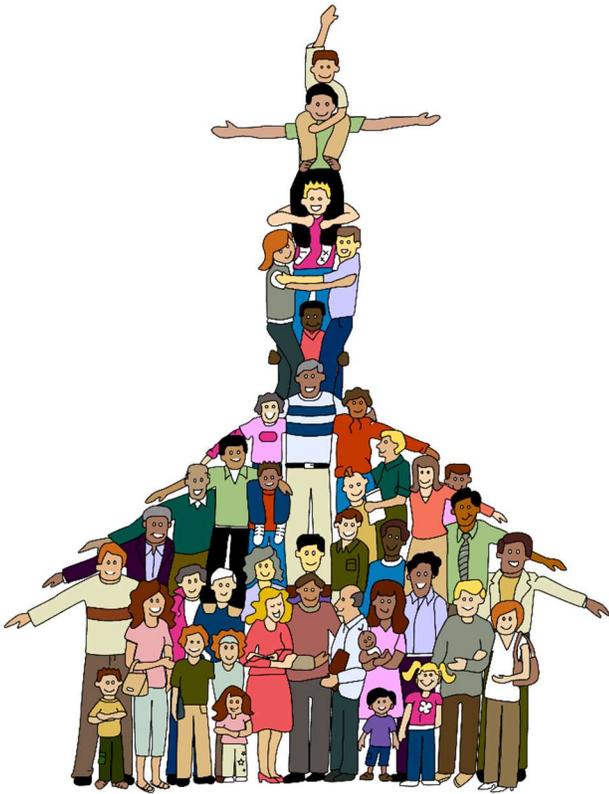


# Why Do I Need the Church? The Mystery of the Catholic Church



## INTRODUCTION

Some people today say that they are “spiritual” but not religious. Or they say they don’t need to belong to a church because they have a personal relationship with Jesus. This video will discuss why that’s not what Jesus intended.

He didn’t come to save us as isolated individuals, but as a profound communion of all believers. He fulfilled the Father’s plan to unite all humanity into one covenant family, the Church.

## VIEW THE VIDEO to DISCOVER...

- The mystery of the Church and what it means in our lives
- How the Church has two dimensions: human and divine
- The three ways the unity of the Church is made manifest
- The four marks (or chief characteristics) of the Church
- Why Jesus established only one Church
- How the Church can be holy while it is filled with sinners
- What it means when we say the Church is apostolic
- Why we call the Church “Catholic”

## SCRIPTURE QUOTES OF THE MONTH

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:5

“So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” —Ephesians 2:19–22

## OPENING PRAYER

Lord, we ask that You open our minds and hearts to what You are revealing to us today about Your Church. We ask that You help us to understand the mystery of the Church and what it means in our lives. Amen

## QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

1. The Church has four characteristics or distinctive marks that sets her apart from all other Christian denominations. What are these “marks of the Church” and what do they mean?
2. In the video, we heard that Jesus wants to have a personal relationship with us in his Church, but not a private, individualistic relationship. What are the differences between a personal relationship with God in his Church and an individualistic relationship with God?

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3. Jesus describes himself as the vine and we, united to him in the Church, are the branches. In what ways can you “remain” in Jesus? What comes to mind when you read Jesus’s promise that if we remain in him, we will bear much fruit? What kind of fruit would you like to bear in this life?

### COMMIT

Commit to joining yourself to Jesus by living more intimately in the vine and branches of Christ and in His Catholic Church. Reflect on how you might do this.

### CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, at Your Last Supper You prayed to the Father that all should be one. Send Your Holy Spirit upon all who bear Your name and seek to serve You. Strengthen our faith in You, and lead us to love one another in humility. May we who have been reborn in one baptism be united in one faith under one Shepherd. Amen.

### A FURTHER REFLECTION

#### “I’m spiritual, but I’m not religious.”

How many times have you heard someone say something along those lines? In our day and age, that stance is popular, especially among people who have stopped attending church but who continue to believe in God (or at least a “higher power”).

Yet...religion and spirituality are intricately interwoven. Jesus never expected us to follow a spiritual path without a community: The Church. The truly spiritual life is, as Jesus himself said, like a vine in which he is the trunk and we are the branches. We are interconnected through our beliefs, our worship, and our desire to know and understand the truth. And once we understand the truth, we realize that it is as impossible to be spiritual without being religious as it is to swim without getting into the water.

**RESPOND TO THE PARISH:** what is a quality or characteristic of our Church, Corpus Christi Parish, that stands out to you? Email your **word** to [corpuschristigenerations@gmail.com](mailto:corpuschristigenerations@gmail.com) or

### A SUMMARY OF THE MAIN POINTS PRESENTED IN THE VIDEO

- The Church is the supernatural family of God; the communion of all believers united in him (CCC 771–772).
- The Church is both human and divine, earthly and heavenly (CCC 773, 779).
- God has used human people, rituals, and institutions to gather his people and accomplish his plan of salvation (CCC 781 ff).
- God’s people are united in his Church through the bonds of Christian love as well as three visible bonds of community: the bond of apostolic succession through the bishops who maintain the fraternal harmony of God’s family; the bond of a common celebration of worship particularly in the sacraments; and finally, the bond of professing the one faith received from the apostles (see CCC 815).
- There are four chief characteristics of the Church, known as the marks of the Church (CCC 811–812, 881).
- The Church is “one” because that is what Jesus intended. He prayed that we would all be one even as he is one with the Father (CCC 813).
- The Church is “holy” in the sense it is united with Christ, sanctified by him, and endowed by him with the fullness of the means of salvation (CCC 823–824).
- The Church is “Catholic,” meaning “universal” in the sense Christ is present in her throughout the world, and because the Church has been sent by Christ to bring all humanity into communion with him (CCC 830–831).
- The church is “apostolic” because it is founded on the apostles and faithfully hands on the teachings of the apostles. The Church continues to be guided by the successors of the apostles, the bishops (CCC 857).