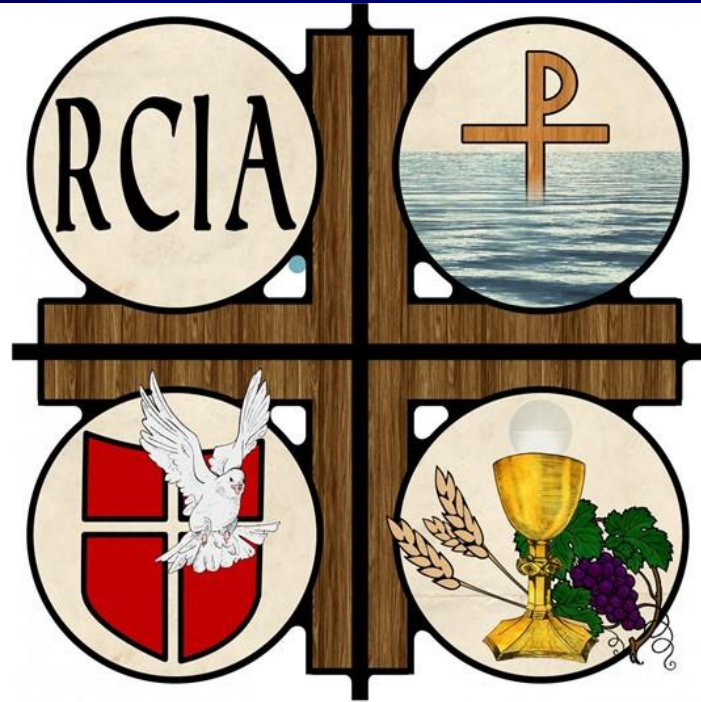


Lesson Q12 – Who Shepherds the Church?



**Rite of Christian Initiation
for Adults**

Opening Prayer



Opening Scripture

■ Matthew 16:13-20

- ¹³ When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴ They replied, “Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter said in reply, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ 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 heavenly Father. ¹⁸ And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” ²⁰ Then he strictly ordered his disciples to tell no one that he was the Messiah.

Symbolon Video

Why do I need the Church?

Part 1, Session 8

45 Minutes

Who Shepherds the Church?

- I'm sure you've heard of the "Chain of Command."
- Every structured organization has one...
 - Military, Government, Corporations, Schools, Sports Programs, Families
- The Catholic Church is no exception.
- This week we'll examine who shepherds the Catholic Church and how the Church is a community for all her members.

The Pope

- The word “Pope” is the English translation of the Italian *il Papa*, meaning *father*.
- AKA...the *Holy Father* because he is a spiritual father like all priests.
- 266 Popes from St. Peter to Pope Francis.
- An unbroken line of succession for 2,000 years.
- The Pope is the Bishop of Rome and the supreme and visible head of the Catholic Church.

The Pope

- Once elected, he holds the office for life unless he voluntarily resigns.
- Other titles...
 - *Successor of Peter*
 - *Vicar of Christ*
 - *Patriarch of the West*
 - *Primate of Italy*
 - *Supreme Pontiff*
 - *Roman Pontiff*
 - *Sovereign of the Vatican City State*
 - *Head of the College of Bishops.*

Peter and Church Authority

- The Catholic Church gets its authority to teach, preach and sanctify the Christian faith directly from Jesus Christ and the Apostles through what is known as “Apostolic Succession.”
- Apostolic Succession is the line of bishops stretching back to the apostles.
- All Catholic bishops around the world are part of a lineage that goes back to the time of the apostles, something that is impossible in Protestant denominations.
- The first Christians had no doubts about how to determine which was the true Church and which doctrines the true teachings of Christ. The test was simple: Just trace the apostolic succession of the claimants.

Peter and Church Authority

- Interesting tidbit of information...
- Peter's name appears more than 195 times in the New Testament, more than all of the other Apostles combined.
- Peter's name is always listed first when the New Testament lists the names of the Apostles.

Peter and Church Authority

■ Matthew 16:13-20

- *“You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church...”*
- This passage witnesses to Jesus’ institution of the papacy and conferral of highest authority to Peter.

■ John 1:40-42

- *“You are Simon the son of John; you will be called Cephas...”*
- Here Jesus renames Simon Peter, meaning the rock (or foundation of the Church).

■ John 21:15-17

- In this resurrection account, Peter reverses his threefold denial with a three fold affirmation of love. Jesus replies to each instance with a command to: *“Feed my sheep.”*
- This affirms Peter’s role and marks it as one of servant leadership.

Peter and Church Authority

■ Acts 1:15-16; 21-26

- *“Therefore, it is necessary that one of the men who accompanied us the whole time...become with us a witness to his resurrection.”*
- This passage recounts how Peter guided the disciples in the process of selecting Judas’ successor.

■ Acts 10:9-41

- *“When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and, falling at his feet, paid him homage...’We are all here in the presence of God to listen to all that you have been commanded by the Lord.’”*
- In this account, Peter receives a vision and is sent to the house of Cornelius to proclaim God’s acceptance of the Gentiles.

■ Acts 15:1-12

- *“It was decided that Paul, Barnabas and some others should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles...The whole assembly fell silent and they listened while Paul and Barnabas described the signs and wonder God had word...”*
- This passage recounts the Council of Jerusalem, in which the necessity of circumcision for Gentile converts is authoritatively denied. After Peter spoke, the whole assembly fell silent and then they made a decision.

Papal Infallibility

- Catholicism maintains that the pope is *infallible*, incapable of error, when he teaches a doctrine on faith or morals to the universal Church in his unique office as supreme head.
- When the pope asserts his official authority in matters of faith and morals to the whole Church, the Holy Spirit guards him from error.
- This does not mean that the pope is impeccable, perfect, free from any or all error, or cannot make mistakes in other areas such as science, philosophy, history, politics, geography, etc.
- Why?...God loves us and the truth so much that he would intervene and prevent a pope from imposing a false teaching upon the whole Church.

Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Religious Brothers/Sisters, Laity

- **Cardinals**
- **Archbishops**
- **Bishops**
- **Auxiliary Bishops**
- **Vicar Generals**
- **Monsignors**
- **Priests (Diocesan or Religious)**
- **Deacons**
- **Monks/Nuns (Cloistered in monasteries and convents)**
- **Brothers/Sisters (live “in the world”)**
- **Both monks/nuns and brothers/sisters take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience**
- **Laity (99% of all people in the Church)**

The Magisterium

- From the Latin *Magister* meaning teacher.
- All of the bishops throughout the world in union with the Pope make up the “*Magisterium*,” or “*teaching office*” of the Church.
- Their task is to give authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form (Sacred Scripture), or in the spoken form (Sacred Tradition).
- The Magisterium ensures the Church’s fidelity to the teaching of the Apostles in matters of faith and morals.

The Lay Faithful

- *“Lay believers are the front line of Church life; for them the Church is the animating principle of human society. Therefore, they in particular ought to have an ever-clearer consciousness not only of belonging to the Church, but of being the Church, that is to say, the community of the faith on earth under the leadership of the Pope, the common Head, and of the bishops in communion with him. They are the Church.”*

- CCC # 899

- Pope Pius XII, Discourse, Feb 20, 1946

Parish Ministries

- **Everyone has a God-given gifts they can use to contribute to the needs of the parish.**
- **Without the lay faithful, the Church would not exist and could not reach the greater world.**
- **The clergy and consecrated religious cannot do it all and so need the help of many lay people.**
 - Parish Council, Finance Council, Director of Religious Education, CCD teachers, Bible Study and Faith Formation Coordinators, Lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Altar Servers, Choir, Ushers
- **The harvest is abundance but he laborers are few.**

Questions?

Q13: The Church as Community

- The Church is a community of sinners in need of redemption.
- The Church is not just a visible, formal institution or a building.
- It is those things...but it is also a living and united people of God.
- All Christians as members of the Church by virtue of their baptism are adopted children of God and have roles and responsibilities.
- We are the family of God.

Q13: The Church as Community

- The Holy Spirit guides the Church to the fullness of truth and protects the deposit of faith from corruption and destruction.
- The Holy Trinity is the model and source of the Church's unity.
- God is One but three Persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in perfect communion and unity.

How the Church is Described in Scripture

■ Colossians 1:18

- *“The Son is the head of the body, the Church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead...”*
- Christ is the head of the Church.

■ 1 Peter 2:9-10

- *“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own...”*
- The Church is God’s chosen people.

■ Ephesians 2:19-20

- *“You are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets...”*
- Every member of the Church is a precious child of God and called to holiness. The Church was established in the New Covenant and maintains the apostolic tradition.

How the Church is Described in Scripture

■ 1 Corinthians 3:9

- *“We are God’s co-workers; you are God’s field, God’s building”*
- Christians are called to seek God’s kingdom and to help bring it to fulfillment.

■ 1 Timothy 3:15

- *“...the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth.”*
- God is present and active in the Church, through which all can find the truth.

■ Galations 3:28

- *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*
- Christ extend salvation to all humanity.

Why Do We Need the Church?

- Christ established the Catholic Church and gave her leaders his authority to be our teachers and guides.
- *“Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.”* (Luke 10:16)
- God created humans to be social beings and in community with one another.
- In 1 Corinthians 12:12-26, St. Paul talks about the Church as being one body with many parts.
- The beautiful quote on page 2 in section Q13 in your study guide from St. Teresa of Avila.

The Mystical Body of Christ

- This is a description of the whole Church because she is...
 - Christ is the Bridegroom and the Church is the Bride of Christ.
 - Christ is the Head and we are the Body.

Did Jesus Intend to Start a Church?

■ Matthew 16:18

- *“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”*

■ 1 Timothy 3:15

- *“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.”*

■ Colossians 1:18

- He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he himself might be preeminent.

How Does God Guide the Church?

- God uses sinful humans to guide His Church.
- Despite of the imperfections and sinfulness of her human members...clergy included.
- Church leaders are human and subject to the same temptations of greed, power and self-indulgence.
- When we fall short we should seek mercy and reconciliation and make amends.
- When our Christian brothers and sisters are in danger of sin or abandoning the faith, we should offer gentle, private correct, encouragement and hope.
- The Church is Holy despite the imperfections of its members.
- This Holiness comes from Christ's presence within her and from the Holy Spirit who sustains her...not from anything any person has done or not done.

Questions?

Closing Prayer

