

# A QUESTION OF FAITH

By AJP

## No.6 : The Church

Church means an assembly usually for a religious purpose.

The Israelites/Jews were a prototype church. The place where God met His people. God-made-man is THE meeting place between us and God so He formed a Church in order to continue on His work in the world.

The 4 Marks of the Church by which we know She is genuine are: She is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic.

ONE because She teaches one doctrine. Christ did not say, 'On the one hand this, on the other hand that.' Or 'Maybe this or maybe that.'

HOLY Because She alone offers the means to holiness even outside the Church to people unaware of Her.

Remember it is Christ alone who can save, and, based on St Paul's teachings, we call the Church, 'The Mystical Body of Christ'.

Grace can only come through Him and thus in some way through His Church. Sadly, her members are sinners, blunt Her work, but cannot not stop it.

CATHOLIC (universal) Because She is here for ALL peoples no matter what race, colour or creed.

No one is excluded! Even slaves were members from the very start. Cf Letter to Philemon.

APOSTOLIC She was founded on the 12 apostles, though later others were appointed directly or indirectly.

To teach ONE truth only, She must have one central authority. (Bishops, as successors of the apostles, together with the chief bishop, the pope.) She employs many other teachers and leaders but ultimately is governed by the successors of the apostles.

It is logical that Jesus would have to set up an INFALLIBLE Church as He could not teach us everything or how to act in every situation or all the new things we would discover over time.

We speak of: The Church Militant (still struggling on earth) The Church Suffering (in Purgatory), The Church Triumphant (in heaven).  
She is both visible and invisible.

We are not spirits but material beings. Hence, the need for Christ to set up a visible society to care for invisible things.

*'These reflections are loosely based on 'Catechism of the Catholic Church' 1994 where you can find more. But please do ask questions or share your knowledge to help us all build our Faith'*