

# 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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