation of the Apostles... the Church keeps and hands on the teaching... she has heard from the apostles.... She continues to be taught, sanctified and guided by the apostles until Christ' 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.

The whole Church is apostolic.... All the members of the Church share in this mission, though in various ways. The Christian vocation is, of its nature, a vocation to the apostolate... Indeed, we call an apostolate “every activity of the Mystical Body” that aims to spread the Kingdom of God over all the earth.

