

# The Church

Part 2: The Indispensable Characteristics of  
the Church



# The Creed

...And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father: who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified: who spoke by the prophets. **In one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.** I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

# Unity and Uniqueness of the Church

- **Indivisible**
- “Now I say this, that each of you says, “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” or “I am of Christ.” Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul.” (1 Cor. 1:12-13)



# Unity and Uniqueness of the Church

- **Private or exclusive meetings run contrary to Orthodoxy**
- **“I spoke openly to the world.** I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing.” (Jn. 18:20)
- **“You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house.”** (Acts 20:18-20)

# Unity and Uniqueness of the Church

- **The Church is also unique**
- *“Glory and honor, honor and glory to the All-Holy Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Peace and edification to the one, only, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of God. Amen.”*  
(Procession of the Lamb, St. Basil Liturgy)
- There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (Eph. 4:4-6)

# Holy

- All the Church's gifts and graces are given for the sanctification of men and all created things.
- What about the sinners?
- “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” (1 Cor. 5:4-5)

# Catholicity

- Does not mean:
  - Roman Catholic
  - Geographically universal
  - Identical in form
- Identical in faith and life
  - “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (Eph. 4:4-6)
  - “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.” (Jn. 6:53)
  - *“In the Eucharist the body of Christians becomes the body of Christ.”* (V. Kesich)

# Catholicity

- The local Church is also universal
- We are members of His Body, not member of His parts
  - “Likewise greet the church that is in their [Priscilla and Aquila] house.” (Rom. 16:5)
- What is the relation of local Church to the Church elsewhere?



# Catholicity

*“...the Church manifests itself as a plurality of churches, each one of which is a part and a whole. It is because only in unity with all churches and in obedience to the universal Truth can it be the Church; yet it is also a whole because in each church by virtue of her unity with the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church [i.e. catholicity], the whole Christ is present...”* (Fr. Alexander Schmemmann)



# Catholicity

- **Christ's catholicity and our task**
- *“Wherever Christ is, there is the catholic church.”* (St. Ignatius)
- Catholicity has been given to the Church, but its achievement is our task

# Apostolicity

*"In no wise am I expounding my own opinion, but that which I have been taught by the fathers, without changing aught in their teaching."*

(St. Maximus the Confessor)

*"Whatever has been transmitted to us through the Law, and the prophets, and the apostles, and the evangelists, we receive and know and esteem highly, and beyond that we ask nothing more."*

(St. John of Damascus)



# Apostolicity

*"Wherefore, brethren, let us plant ourselves upon the rock of faith and the Tradition of the Church, removing not the landmarks set by our holy fathers, nor giving room to those who are anxious to introduce novelties and to undermine the structure of God's holy ecumenical and apostolic Church. For if everyone were allowed a free hand, little by little the entire Body of the Church would be destroyed." (St. John of Damascus)*