



What It Means to be a Church?

St. Michael's Church
Fr. Jeffrey S. Tunnichliff
January 29, 2018

What It Means to be a Church?



What It Means to be a Church?

Why are we here tonight?

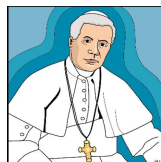


150th anniversary of our diocese

To talk about “church”

What It Means to be a Church?

What comes to mind
when you hear the word “church”?



What It Means to be a Church?

Church as a “building”

- What do we expect a church to look like outside?
- What should a church have inside it?

What It Means to be a Church?

- Uppercase “C” vs. lowercase “c”
- Is there a difference when we say “a church” vs. “the Church”

What It Means to be a Church?

“The word *Church* is a translation of biblical words: the Hebrew word *qahal*, and the Greek word *ekklesia*, both of which mean “gathering of people or community” for worship.”

USCCB, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, 113.
Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 751 & 752.

What It Means to be a Church?

Church as

building

parish

diocese

world-wide

transcendent

What It Means to be a Church?

When was the “church” born?

- When blood flowed from Jesus’ side on the Cross
 - “The origin and growth of the Church are symbolized by the blood and water which flowed from the open side of the crucified Jesus.” (*U.S. Catechism for Adults*, 114. cf. John 19:34).
- Pentecost
 - Acts 2:1-4
 - “The Holy Spirit revealed the Church at Pentecost” (*U.S. Catechism for Adults*, 114).
- CCC 763 – “The Lord Jesus inaugurated his Church by preaching the Good News, that is, the coming of the Reign of God, promised over the ages in the scriptures.”



“The Holy Trinity brought the Church into being. The Father called the church into existence. The Son established the Church. The Holy Spirit filled the church with power and wisdom at Pentecost.” (*U.S. Catechism for Adults*, 112).

What It Means to be a Church?

History of the Early Church as told in the *Acts of the Apostles*

- Acts 1:4-6 - Jesus told them to ‘wait for the Father’s promise’ i.e. holy spirit. The church won’t be the church without the holy spirit
- Acts 2:1-11 - Pentecost
- What Jesus did Peter and Paul will do
 - Acts 3:1ff - Peter heals the crippled man and it is in Jesus’ name
 - Acts 5:17-42 – Peter is put on trial
- Acts 7 – Stephen (first deacon) becomes the first martyr
- Acts 8:1b-3 - Persecution led to the spread of the church
- Acts 9 – Paul’s Conversion
- Acts 10 & 11 - Begins the mission to the Gentiles
- Acts 13-14, 16-21 - Paul’s missionary journey’s → Evangelizing church
- Acts 15 - the Council of Jerusalem (collegiality)

What It Means to be a Church?

Hierarchy

Pope - Matthew 16:18-19

Bishops - 1 Timothy 3:1-7

Priests - "presbyters"

Deacons - 1 Timothy 3:8-13

Laity

What It Means to be a Church?

"The Church needs an institutional framework for its stability, continuity, and mission for serving the cause of the Gospel and opening people to God's call to holiness. Problems with the institution are not arguments for its removal, but for its renewal."

U.S. Catechism for Adults, 121

What It Means to be a Church?

The church has had its struggles

→ Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation

- Example - selling of indulgences

What It Means to be a Church?

"Thus Counter-Reformation Catholicism came to conceive the Bishop of Rome as the chief executive of a global enterprise whose local leaders (the bishops) were, in effect, papal delegates (or branch managers) for their respective areas; this, it was thought, was the appropriate embodiment of Catholic unity and apostolicity for the early modern age."

Weigel, *Evangelical Catholicism*, 55.

What It Means to be a Church?

The Second Vatican Council

- "Thus, the council did not seek to remake the church from the ground up. It did not seek to change her basic mission or doctrines. It did not seek to weaken the vocation of the Catholic Church as "mother and teacher" of all humanity. Instead, the council sought to make the church *more* fruitful in her work by reinvigorating the forms and means of Catholic life in the light of new conditions." (Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 107).
- "In other words, *Lumen Gentium* both affirmed and adjusted Catholics' understanding of their church. It confirmed papal authority but restored the collegiality of bishops. It confirmed the hierarchal nature of the church but restored the Catholic sense of *communio*-that is, the church as a communion of free persons and local churches. It confirmed the unique priesthood of the ordained but restored an awareness of the common priesthood of all believers and the dignity of laypersons, each of whom shares "in the obligation of spreading the faith to the best of his ability" (LG 17)."(Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 113).

What It Means to be a Church?

Dulles, Avery, S.J. *Models of the Church (Expanded Edition)*. Image Books/Doubleday: New York. 2002.

- "I draw the conclusion that a balanced theology of the Church must find a way of incorporating the major affirmations of each basic ecclesiological type...we must work simultaneously with different models." (2)
- "The Church exists only as a dynamic reality achieving itself in history, and only through some kind of sharing in the Church's life can one understand at all sufficiently what the Church is. A person lacking this inner familiarity given by faith could not be competent judge of the value of the models." (19).
- "Pursued alone, any single model will lead to distortions." (20).

What It Means to be a Church?

Church as Institution

- "The Church of Christ could not perform its mission without some stable organizational features." (Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 27)
- The three power/functions (Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 29-30)
 - Teaching
 - Sanctifying
 - Governing
- The institutional model helps provide "a strong sense of corporate identity" (Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 35)

What It Means to be a Church?

Church as Servant

"Thus in Article 3, after asserting that the Church should enter into conversation with all men, the Constitution teaches that just as Christ came into the world not to be served but to serve, so the Church, carrying on the mission of Christ, seeks to serve the world by fostering the brotherhood of all men." (Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 84)

What It Means to be a Church?

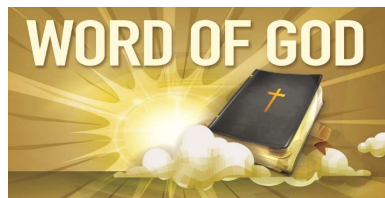
Church as Herald

- "The Church is the congregation that is gathering together by the word—a word that ceaselessly summons it to repentance and reform." (Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 76).
- "The goal of the Church, in this style of theology, is simply to herald the message. This ecclesiology goes with a strong evangelistic missionary thrust." (Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 76).
→ "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life"

What It Means to be a Church?

Church as Herald

- The Word we herald is found in the Bible
- Do Catholics know the Bible?
 - Bible readings and prayers at mass



What It Means to be a Church?

“Of all things visible and invisible”

What It Means to be a Church?

The Church as Mystical Communion

"All the external means of grace (sacraments, scripture, laws, etc.) are secondary and subordinate; their role is simply to dispose men for an interior union with God effected by grace." (Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 44)

What It Means to be a Church?

The Church as Mystical Communion

"In 1943 Pius XII published his famous encyclical in which, as we have seen, he defined the Church of Jesus Christ as the Mystical Body of Christ, and stated that the Mystical Body is identical with the Roman Catholic Church. This encyclical attempts to harmonize the "Mystical Body" concept with the societal concept of Bellarmine. It points to the pope and the bishops as the joints and ligaments of the body, and asserts that "those who exercise sacred power in the Body are its first and chiefs members." The laity are said to "assist the ecclesiastical hierarchy in spreading the Kingdom of the divine Redeemer" and thus to occupy an honorable, even though often lowly, place in the Christian Community." (Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 44).

What It Means to be a Church?

The Church as Mystical Communion

- "Communion in the sense of sociological group would be simply *horizontal*; it would be a matter of friendly relationships between man and man. What is distinctive to the Church, he maintains is the *vertical* dimension-the divine life disclosed in the incarnate Christ and communicated to men through his Spirit." (Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 42, italics my emphasis)
- "The idea of the Church as Body of Christ is found in Paul. In Rom. 12 and 1 Cor. 12 the main point is the mutual union, mutual concern, and mutual dependence of the members of the local community upon one another. No mention is made in these epistles of Christ as head, still less of the Holy spirit as soul. In Ephesians and Colossians, on the other hand, the accent is on the headship of Christ and on the subordination of the Total Church to him." (Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 43).

What It Means to be a Church?

Where do we turn for strength?

The Sacraments



Year of the Eucharist

- The Eucharist “the source and summit of Christian Life” (*Lumen Gentium*, 11).
- Eucharist makes the Church vs. the church makes Eucharist

What It Means to be a Church?

Put these words in “proper order”



catholic

one

apostolic

holy

*Bonus – where does the order come from?

What It Means to be a Church?

One

Acts 4:32-35

"The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common. With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all. There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need."



What It Means to be a Church?

One

- As a sign of our unity we have the same Mass (structure, readings, and prayers)
- Our Eucharistic Prayers of becoming one body and one spirit
- The Lord's Prayer
- John 17:20-21 – "I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 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."
- "At the same time, the Catholic Church recognizes that the Holy Spirit uses other churches and ecclesial communities "as means of salvation, whose power drives from the fullness of grace and truth that Christ has entrusted to the Catholic Church" (CCC, no. 819; LG, no. 8). (U.S. Catechism for Adults, 128)

What It Means to be a Church?

Holy

- Matthew 5:48 – “So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect”
- 1 Peter 1:15-16 – “But, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in every aspect of your conduct, for it is written, “Be holy because I am holy.”
- Leviticus 19:2b “Be holy, for I, the LORD, your God, am holy.” (Cf. Lev. 11:45)

What It Means to be a Church?

catholic

- Capital “C” vs. lowercase “c”
- Unity in diversity → the Eastern Rites

What It Means to be a Church?

Apostolic

- Bishops as successors to the Apostles (cf. *U.S. Catechism for Adults*, 132-133)
- The *United States Catechism for Adults* provides the following definition of Tradition, "The living transmission of the message of the Gospel in the Church, flowing from the oral preaching of the Apostles and the written message of salvation under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Scripture). Tradition is preserved and handed on as the Deposit of Faith under the guidance of the bishops, successors to the Apostles." (504).

What It Means to be a Church?

Apostolic

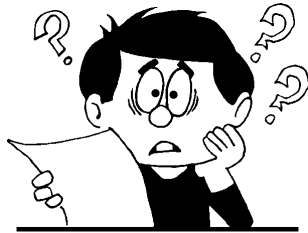
- New circumstances arise and the Church interprets these new circumstances "looking into the signs of the times by the light of faith" (from the "Eucharistic Prayer for Use in Various Needs III)
- Deuteronomy 4:2 – "In your observance of the commandments of the LORD, your God, which I am commanding you, you shall not add to what I command you nor subtract from it."

What It Means to be a Church?

Apostolic

- What about the laity? – The *United States Catechism for Adults* states, “By Baptism, every member of the Church participates in the Christ’s role as priest, prophet, and king (which is understood in terms of being the shepherd of his people.) The laity do this in the context of their lives within families, parish communities, civic communities, and the workplace (134).”

What It Means to be a Church?



So,
how we are
to be “Church”?

What It Means to be a Church?

From my recent document "What Sort of Church Should We Be?

- "800 years ago, God said to St. Francis of Assisi, "repair my church." At first, St. Francis thought God was referring to the local church building but God had something much bigger in mind, to repair the church as it was being lived out. I believe God is saying to us today "repair my church" with the same meaning when he said these words to St. Francis." (3).
- "I believe we are at a crossroads in the future of our Church. By "Church" I am not referring to individual parishes or dioceses but as a universal church. We can choose to withdraw ourselves within the Church for our own self-preservation or we can choose to renew ourselves for the mission that Jesus Christ has called us to." (1)

What It Means to be a Church?

"The Church of the twenty-first century cannot, however, invite men and women to faith on the basis of authority. It must deploy a bolder, more evangelical appeal. It much change the game." (Weigel, *Evangelical Catholicism*, 29).

What It Means to be a Church?

Before we get caught up in doing, Pope Francis writes in *The Joy of the Gospel*, "The problem is not always an excess of activity, but rather activity undertaken badly, without adequate motivation, without a spirituality which would permeate it and make it pleasurable. As a result, work becomes more tiring than necessary..." (EG, 82)."

What It Means to be a Church?

From Archbishop Chaput of Philadelphia
in *Strangers in a Strange Land*

- "The Gospel should move us to change the world for the better, not bless it as it is" (78).
- "The "power" of the Church resides not in her public statements or material resources, her structures or social services, but in her ability to form and lead her people-and to be their first loyalty" (188).

What It Means to be a Church?

From Robert S. Rivers, CSP in *From Maintenance to Mission: Evangelization and Revitalization of the Parish*

- "In the years before 1965, the Catholic Church was a powerful institution, with strong authority structures, clear belief systems, a rather, rigid ritual life, clear moral standards, and a well-articulated behavioral expectations" (4).
- "Very soon after the close of the council, everything in the church seemed to be up for grabs, and this upheaval still exists. To many Catholics today, the church still seems to be in a state of crisis." "Yet we don't have to see these post-Vatican II years only as years of crisis. Instead, we can try another perspective, adapted from theologian Walter Brueggemann: as part of a cyclical process of orientation, disorientation, and reorientation" (5).
- "Organizational development theory tells us that healthy organizations are ones that have a clear sense of mission. Low morale often results from the aimlessness and malaise that come from the lack of mission. When we have a clear outward focus, some of our internal problems tend to fall into perspective. When we are not absorbed by the mission, these internal problems are magnified" (23).

What It Means to be a Church?

From Brenda Herman in *Build a Life-Giving Parish: The Gift of Counsel in the Modern World*.

- "The parish must consciously and intentionally come to see itself as THE primary formator of the laity for their role in society" (xv)
- "Great (versus good) parish programs enable participants to make the necessary connections between their faith and their daily living" (xv).
- "Parish community-building programs must also help members understand the need to build community in their neighborhoods and workplaces. The parish is not an escape from the challenges of family living, of being a good neighbor, or of an unhappy workplace" (xvi).

What It Means to be a Church?

“Some people do not commit themselves to mission because they think that nothing will change and that it is useless to make the effort. They think: “Why should I deny myself my comforts and pleasures if I won't see any significant result?” This attitude makes it impossible to be a missionary” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 275).

What It Means to be a Church?

Upcoming Presentations for Lent

- Monday, February 26th at 7:00 p.m.
- Monday, March 12th at 7:00 p.m.

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Resources

On my website (www.renewaloffaith.org)

- Tunnichliff, Rev. Jeffrey S., "What Sort of Church Should We Be?" November 24, 2017. Available online at <http://www.renewaloffaith.org/what-sort-of-church-should-we-be-.html>.
- Tunnichliff, Rev. Jeffrey S., *We Profess, We Believe: One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church* (video presentation at Immaculate Conception Church, Ithaca, NY on May 26, 2015. Available online at <http://www.renewaloffaith.org/video---one-holy-catholic-and-apostolic-church.html>.

What It Means to be a Church?

Resources – Reference Sources

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Second Edition. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997.

Compendium: Catechism of the Catholic Church. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. USCCB, 2006.

St. Joseph Edition of The New American Bible Revised Edition. New Jersey, Catholic Book Publishing Corp. 2010.

USCCB, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults. Washington, DC: USCCB, 2006.

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Resources – Vatican & USCCB

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)*, The Word Among Us Press, Frederick, MD. Copyright 2013 by Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Citta del Vaticano.

Second Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution On The Church, Lumen Gentium* in Vatican Council II, Volume I: The Conciliar and Postconciliar Documents, New Revised Edition. Austin Flannery, O.P., Ed. Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company. 1996. Also available online at http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html

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Resources – Books

Chaput, Charles J. O.F.M. Cap. *Render Unto Caesar: Serving the Nation by Living Our Catholic Beliefs in Political Life*. Doubleday, New York. 2008.

Chaput, Charles J. O.F.M. Cap. *Strangers in a Strange Land: Living the Catholic Faith in a Post-Christian World*. Henry Holt and Company, New York. 2017.

Dulles, Avery, S.J. *Models of the Church (Expanded Edition)*. Image Books/Doubleday: New York. 2002.

What It Means to be a Church?

Resources – Books cont'd

Hermann, Brenda MSBT, ACSW and Msgr. James T. Gaston, MA, STL. *Build a Life-Giving Parish: The Gift of Counsel in the Modern*. Ligouri: Ligouri, Missouri. 2010.

Rivers, Robert S. CSP, *From Maintenance to Mission: Evangelization and the Revitalization of the Parish*. Paulist Press, New York, 2005.

Weigel, George, *Evangelical Catholicism: Deep Reform in the 21st-Century Church*. Basic Books: New York. 2013.