INTRODUCTION TO THE CHURCH

(The information on this outline can be found in paragraphs 748-975 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and in the Second Vatican Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*.)

I. The Church in God’s Plan
   A. Names and Images of the Church (CCC 751-757) (*Lumen Gentium* 6)
      1. Word “church” means a convocation or an assembly
      2. In Christian usage, it means the liturgical assembly, the local community, or the universal community of believers
      3. Symbols of the Church
         a. Sheepfold (Jn.10:1-10)
         b. Cultivated field (Mt. 21:33-43)
         c. Building of God
         d. Bride of Christ (Rev.19:7)
         e. That Jerusalem which is above (Rev. 19:7)
         f. Our mother
   B. The Church’s Origin, Foundation, and Mission (CCC 758-769)
      1. A plan born in the Father’s Heart
      2. The Church: Foreshadowed from the world’s beginning
      3. The Church: Prepared for in the Old Covenant
      4. The Church: Instituted by Christ Jesus
      5. The Church: Revealed by the Holy Spirit
      6. The Church: Perfected in glory (LG 48)
   C. The Mystery of the Church (CCC 770-776) (LG 8)
      1. The Church: Both visible and spiritual
      2. The Church: Mystery of man’s union with God
      3. The universal Sacrament of Salvation

II. The Church: People of God, Body of Christ, Temple of the Holy Spirit
   A. The Church: People of God (CCC 782-786) (LG 9)
      1. Characteristics of the People of God (1 Pet 2:9)
      2. A priestly, prophetic, and royal people
   B. The Church: Body of Christ (CCC 787 –796) (LG 7)
      1. The Church is communion with Jesus
      2. “One Body”
      3. “Christ is the Head of this Body” (Col 1:18; Gal 4:19)
      4. The Church is the Bride of Christ
   C. The Church is the Temple of the Holy Spirit (CCC 797-801)
      1. Charisms

III. The Church is One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic
   “This is the sole Church of Christ, which in the Creed we profess to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic” (LG 8) (CCC 811)
   A. The Church is One (CCC 813 – 822)
1. “The sacred mystery of the Church’s unity” (*Unitatis Redintegratio* 2)
2. Wounds to unity
3. Toward unity

**B. The Church is Holy (CCC 823 – 829)**

**C. The Church is Catholic (CCC 830 – 856)**
1. What does “catholic” mean?
2. Each particular Church is “catholic”
3. Who belongs to the Catholic Church?
4. The Church and non–Christians
5. “Outside the Church there is no salvation”
6. Mission: A requirement of the Church’s catholicity

**D. The Church is Apostolic (CCC 857 – 865)**
1. The Apostles’ mission
2. The bishops–successors of the Apostles
3. The apostolate

**IV. Christ’s Faithful: Hierarchy, Laity, and Consecrated Life**

**A. The Hierarchical Constitution of the Church (CCC 874-896)**
1. Why the ecclesial ministry?
2. The episcopal college and its head, the Pope
3. The teaching office
4. The sanctifying office
5. The governing office

**B. The Lay Faithful (CCC 897-913)**
1. The vocation of lay people
2. The participation of lay people in Christ’s priestly office
3. Participation in Christ’s prophetic office
4. Participation in Christ’s kingly office

**C. The Consecrated Life (CCC 914-933)**
1. Evangelical counsels, consecrated life (LG 42-43)
2. One great tree, with many branches
3. The eremitic life
4. Consecrated virgins and widows (1 Cor. 7: 34-36)
5. Religious life
6. Secular institutes
7. Societies of apostolic life
8. Consecration and mission: proclaiming the King who is coming

**V. The Communion of Saints**

**A. Communion in Spiritual Goods (CCC 949-953)**

**B. The Communion of the Church of Heaven and Earth (CCC 954-959)**

**VI. Mary: Mother of Christ, Mother of the Church**

**A. Mary’s Motherhood with regard to the Church (CCC 964-970)**
1. Wholly united with her Son
2. Also in her Assumption
3. She is our Mother in the order of grace (CCC 968) (LG 61)
B. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin (CCC 971)
C. Mary: Eschatological Icon of the Church (CCC 972)
   1. In Mary, we not only have a model for our lives, but we see what the Church will be like in heaven (LG 69)

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