

FAITH CHAT

with James & John

How Many Churches Did Jesus Establish?

Know This...

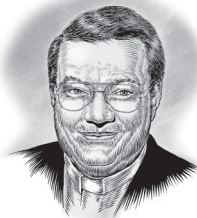
Jesus, knowing He was going to leave His disciples and ascend into heaven, established One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church to ensure His infallible teaching would not be altered by naive, misinformed, or evil men. The Holy Spirit guides and guards the Catholic Church: God's visible, authoritative, and infallible voice on earth. She is the Mystical Body of Christ, the community of all baptized believers, the vehicle of sacramental grace, and the means of Christian unity.

The Church is the moral beacon in our sinful world.



John: Jesus, in His infinite wisdom and love, established the Catholic Church to teach and guide us in this life and to lead us to heaven.

James: The Church is the kingdom of God on earth, built on the foundation of the Apostles with Peter as its earthly shepherd.



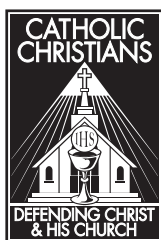
John: Jesus declared, "There will be one flock one shepherd." ^{Jn 10:16b} The Catholic Church is the one flock led by one shepherd. No other "church" can trace its history back to Christ and the Apostles without going through Her.

James: The Catechism says, "The Church draws her life from the Word and the Body of Christ, and so herself becomes Christ's Body." ^{CCC 752} Jesus speaks through His Church. They are inseparable.

John: We only need to turn to Her to discover and live the fullness of God's truth. For through the Catholic Church we can know with certainty the mind and will of God.

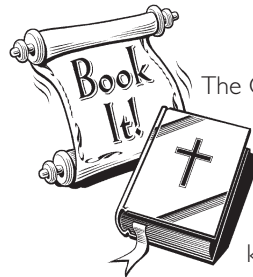
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Jesus asked the Apostles, "Who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus said to him in reply, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." ^{Mt 16:15-18} Jesus made His Church the final arbitrator: "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the Church; and if he refuses to listen even to the Church; let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector." ^{Mt 18:15-17}

Catholic means Universal. Like the word Trinity, Catholic does not appear in the Bible. St. Ignatius of Antioch first called the universal Church "Catholic" when he wrote in 107 A.D., "You must all follow the bishop as Jesus Christ follows the Father, and the presbytery as you would the Apostles. Reverence the deacons as you would the command of God... Wherever the bishop appears, let the people be there; just as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church." In 397, St. Augustine said, "I would not believe in the Gospel myself if the authority of the Catholic Church did not influence me to do so."



The Church is God's kingdom on earth foretold in the Old Testament. "In the lifetime of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed or delivered up to another people; rather, it shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and put an end to them, and it shall stand forever." ^{Dan 2:44} Jesus is the King of this kingdom. "He received dominion, glory, and kingship; nations and peoples of every language serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not be taken away, His kingdom shall not be destroyed." ^{Dan 7:14} St. Paul says the Church is the voice of truth. "But if I should be delayed, you should know how to behave in the household of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth." ^{1 Tim 3:15}

Lord Jesus Christ, the source of all knowledge and grace, You built Your Church on Saint Peter, the Rock. You told the Apostles that whoever listens to them listens to You, and whoever rejects them rejects You, and whoever rejects You rejects the Father in heaven who sent You. I pray that You will give me the grace to never reject You or Your voice on earth—the Catholic Church. I ask this in Your most holy Name. Amen.

