

BETA CLASS

2018 REVISION

BETA Class 2018

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BETA Introduction

Revelation & Faith

Revelation

1.) What is Revelation?

Revelation is "the true knowledge of God, made known by God"

2.) How is Revelation obtained?

Revelation can only be obtained through God's self revelation.

3.) What are some WAYS God's reveals Himself?

visibly – through creation, that which God has made

Romans 1:20 *"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."*

verbally – through words, that which God speaks or has spoken (audible or recorded)

- Exodus 3:14 – *"God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"*

circumstantially – through events in our lives ex. Protection, Provision

– **Ask students for testimonies.**

directly - when God communicates to you without using others

indirectly - when God communicates to you through others

4.) What are some of the TYPES of revelation?

general: communicates existence and attributes of God throughout course of life

i.e. Life-Giving, Creative, All-Wise, Good, Patient, Redemptive

special: communicated in a special personal moment

i.e. Acts 8:31 – Phillip helps Ethiopian understand ; Acts 9 – Saul's conversion

definitive: everything we need to know about God can be learned through His Son.

Colossian 1:15 " *the Son is the image of the invisible God*"

John 14:9 - "*If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.*"

progressive: God's self-revelation of Himself over time and in stages

What are the 2 primary things God revealed "progressively"?

1. Himself: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
2. His Plan: for the salvation of the world

5.) What are the primary vehicles through which God reveals himself now?

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|----------------------|
| a. The Holy Scriptures | = The <u>Word</u> of Truth | 2 Tim 2:15 |
| b. The Holy Spirit | = The <u>Spirit</u> of Truth | John 16:13 |
| c. The Holy Church | = The <u>Pillar & Foundation</u> of Truth | 1 Tim 3:15, Rev 21:4 |

6.) Is there any greater revelation of God still yet to come?

No. The fullness of who God is: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit has been revealed, and in Christ, all the fullness of the Godhead lives in bodily form. We are now awaiting Jesus' return and the consummation of God's plan to create a new heaven and earth, with Jesus as king.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. - Rev 22:23

7.) Can a person have some general knowledge of God without it being a saving knowledge?

Yes. General revelation, can prepare that person for further revelation of God.
i.e. Acts 10 Cornelius, the Roman Centurion before he believed the Gospel.

8.) What do we mean by the term "a saving knowledge of God"?

Ultimately, all men need to be saved from sin and death, which occurs through faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as Lord and Savior. Read 1 Timothy 2:1--6

Faith

1.) What is Faith?

Faith is the right response to the revelation of God.

- *"Without faith it is impossible to please; for one believe that He exists and rewards those who earnestly seek Him."* Hebrews 11:6

Faith, as a result of revelation, becomes the substantial evidence of God's existence.

- *"Faith is the substance of things (to be) hoped for, the evidence of things unseen."* Hebrews 11:1

Faith is a spiritual gift and virtue.

- And now these three remain: **faith**, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

2.) Why is Faith necessary?

- a. It is God's desired and required response to revelation.
- b. Jesus expects faith. We shouldn't be slow to believe or do the works of God.
- c. It is the vehicle through which we receive God's grace.

i.e. Ephesians 2:8-9 Romans 5:1 Luke 18:8

3.) How is Faith in Christ...

... the same as faith in God?

Jesus is wholly God. You cannot separate the Son from the Father or the Spirit.
When you believe in Jesus, you believe in God.

... different than faith in God?

Jesus is a unique person. Jesus is not just God. He is the Christ, the incarnate Son of God, who is also wholly man. He is the propitiation for our sins. To be saved, we must believe in Him, and call upon His name, specifically. It is not enough say we believe in God.

4.) What is meant by the phrase, saved “by Faith” vs. saved “by Works”?

“By Faith” means we know Jesus earned our salvation for us, and so we put our trust in His saving act, and as a result become acceptable to God, our Savior.

“By Works” means we think we can earn our salvation, and we don’t put our trust in Jesus, thinking we were or can be made acceptable to God through our own efforts.

Ref: Romans 5:1-2 Galatians 2:15-16 John 6:29

5.) What is meant by “Faith with Works” vs. “Faith without Works”?

“Faith with Works” means that *after* we put our trust in what Jesus did, and are justified by faith, a genuine and living faith in Jesus will also result in the by-product (fruit) of **good works**, because Jesus will come to live in and through us.

“Faith without Works” *can* mean that *after* we say we put our trust in what Jesus did, there is no by-product (fruit) of good works, hence apparently revealing an ingenuine and dead faith. Ref: Romans 4:2-3, Ephesians 2:8-10, James 2:14, 21-26

“Faith without Works” *can* also mean that we are “claiming” that we are saved “by Faith vs. by Works” - referring to #4) above, when discussing the topic. Sometimes, people confuse the context.

There is also a difference between “works of the Law” and “good works” in Christ

“We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, to do good works which God has prepared in advance for us to do.” – Ephesians 2:10

6.) What is Faith vs. “**The Faith**” of the Church?

“**The Faith**” is the compilation of essential things Christians believe about God, Jesus, and His Church that are considered historically Catholic-Orthodox.

I.e the Nicene Creed, the Holy Scriptures, Apostolic Teachings, Doctrines, and Tradition.

Different branches of the Church will differ on what are the essential of “The Faith”.

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BETA 1 What is the Church?

What is the Church?

The word "Church" in the bible is the Greek word **ekklesia**, which "commonly" means:
a congregation or assembly or gathering of God's people (with an implied call to rule).

Matthew 16:18, 28:18-20 Acts 2:44-46, 16:19, 20:20

This word **ekklesia** is derived from two other Greek words:

ek = out from and to

kaleo = to call

So, the Church is "properly" defined as the people called out from the world to God.

The Church is "plainly" described as the collection of God's people who accept Jesus as the Christ and follow Him as Lord, wherever they are assembled, including the saints in heaven.

The Church in heaven is often called the Church triumphant. Why?

The Church on earth is often called the Church militant. Why?

The actual *English* word "*church*" comes from the Greek word *kyriakos*, "belonging to the Lord" or *kuriakon*, "house of the Lord". These words can be applied broadly, and may apply more to the gathering space than the people, and has been used in bible translations in place of translating the actual word **ekklesia**.

Note: Read together at least one Scriptural references during each section below.

The Church is also described in Holy Scripture using other terms and metaphors, such as:

Household of God - The Church is really about the people vs. a material building. It includes everyone who is living in the house. It is somewhat synonymous with Family of God

ref: 1 Timothy 3:15 Ephesians 3:14-15 1 John 3:1

Holy Nation - a citizenry of people belonging to God and chosen by God out of the world is called to be different from the people of the world who are distinguished by their natural ancestry and national heritage. The Church has a spiritual language, culture, and criteria for citizenship that transcends natural boundaries. Our citizenship is in heaven and God is our King.

Ref: 1 Peter 2:9 Ephesians 2:11-19 Philippians 3:20

Spiritual Kingdom - The Kingdom of God is a different form of government and a different type of realm. There are spiritual principles that apply to how God's Kingdom works, which Jesus speaks of, especially in parables. As subjects of His Kingdom, we are called to learn and live by them. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." Two spiritual metaphors Jesus used to describe His church were "salt of the earth" and "light of the world".

Ref: John 18:36

1 Thessalonians 2:12

Matthew 18:21-35

Temple of God - A temple is a special place where God dwells, where sacrifices and prayers are offered to God, through various vessels. Priests of God are set apart from others and called to serve Him in His temple, and all of God's people are collectively called a Royal Priesthood. The Temple belongs to God and is to be respected as a holy place. We are both individually and collectively the temple of God.

Ref: Matthew 21:12

John 2:19

1 Cor 3:17

1 Cor 6:19-20

The Bride of Christ - This metaphor is used to describe the relationship of sacrificial love between Christ and His Church, as a whole, comprised of both men and women, with Jesus being the groom. This female metaphor is used for the Church in totality, because the Church was formed out from Jesus' body, as was Eve from Adam, woman from man, and so it refers to the positional relationship. Since Jesus is male, there cannot be two grooms, so hence "bride".

Ref: Mark 2:19-20

John 3:29

Eph 5:25,32

Jer 2:2

Rev. 19:7-9, 21:9

The Body of Christ - Jesus is the metaphoric and literal ruling head of His Body. On earth, we are called to be an extension of His Person: his arms, legs, mouth, ears, feet, etc. We need Him and each other to function wholly as the Church and accomplish His will together. Also, being members of His One Body, we are called to care for each other. Just like every human body needs a spirit and the breath of God to have life, so the Body of Christ needs the Spirit of God.

Ref: 1 Cor 12:12-27

Ephesians 5:23

Colossians 1:18

A Living Organization - the Church has hierarchical order so it may function according to God's purposes without confusion. Like a nation, state, city or corporation that has a governmental structure, so has Christ by His authority, set some people into positions of authority, not to "lord it over", but to serve and lead it with humility and wisdom. The Church is organized with different levels of authority, roles, and talents, to accomplish God's work together

Ref: Matthew 18:17

Ephesians 4:12

1 Tim 3:4-5

Titus 1:5

Questions:

1. When was the Church established?

Officially, the Church is said to have been established on the Feast of Pentecost when Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit upon those gathered in His Name.

Some say, that the Church began as soon as 2 or 3 disciples were gathered together around Him, or at the Last Supper, first New Covenant Eucharistic meal, or when the risen Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit upon the apostles after his resurrection.

Mark 1:16 John 1:35-40 Luke 22:19-20 John 20:22 Acts 1:6-14 Acts 2

2. Is there one or many "churches"?

Biblically, there is only one Church, because Jesus is the Head of the Church, and He is not divided. He has one body, and all His members are called to follow Him.

Historically, the Church has become divided for many reasons: in understanding, doctrines, practices, and claims of authority, and as a result, in organization; but it is called to be united.

John 17:21 1 Cor 1:13 Romans 12:4-5 Ephesians 4:4

3. Is the Church necessary?

Yes. Christ established it himself and chooses to fulfill His plans and purposes through the Church. We become members of His Body when we are baptized into His Name. We become part of the family of God, called to love and to be witnesses of Christ together.

1 Cor 12:12-21 Ephesians 4:7-16 Acts 1:8 1 John 1:3



BETA 2 - What Does the Church Believe? Part I

The question of "What Does the Church believes?" should be prefaced by the two questions: "What was the Church first taught to believe?" and "Who was the teacher?"

The first and second primary teachers of the Church are Jesus, who is called The Truth, and the Holy Spirit, who Jesus called The Spirit of Truth.

What the Church, was taught and has believed is found in:

1. Holy Scriptures
2. the Creeds
3. the Councils
4. Apostolic Tradition

Hence, we have to start with what the apostles learned and were encouraged to believe, from the Lord, who also promised to give them the Holy Spirit, who would bring them into all truth.

For example: At the first council of the Church 15AD, it was stated
"It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and us..." – Acts 15:14 -28

Jesus also appointed and gave authority to the apostles to lead and teach the Church.

"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." - Matthew 28:18-20

The foundational beliefs and even starting elements of the Creeds were taught by the apostles, which are also found in and affirmed by, Holy Scripture:

"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. - 1 Corinthians 15:3-5

The apostles also then appointed and gave authority to others to continue teaching what was learned from Jesus and then passed down from the apostles.

"He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it." - Titus 1:9

Holy Scripture

What are the Holy Scriptures?

The Holy Scriptures are the collection of sacred writings written over multiple centuries by those called by God to do so. It is the primary witness and resource of the Christian Faith.

They are the record of words inspired and anointed by God to be written down that communicate truth, activity, and thoughts, related to: **Note: *mention, do not discuss in detail.***

- God's creation of the world and everything in it
- The sin of mankind, forgiveness, and the hope of salvation.
- The existence of Satan , Hell, and the nature of evil.
- The record of God's promises and interventions in the world.
- The formation of the nation of Israel and its relationship to God.
- The history of the nation of Israel, and its relationship to other nations.
- The supremacy and lone reality of God's existence against any other false god.
- The unfaithfulness of God's people vs. the faithfulness of God.
- The warnings of God's wrath and the promises of God's mercy.
- The hidden and revealed mystery of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God.
- Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection.
- The nature of God; particularly that God is love.
- The coming of the Kingdom of God on earth, and the proclamation of the Gospel.
- The activities of God's prophets and apostles.
- The outpouring of God's grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- The Church, including its teachings, development, expectations and troubles.
- The end of this world and the promise of Christ's return.
- The final judgment of the living and the dead.
- Eternal Life and Heaven

The Holy Scriptures are comprised of various forms of writings, and were written by prophets, priests, and apostles, inspired by God, in human language. They were used, collected, edited, and canonized by the Jewish people regarding the Old Testament writings and later by the Church which also included the New Testament writings.

Writings that are canonized have been tested, affirmed, and accepted as being authoritative for the Church, who also recognizes and accepts the Jewish canon of Old Testament Scriptures.

The word “canon” means: measuring stick, or a standard.

Writings were tested by using the combination of such factors:

1. Verification of the authorship, as coming from the recognized prophet, priest, apostle...
2. Whether through the gift of discernment the writings bore witness to the Spirit of God.
3. Whether or not they were consensually used and accepted as authoritative and inspired
4. Elimination of those writings that contained obvious doctrinal or factual errors, or myth.
5. For the Church, whether Old Testament books were further quoted by Jesus himself.

The Holiness of Scripture

The writings are considered “Holy” because they are recognized as originating from God, who is Holy, and have been therefore “set apart” as “holy” to be read and taught and believed, by the people of God, who are called to be “holy”.

The Authority of Scripture,

Jesus affirmed the authority of Scripture, for example, when using the phrase “It is written” and when he quoted the Scriptures to communicate the Truth of God.

The apostles also quoted Old Testament Scripture as authoritative.

The apostle Paul seems to quote the NT Gospel of Luke 10:17 in 1 Tim 5:17-18, as authoritative.

The apostle Paul refers to what the apostles preached as authoritative in 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

Synonyms for the Holy Scriptures:

The Bible “the books” = the collection of these authoritative writings, letters, and books

The Word of God = God breathed, inspired of God, originating from and spoken by God

O.T. Ref: Ex 17:14 Ex 24:37 Deut 31:24 Psalm 68:11 Jer 36:4 Ezek 21:8 2 Hab 2:20

N.T. Ref: Matthew 4:4 John 1:1 2 Tim 3:16-17 1 Thess 2:13 2 Pet 1:20-21 Rev 1:19

Manuscripts are: "hand-written" copies of biblical texts, copied by scribes through the centuries, made on papyrus, parchment, or paper and the oldest kept in the form of a scroll, in order to preserve what was written. (Latin) *Manu* = hand *Scriptum* = written

- there are over 6,000 early manuscript copies or portions of the Greek New Testament today
- when we include the Latin Vulgate and other languages, we have over 24,000 early copies or portions of the New Testament (twice that many when including quotes by church fathers)
- some of these date only 20 to 30 years from the original autographs. By comparison, the average secular classical work from antiquity survives on only a handful of manuscripts, i.e. Plato, and the average gap between the original composition and the earliest copy is over 1,000 years.
- there are over 10,000 biblical manuscripts of the Old Testament dating back to 500 B.C.
- about 200 Old Testament manuscripts (Dead Sea Scrolls) recently discovered in 1947 that date back to 150 B.C.

Old Testament Canon

There are 39 books in the Old Testament. The original Hebrew canon has less (24) books, because some of the books were combined together, but they are all the same writings.

The books are categorized by the Church as:

1. Books of the Law - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy (The Pentateuch)
2. Historical - Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
3. Wisdom/Poetic - Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs
4. Major Prophets - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel
5. Minor Prophets - Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

The original Hebrew OT bible had 3 categories and was grouped differently.

1. The Law (Torah) - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy
2. The Prophets (Neviim) - Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel (one vol.), 1 & 2 Kings (one vol.), Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the 12 Minor Prophets (one vol.)
3. The Writings (Kethubim) - Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Ruth, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah (one vol.), 1 & 2 Chronicles (one vol.)

Septuagint = the Greek Translation of the Old Testament Hebrew canon, written by "70" Jewish scribes, about 250-200 BC, which re-organized the original 24 books into 39 books.

The Septuagint also includes additional **deutero-canonical** (second canon) books, which not everyone accepts as authoritative or usable to establish doctrine. These other books were later accepted and included in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Church bibles, although the list of books added differ between them.

The Roman Church affirmed their inclusion of OT deutero-canonical books – at Trent 1546 AD
The Orthodox affirmed their inclusion of OT deutero-canonical books –at Jerusalem 1642 AD

The ICCEC allows for the reading of the deutero-canonical books, but does not officially grant them the same authority as the originally accepted Hebrew canon of OT Scripture.

Protestants generally refer to these books as **The Apocrypha** (hidden), and are sometimes added into some bibles in a separate section, between Old and New Testaments, because they do not hold equal authority to canonized Scripture.

Some debatable doctrines / teachings arise from the Apocryphal – Deuterocanonical writings:

Basis for the doctrine of purgatory: 2 Maccabees 12:43-45

Forgiveness of sins from alms-giving: Ecclesiasticus 3:30 Tobit 12:8-9, 17

The use of magic: Tobit 6:5-8

Someone can be born sinless (i.e. immaculate conception): Wisdom 8:19-20

Notes: Jesus quoted from the 3 categories of the Hebrew Canon (though not all the books), but never quoted from any of the deutero-canonical books. He seemingly affirms the original Hebrew canon in Luke 11:51, when he says “from the blood of Abel (Genesis) to the blood of Zechariah (1 Chronicles), which are the first and last books in the Hebrew canon. He also usually put Scripture into two categories, “the Law and the Prophets”, once adding “the Psalms” which is the 1st book in the 3rd category of the Hebrew canon, perhaps representative.

There are many other non-canonical later writings, collectively called **The Pseudepigrapha**, which are “falsely attributed” works, spurious or pseudonymous writings, especially Jewish writings ascribed to various biblical patriarchs and prophets, but composed within approximately 200 years of the birth of Jesus Christ.

In summary, the Old Testament states that God promised a Divine Savior, whose salvation would come to Israel and extend beyond Israel to all peoples, and He prepared them to receive Him through *progressive* revelation.

New Testament Canon

There are 27 books in the New Testament canon, universally agreed upon, written 45-85 AD.

The Four Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. “Gospel” is Greek for “good and joyful news”

The Acts of the Apostles (written by Luke)

The Pauline Epistles – Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians,
1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews

The Catholic Epistles – James, 1-2 Peter, 1-2-3 John, Jude

The Book of Revelation (written by John)

The Church came to consensual agreement on the N.T. canon, which was generally agreed upon in the early 300's but affirmed at the Councils of Hippo 393 AD and Carthage 397 AD.

There were some other writings that were circulated, and even read among the churches, but were ultimately rejected as part of the NT Canon, because of suspected forgery, heresy, lack of inspiration, or nonfactual errors. Some examples are:

- Epistle of Barnabas - (Barnabas would have been dead when it was written)
- 1 and 2 Clement - (mythical reference and suspected forgery)
- Shepherd of Hermes - (eventually consensually decided not inspired)

All Holy Scripture is Christological = it all points to Jesus.

“Then Jesus opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He said to them, “It is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day” - Luke 24:35-36

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. – John 1:14

“You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me...” - John 5:39

“Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus.” – Rev 19:10

In summary, the New Testament testifies that God sent and gave His only-begotten Son, Jesus, to be the promised Divine Savior of the world.

The apostle John wrote in his gospel, “Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

- John 20:30-31

BETA 3 - What Does the Church Believe? Part 2

THE FAITH = What the Church Believes

What is "The Faith"

"The Faith" is the *compilation* of the essential things that Christians believe about God, Christ, and His Church, that are considered historically Catholic-Orthodox Christian.

i.e. the Holy Scriptures, the Creeds, Apostolic Teachings, Doctrines, and Tradition.

What is a Heresy?

A heresy is a teaching, doctrine, or practice, incompatible or contrary with the consensually agreed upon Catholic-Orthodox Christian Faith.

i.e. that Jesus was just a man, and not also equally God by nature

i.e. the God didn't really become incarnate, fully man, but only appeared as such.

i.e. that the created physical world is bad, and only the spiritual matters

What is Syncretism?

Syncretism is the mixing of one or more other "Faiths" or belief systems.

i.e. Zen Christianity

The Creeds

The Creeds are the essential and summary belief statements of the Christian Faith.

The 3 Creeds of the historic undivided universal Church are: Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian

The Apostles Creed

- personal profession of faith
- used at baptisms and in the daily office of prayer – dates to 1st century
- historian Rufinus claims the 12 apostles all contributed one part of the creed.

The Nicene Creed - (drafted at Nicea and later affirmed at Constantinople)

- corporate profession of faith, for the defense of "The Faith" of Christianity
- used in the Eucharistic liturgy and against heresies - dates to 325/381AD Councils
- contains 12 articles of the faith

1. Speaks of One God, the prime origin of everything, the Father as 1st person
 - Monotheism, Personhood, and Unity
 - Almighty Creator of All Things Visible and Invisible
2. Speaks of the Lord Jesus, the only-begotten Son of God, the 2nd person of the Trinity
 - Jesus is the promised Christ Messiah, the one and only, distinct in person
 - Eternal Generation, Same Substance, Equally God, Sent by the Father
3. Speaks of the incarnation of the 2nd person, by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
 - Son of God truly took on humanity, dual natures perfectly united in one person
4. Speaks of the crucifixion, suffering and death, of Jesus
 - Suffering and death was required (by the Law) and foretold (by the Prophets)
 - The Son died in accordance with the Father's will for the salvation of all
 - Jesus' death is a historical fact.
5. Speaks of the resurrection of Jesus in accordance with the Scriptures
 - affirms the necessity and reality of the resurrection
 - affirms the authority of Scripture
 - vindicates Jesus' innocence and identity as the Son of God
6. Speaks of the ascension and enthronement of Jesus in heaven
 - the Son returned to the Father where He belongs, but with his humanity
 - appears in the presence of God for us, making intercession as High Priest
 - has been given all authority and power over heaven and earth as King
7. Speaks of the second coming of Jesus and establishment of His Kingdom on earth
 - His second coming will be different than the first, powerful and glorious
 - He has authority and will judge the living and dead
 - His Kingdom is Eternal and will be established as such on the earth.
8. Speaks of the Holy Spirit, his origin and activity, the 3rd person of the Trinity
 - Equally God, with Power and Authority, One with the Father and Son
 - Eternal Procession from the Father (John 15:26)
 - Actively involved in creation and the plan of salvation from the beginning.
9. Speaks of Christ's Church - One Holy Catholic Apostolic
 - There can be only one Church, because there is one head, who is Jesus.
 - The Church is Holy because God indwells her and sets her apart from the world.
 - The Church is Catholic, because it is universal in nature, its Faith being the same at all times, in all places, for all peoples.
 - The Church is Apostolic because Christ delegated authority to the apostles, who also passed down the Faith through apostolic succession.

10. Speaks of the one baptism, through which we are saved from our sins
 - Baptism is the initiation into the life, death, and resurrection of Christ
 - Baptism is the initiation into the Church, Christ's Body.
11. Speaks of the future resurrection of the dead.
 - Jesus will raise those who believe in him from the dead, as he promised.
 - The resurrection will occur at Jesus' second coming.
 - Those resurrected will receive a glorified body, but until then, those who die become absent from the body, and present with the Lord, in spirit.
12. Speaks of the creation of a new world to come.
 - God is going to create a new heaven and earth.
 - The old will pass away-be destroyed.

The Athanasian Creed - written by Athanasius, persecuted Bishop and Theologian of Alexandria

- proclaims and explains the mystery of Trinity – dates to 5th century
- speaks of the unity of God in 3 persons
- speaks of the same divine eternal nature and substance of the 3 persons
- speaks of the uniqueness of each of the 3 persons
- speaks of Jesus' dual natures and wills perfectly united in the one incarnate person.

These 3 Creeds have served the Church as summary statements since its early development.

The Councils

The Ecumenical Councils of the Church met to discuss and resolve theological, ecclesiastical, doctrinal divisions and definitions, and make ruling decisions. Ecumenical means worldwide.

During the first 1000 years of the "undivided" Church, there were 7 ecumenical councils.

Nicea 325 AD

Condemned Arian heresy claiming Jesus was created vs. eternally begotten and by nature God.

Constantinople 381 AD

Defended the Divinity of the Holy Spirit; and formulation of the Doctrine of the Trinity

Ephesus 431 AD

Condemned Nestorian heresy emphasizing humanity vs. the dual natures united in one person.
Mary declared "Theotokos" = God-Bearer (mother of God), in defense of Christ's divinity

Chalcedon 451 AD

Condemned Monophysite Heresy emphasizing divinity vs. the dual natures united in one person

Constantinople II 553 AD

Reaffirmed the Catholic/Orthodox teaching on Christology of previous councils, including usage of term Theotokos (God-Bearer) vs. Christotokos (Christ-bearer) or Anthropotokos (man-bearer)

Constantinople III 680

Condemned Monothelite heresy claiming single divine will vs. two wills, divine leading the human

> **Quinisext Council 692** –

- considered and extension of the 5th & 6th Councils, dealing with “natures and wills”

Nicea II 787

Icons allowed to express devotion to what they depict, but only God can be worshiped.

Apostolic Tradition

Apostolic Tradition is the Church teaching and practicing the things it has always traditionally done so. Like a family, the traditions get passed down in writing or orally. Some are found in Holy Scripture, but none should ever contradict Holy Scripture. Some may vary geographically.

Scriptural Examples:

“I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the **traditions** even as I have delivered them to you” (1 Cor. 11:2)

“So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the **traditions** which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter” (2 Thess. 2:15).

Church Examples:

Gathering on the Lord’s Day for Apostolic teaching and fellowship with Eucharistic Liturgy

Ordination Policies and Rites

Baptismal Rites (in the Name of the Trinity)

Laying on of Hands for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Anointing of the Sick with Oil

Burial Rites

The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony

Tithes and Collection of Offerings for the Poor

The public reading of Holy Scripture and preaching of the Gospel

Church Authority, Order of Bishops, Priests & Deacons,

Adherence to the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils

Daily Office of Prayer

Prayer and Fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays

The Church Fathers:

The Church Fathers are a group of men who were respected leaders and elders in the Church through the first centuries of Church history, many being apostles, bishops, teachers and historians, who spoke and wrote on the Holy Scriptures, Apostolic Traditions, the Councils, and the Creeds. They didn't always agree completely, but wisdom and guidance especially on disputable matters, particularly where Holy Scripture does not speak, can be found through them. Being closer in time to the apostles, some of them disciples of the apostles teaching, and disciples of those disciples, they are generally a better resource.

Examples: Irenaeus, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Clement, Cyril, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, Athanasius, Augustine, Origen, Papias, Hilary, Chrysostom, Cyprian

Other Writings: non-Scriptural writings that were used by the Church and provide a historical record of its practices.

i.e. The Didache - meaning "Teaching" is the short name of a Christian manual compiled before 300AD. The full title is *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*. Some Christians thought *Didache* was inspired, but the church rejected it when making the final decision which books to include in the New Testament. *Didache* contained instructions for Christian groups; and its statement of belief may be the first written catechism. It contains such things as: how to perform rituals such as baptism, fasting, and Communion; ministry and how to deal with traveling teachers; the expected "return of Christ", with quotations from several New Testament passages which exhort Christians to live godly lives and prepare for "that day."

BETA 4 The Sacraments – Part 1

Sacrament = “an outward and visible sign conveying an inward and invisible grace” – St. Augustine

The Sacraments, contain and communicate, the invisible grace they visibly signify.

The word “sacrament” is derived:

- from the Greek *mysterion*, which means “hidden or secret”, and translated to “mystery”
- from the Latin *sacramentum*, which means, a “consecrating” (being made holy)

So commonly, a sacrament is considered a “Holy Mystery” by which divine grace is imparted.

Like the two natures of Christ, human and divine, the natural and Spirit, becoming perfectly united in one person in the incarnation, the natural physical and supernatural spiritual elements of a sacrament become united in one purpose. It is a holy mystery with purpose and cannot be rationally comprehended. We believe it is the supernatural work of God that we are willed to participate in. For example:

When disciples left and Peter questioned Jesus’ statement about having to eat his flesh and drink his blood, Jesus said “My words are spirit and life”. - John 6:63-70

The sacraments are actions of Christ because:

- they make Christ present to the recipient
- they are celebrated by the Body of Christ, the Church.
- they are administered under His authority (i.e. in the Name of Jesus)

If we understand the incarnate Christ as the first and most important *sacrament* himself, then we recognize that the sacraments are always actions of Christ. They are rooted in events and experiences where Christ, and through His Church, uses specific “*elements, actions, and words*” as a means to dispense grace and give life, which are understood in sacramental theology, to be valid, when using the right “*matter, form, and intent*”.

Sacraments contain two parts:

- 1- The visible physical natural element(s)
- 2- The invisible spiritual supernatural element(s)

Sacraments also involve the usage of certain Words of Christ or gestures. For example:

- “Your sins are forgiven”, “Be healed”, “This is my body”, “Receive the Holy Spirit”
- The Laying on of Hands, Blessings by the Ordained Clergy, Prayers of Intent

Scripture of both Old and New Testament affirms God's usage of physical natural elements when effecting supernatural change and displaying God's power. For example:

Blood on doorposts served as a sign for God to passover firstborn Jews - Exodus 12:13

Joshua was filled with wisdom when Moses laid hands on him - Deut 34:9

Elisha threw salt into the poisoned water to heal it - 2 Kings 1:1

Samuel anoints David with oil to become king - 1 Sam 16:10

Elisha tells Naaman to wash 7 times in Jordan to heal leprosy - 2 Kings 5:10

Jesus was baptized with water and the Holy Spirit descended upon him - Mk 1:9-10

Jesus' first miracle was to turn water into wine. - John 2:1-11

Jesus used his spittle and mud to cure a blind man. - Mk 8:23

Healings came via handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched Apostle Paul - Acts 19:12

While the Church had considered 100's of acts and rituals to possibly be "sacraments", they eventually agreed to narrow the number down to a primary list of seven, for official usage, in year 1215 AD, at the 4th Lateran Council. Other acts or rituals above the seven, are referred to as sacramentals, things "set apart" (consecrated) for usage in the Church that also signify and communicate Christian truth. For example: holy water, ashes, palms, crucifixes, incense, etc.

The Seven Sacraments of the historic Apostolic Church (Catholic and Orthodox) are:

Holy Baptism

Confirmation

Confession (Penance/Reconciliation)

Anointing with Oil for the Sick and Dying (Holy Unction)

Holy Eucharist (Holy Communion, the Body and Blood of Jesus, the Lord's Supper)

Holy Matrimony

Holy Orders (Ordination)

Protestant denominations, as a result of The Reformation, lessen the categorization and naming of sacraments, often down to two, Baptism and Communion, because they claim these two are the only ones Jesus clearly instituted and commanded in Scripture, even though all seven, and more, can be found in Scripture. However, Protestants still practice them in diminished and varying numbers, and not necessarily with the same authority, understanding, performance, frequency, or effect.

These Protestant changes, the result of over-reactions to the real need for Church reform, were erroneously extended and applied to the historic holy traditions of the Apostolic Church.

Holy Baptism

Outward Signs = Rejection of Sin, Submission to Baptism, Washing with Water, Chrism

Inner Grace = Forgiveness of Sins, Spiritual Rebirth, Sealed by God

What does it convey and affect?

Entrance/Acceptance/Initiation into the New Covenant People of God

Cleansing of Conscience

Becoming Reborn through Christ's Death and Resurrection

Salvation

What does it fulfill and replace?

Circumcision under the Old Covenant

"In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

Scriptural Examples:

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.
- Acts 2:38

He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.
- Mark 16:16

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. – Rom 6:4

Sprinkling to Full Immersion

Baptism in water can be performed by full or partial immersion, pouring, or sprinkling.

It's not about the amount of water, but about what God does for us through the water.

The Greek word used for "baptism" comprises different concepts such as: "to immerse, to plunge, to pour, to tinge, to sprinkle, to dip, to dye," and many others. Consider the apostles who only had their feet washed, and the repentant thief on the cross, who at most, was sprinkled by the water that came forth from Jesus' side. Insistence on full-body immersion is legalistic. Baptism, regardless of the amount of water used, unites us to Jesus Christ in His death, burial, and resurrected life.

Baptism of Children and Women and Gentile Converts

Under the Old Covenant, every male child was to be circumcised on the 8th day. It was the responsibility of the father, the head of the household, to do so, as God commanded to Abraham and also under the Law of Moses. Under the New Covenant, the same principle continued. As adults believed, their whole households were baptized and brought under the New Covenant. Children were then called to “obey their parents in the Lord.” - Ephesians 6:1

The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call. - Acts 2:39 Ref: Acts 16:31-33

This is also validated through early historical writings of the Church Fathers.

“Jesus came to save all through Himself; all, I say, who through Him are reborn in God: infants and children, and youths, and old men.” - Irenaus 189 AD

“Baptize first the children, and if they can speak for themselves let them do so. Otherwise, let their parents or other relatives speak for them.” -Hippolytus, 215 AD

For women, there had been no command and necessity to be circumcised, because the male, father or husband, was their spiritual guardian, until faith in Christ came.

“Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian. So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” - Gal 3:25-28

When any person believes in Christ, they become joint heirs of eternal life, whereas before, inheritance rights flowed through the male tribal family ancestry of Israel.

But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. – Acts 8:12

While men are still considered the “spiritual head and covering” of the women in the New Testament, the curse that degenerated the marriage relationship was broken, and both must newly account for themselves. The serpent deceived the woman, but “her seed” redeemed her.

How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife? - 1 Corinthians 7:15

Like women under the Old Covenant, male Gentile converts to Christianity were not required to be circumcised; because it was now “by faith in Christ” that everyone was to be saved. Hence, “baptism for all” replaced “circumcision for some”. Reference – Acts 15:5-11

Confirmation

Outward Signs = Laying on of Hands by Apostolic Authority

Inner Grace = Reception/Baptism of the Holy Spirit and Power

What does it convey and affect?

- Affirmation/Confirmation of Baptismal Acceptance into the New Covenant
- The Presence of the Spirit in your daily life; Who guides, teaches, counsels, etc
- Empowerment to Live as a Witness of Christ in the world
- The Gifts of the Holy Spirit, possibly including "speaking in tongues"

What does it fulfill and replace?

- God's promise to pour out His Spirit / Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit
- The need to live in our own (lack of) strength

Scriptural Examples:

"And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions." – Joel 2:28

"I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." - Luke 24:49

"When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit." – Acts 8:15-17

"The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, "Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." - Acts 10:45-47

"After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?" - Galatians 3:3

A Second Baptism? Of the Holy Spirit?

Confirmation is, in a way, an extension of Baptism, first performed in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - but not yet fully appropriated. In Christianity, apostles and bishops are unable to be present at all baptisms, arriving at later times, when they "lay hands upon" the previously baptized, confirming acceptance by their authority, and inviting the Holy Spirit to come upon them in Power. The "laying on of hands" is an apostolic ministry. – Ref Acts 8:18

Note: Jesus was not baptized in the Holy Spirit until he was 30 years of age

Confession (Penance-Reconciliation)

Outward Signs = Bishop/Priest Pronouncement of Absolution

Inner Grace = Forgiveness of Sins for Baptized Christians

What does it convey and affect?

- Affirms Son of Man's incarnational authority as true High Priest
- Cleansing of Conscience for the Confessant
- Reconciliation with God
- Freedom from "the sin that so easily entangles us"

What does it fulfill and replace?

- Christ' delegation of authority to the apostles to forgive sins and reconcile sinners
- The need to offer sacrifices

Scriptural Examples:

"But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "Get up, take your mat and go home." Then the man got up and went home. When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to man. – Matthew 9:6-8

"If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained." - John 20:23

"Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven--if there was anything to forgive--I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake," - 2 Corinthians 2:10

"Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven." - James 5:14-15

Incarnational Representation

Sacramental Confession is also, in a way, an extension of Baptism, through which we receive the forgiveness of sins, but experienced in the present time, as we work out our salvation.

The bishop/priest represents Christ's incarnational Presence and High Priesthood and exercises Christ's delegated authority to assure confessants of God's love, grace, and forgiveness. This is also true in a public setting of corporate worship/prayer with a general confession, but a private confession is a unique personal encounter with Christ's incarnational representative.

Anointing with Oil of the Sick and Dying (Holy Unction)

Outward Signs = Oil Placed on Forehead mixed with a Prayer of Faith

Inner Grace = Healing of Illnesses and Infirmities for the Sick or Dying

Assurance of the Resurrection for those who will “die in the Lord”

What does it convey and affect?

- Confirms God’s Word to Spread the Good News of the Kingdom of God
- Provides a Taste of God’s Saving Power, Compassion, Mercy, and Love
- Promotes Faith in Christ, who is the Anointed One of God

What does it fulfill and replace?

- God’s promise to bring healing and joy to those who are suffering.
- The false belief that God does not care about you and has forsaken you.

Scriptural Examples:

Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. – Matthew 11:4-5

And they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them. – Mark 6:13

Jesus said, “Let her alone. She has kept it for the time when I will be buried. – John 12:7

“Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up.” – James 5:14-15

The Oil of Gladness

The oil used for anointing is representative of being touched by the Anointed One himself. It signifies the prophetic miraculous power given by the Spirit of God to those who themselves are anointed, to bring joy to people’s lives who are stricken by illness, infirmities, and injuries. The oil itself contains natural healing properties, was designed and created by God for this application, as well as others related to the advancement of the Kingdom of God. The oil is mixed (as per God’s commands) with the finest of spices, sweet and aromatic. The sweet fragrances are symbolic of God’s holiness because they denote life and health over the stench of disease and death that results from original sin. The healings confirm the Good News.

BETA 5 The Sacraments – Part 2

Holy Eucharist (Holy Communion -The Body and Blood of Jesus - The Lord's Supper)

Outward Signs = Bread and Wine, the Words of Christ, the Prayers of Intent, Distribution

Inner Grace = Participation in the Body and Blood of Jesus

What does it convey and affect?

- Eternal Life is given and preserved through reception of Christ's sacrifice for sins
- The Spirit will give life to our mortal bodies
- The satisfaction of our hunger and thirst for God is available
- Unity between God and man, and between man, through one man, is accomplished
- When we eat and drink it, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes again

What does it fulfill and replace?

- the Passover Meal, Manna in Desert, the Temple Sacrifices, the Bread of Presence

Scriptural Examples:

Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. — John 6:53

And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you".

- Luke 22:19

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.

- 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

For I received from the LORD what I also passed on to you: The LORD Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the LORD's death until he comes. So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the LORD in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the LORD.

— 1 Corinthians 11:23-27

Quotes from Church Fathers

"I have no taste for corruptible food nor for the pleasures of life. I desire the Bread of God, which is the Flesh of Jesus Christ, who was the seed of David; and for drink, I desire His blood, which is love incorruptible. – *Ignatius of Antioch*... circa 110 AD

For we do not receive these as common bread and common drink; but just as Jesus Christ our Savior, having been made flesh by the word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so also we have learned that the food over which thanks has been given by the prayer of the word which comes from him, and by which are blood and flesh are nourished through a change, is the Flesh and Blood of the same incarnate Jesus. – *Justin Martyr*... 2nd century

The earthly creation (bread and wine) are raised to a heavenly dignity after they "receive the word of God" and become the food and drink of Christians. So how then can we doubt that, "Our bodies, receiving the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible but have the hope of resurrection to eternal life." – *Irenaeus*... 180 -190 AD

Doctrine of the Real Presence

The Apostolic Church has always taught and believed that Jesus becomes really and wholly, but mysteriously present, in the Eucharist – under the elements of bread and wine. Diminished views that the Eucharist is merely a symbolic or spiritual exercise are not biblical or historically defensible. The Eucharist is the principle sacrament by which we feed on Christ Himself.

Central Act of Worship

In the corporate gathering of the Church, the celebration of the Holy Eucharist is the *central act of worship*, in agreement with the fulfilled life and mission, death and resurrection, of Jesus Christ. Everything in Jesus' life and so in the Liturgy of the Church: the reason for gathering, the music, the praise, the preaching of God's Word, the prayers - points to, moves towards, and finishes with this "once for all" saving act of God and His Son for the sake of the world He loves.

Reception of Children

The original historical practice of the Apostolic Church was to give communion to infants and children, which is not only in agreement with the heart of Jesus, "Let the little children come to me", but also with the historical practice of God's people to include children when participating in celebration of the Old Covenant Passover Meal, even as they taught them what it was about. Once baptized, all were welcome and invited to receive the Holy Eucharist. The same practice continues today in both Eastern Catholic and Orthodox Christian churches. The Roman churches decided at the 4th Lateran Council in 1213 AD to withhold Holy Communion until children reached the "age of reason", which they determined to be about 7 years old.

Holy Matrimony

Outward Signs = Groom and Bride, Vows and Rings, Blessing of the Priest

Inner Grace = The Two Become One, A Sign to the World

What does it convey and affect?

- The Mystery of Christ's Love for His Bride, the Church, His Own Body
- The Unity that is inherent in the Godhead is united to God's image and likeness
- A Model Witness and Vocation of Christ's incarnational love, for the world to see
- Eternal Love

What does it fulfill and replace?

- Marriage in the Old Testament: the original, in the law and the prophetic references

What does it prefigure and foretell?

- The Wedding Feast of the Lamb - Ref. Revelation 19:6-10

Scriptural Examples:

The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. – Genesis 2:23-24

"It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law," Jesus replied. "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." - Mark 10:4-9

After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— for we are members of his body. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. - Ephesians 5:29-33

Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy of taking part in the age to come and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection. – Luke 34-36

Sacrament vs. Service

Holy Matrimony is not the same as the secular understanding of marriage, in that, the Church does not perform a service for (any) two people who desire to be married; but marriage really belongs (has been given) to the Church as a true proclamation of the Gospel and a distribution of Christian grace; and like other sacraments, is incarnational in its nature and witness. The Apostolic Church has the delegated authority of Christ, over all the Sacraments of the Church, to withhold or administer the grace that would be bestowed upon the recipient(s), i.e. whether to baptize, confirm, forgive, anoint, commune, marry, or ordain.

The Vocation of Marriage

Every Christian husband and wife, are called to witness to the relationship of Christ and His Church, to one another and to the world. The witness of their life together is a joint ministry and calling. In Holy Matrimony, self is not the focus, but God and others. Acceptance of the vocation is a spiritual act of worship.

Marriage and the Resurrection

Holy Scripture also instructs us that the marriage between a man and women is a covenant instituted by God for our lives on earth and is ended by the death of one or both persons. Because we were really made for God, in the age to come, the only wedding event and marriage relationship is the one between Christ and His Church in entirety, when and where it reaches its fulfillment. Not that loved ones will not exist together, but they will be serving God undividedly forever, dwelling in the Eternal Presence of God and filled completely with God's love. Hence, the grace given in Holy Matrimony is for this life only, as it will not be needed in the next.

Miracle at the Wedding in Cana

Jesus' first miracle at the wedding at Cana, turning the water into the finest wine, on the third day, was a sign that pointed to something better, something greater, that was and is to come with the resurrection of Christ, and that gives glory to God. The sign given by Jesus also shows that although our marriages are temporal, they can also be used to point to something greater yet to come, something that gives glory to God and Christ Jesus. And so, a Christian marriage, performed in the Presence of the Lord, and by whom the marriage is truly blessed, is meant to transform us into something new and finer than we were before we were united together in Christ in Holy Matrimony. By and in His grace, we become a sign and sacrament to the world.

It is also why Holy Matrimony is closely associated with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, i.e. the Wedding Supper of the Lamb, both in Scripture and the Church, because the Eternal Love of God has been made known to us through the death and resurrection of God's Son.

Holy Orders

Outward Signs = The Laying on of Hands, Anointing with Oil, Authority of the Bishop

Inner Grace = The Power and Gifting to Serve in a *Positional* Office of the Church

What does it convey and affect?

- Anointing and Empowerment by the Spirit of God
- Giving & Reception of Delegated Authority from Christ
- Ordination of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons for the Church
- The Continuation of Jesus' ministry "In persona Christi"

What does it fulfill and replace?

- Jesus' promise to build His Church
- Apostles' Scriptural directive to appoint Spirit-filled, faithful men, full of virtue
- The Old Covenant Law offices of High Priest, Priests, and Levites

Scriptural Examples:

Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. - Acts 6:3-6

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. - Acts 20:28

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. - Titus 1:5-9

Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you. - 1 Timothy 4:14

Quotes from Church Fathers

"Take care to do all things in harmony with God, with the bishop presiding in the place of God, and with the presbyters in the place of the council of the apostles, and with the deacons, who are most dear to me, entrusted with the business of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father from the beginning and is at last made manifest"

- Ignatius of Antioch (*Letter to the Magnesians* 2[AD 110]) (6:1).

Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop. Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist, which is [administered] either by the bishop, or by one to whom he has entrusted it. Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] also be; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.

- Ignatius of Antioch (*Letter to the Philadelphians* 7:1–2 [A.D. 110]).

"Even here in the Church the gradations of bishops, presbyters, and deacons happen to be imitations, in my opinion, of the angelic glory and of that arrangement which, the scriptures say, awaits those who have followed in the footsteps of the apostles and who have lived in complete righteousness according to the gospel" (*Miscellanies* 6:13:107:2)

– Clement of Alexandria [AD 208]

"Over a deacon, then, let the bishop speak thus: 'O God, who have created all things and have set them in order through your Word; Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom you sent to minister to your will and to make clear to us your desires, grant the Holy Spirit of grace and care and diligence to this your servant, whom you have chosen to serve the Church and to offer in your holy places the gifts which are offered to you by your chosen high priests, so that he may serve with a pure heart and without blame, and that, ever giving praise to you, he may be accounted by your good will as worthy of this high office: through your Son Jesus Christ, through whom be glory and honor to you, to the Father and the Son with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and through the ages of ages. Amen'"

-Hippolytus (*The Apostolic Tradition* 9 [A.D. 215]).

Let the deacons remain within their own bounds, knowing that they are the ministers of the bishop and the inferiors of the presbyters. Let them receive the Eucharist according to their order, after the presbyters, and let either the bishop or the presbyter administer to them"

- Council of Nicea (Canon 18 [A.D. 325]).

"I, Patrick, the sinner, unlearned as everybody knows, avow that I have been established a bishop in Ireland. Most assuredly I believe that I have received from God what I am.

– St. Patrick of Ireland (*Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus* 1 [A.D. 452]).

Laying on of Hands

The "laying on of hands" upon a candidate for ordination, both signifies and imparts the authority and power required for that office the person is being ordained to; just as Jesus' quote of Isaiah 61:1, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me..." affirms God's choosing and empowerment of Himself. The rite of "laying on of hands" has biblical references in both Old and New Testaments. – Ref. Deut 34:9 1 Tim 5:22 Hebrews 6:2

In Persona Christi (in the Person of Christ)

Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, fulfill their offices: by, with, in, and for Christ, who although He is "seated in Heaven", yet He "walks among the churches". Their ministry is performed as a visible extension and representation of Christ who is present but unseen, and whose Lordship and servanthood are both manifested through the ordained clergy, who are united to Him especially in Holy Orders. Ref. Exodus 4:15-17

In the Order of Melchizedek

Jesus is a high priest "in the order of Melchizedek", who was a mysterious priest-king of God Most High, who pre-figured Christ's High Priesthood, which would be superior to the priesthood of Aaron and that of the Old Covenant, because His sacrifice would be perfectly satisfying to God and He would remain a priest forever vs. the Old Covenant imperfect sacrifices which could never take away sins, which were performed by priests who died and had to be replaced. – Ref. Genesis 14:18-20 Psalm 110:4 Hebrews 7:1-28.

Therefore, priests who receive Holy Orders in Christ's Church are ordained "in the order of Melchizedek", forming an extension of Christ's High Priesthood in Heaven on earth, who also commanded his apostles to celebrate His sacrifice when he said, "This is My body and My blood.", "do this in remembrance of me."

The words "In the order of" and "High Priest" also imply that there are other priests serving in this order among whom Jesus is the Chief High Priest, just as Peter referred to Jesus as the Chief Shepherd above the other shepherds, "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care..... And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away." (1 Peter 5:2-4). The Church's biblical and historical accounts of the offices of Bishop (High Priest), Priests, and Deacons serving under Christ and celebrating His "once and for all sacrifice" show this to be true.

BETA 6 – The Five-Fold Ministry & Clergy of the Church

The ordering of leadership in Christ's Church

Jesus said, “ ... I will build my church....”

Functional and Positional Roles

Christ, as Head of the Church, orders and appoints five functional roles in His Church for the ultimate purpose of building it up. These are known as the “five-fold ministry” of the Church.

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teacher, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up... ” - Ephesians 4:11-12

“One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and **chose** twelve of them, whom he also **designated apostles**: Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.” - Luke 6:12-16

In conjunction, in unity, and somewhat blended with this, three positional roles are also ordained in the Church, as per Scripture, which are: **Bishop**, **Priest**, and **Deacon**.

“Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an **overseer** desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) 1 Tim 3:1-5

In the same way, **deacons** are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. – 1 Tim 3:8-10

Apostles Paul and Barnabas appointed **presbyters** (elders) for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. - Acts 14:23

Definition of Terms for Positional Roles of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon

Bishop comes from the Greek word *episkopos*, meaning “overseer”. The prefix “epi-” means “upon” and “scopus” means “to see,” like a scope or a telescope. The word came into Latin as *episcopus* and then into English as *piscop*. The “p” turned into a “b” and that gave us “*biscop*” or “*bishop*.” (episkopos > episcopus > piscop > biscop > bishop)

Priest comes from the Greek word *presbyteros*, meaning “elder” or “old man”. It refers back to the ancient elders of Israel who assisted Aaron and Moses in leading the children of Israel. The word came into Latin as *presbyterus* and then into English as “*presbyter*” which was shortened to “*prester*,” and finally “*priest*.” (presbyteros > presbyterus > presbyter > prester > priest)

Deacon comes from the Greek word *diakonos*, meaning “servant”. The prefix “dia-” means “through” and “konos” means “common.” This is someone who works by means of common duties – a servant. It came into Latin as “*diaconus*” and from there into English as “*deacon*.”

Old Testament **three-level** structure of “priestly” offices:

- High Priesthood of Aaron,

- The priesthood of the sons of Aaron who were to serve at the altar under Aaron.

- The Levitical priests who assisted Aaron’s sons around the altar and care of the poor

New Testament **three-level** structure of “priestly” offices:

- Bishop (High Priest)

- Priests who serve at altar under the Bishop’s authority.

- Deacons who serve around altar assisting the priests, and help care for the poor.

The *terms* used for bishop and presbyter in the early language of the Christian Church, were not always clearly distinguished from the each other and were sometimes applied interchangeably, but the *office* of bishop was always distinct from that of presbyter. In the writings of Ignatius of Antioch (died c. 108), a disciple of the John the Apostle, and sources from the middle of the 2nd century, it was clear that all the chief centers of Christianity recognized and had the office of bishop, using a form of organization that remained universal until the Protestant Reformation. Some Protestant churches have re-instituted the use of the titles of Bishops and Deacons in more recent history.

In some cases, the words chosen and used in Scripture could be applied in more ways than one, but the context determines the understanding. For example, the word “elder” is a general word and could be used to refer to either a high priest, priest, or just an “elder”. The root word “*diakon*” is used to form both the words “*ministry*” and “*serve*” and can be applied to both the “*ministry*” of the apostles and the “*service*” of a deacon, or just someone acting as a “*servant*”. The words themselves are not always deterministic, but instead the context matters.

General Qualifications for Bishop, Priest, Deacon

A Man, Proven to be Faithful/Trustworthy and Full of the Holy Spirit

Manifesting the Virtuous Fruits of the Spirit

Not a Lover of Money

Not a Drunkard

Not a New Believer in the Faith/Recent Convert

Hospitable

Able to Teach, Defend the Faith, and Correct/Rebuke if Necessary

Able to Endure Hardship

If married, to be that of one wife.

If married, the wife should likewise be faithful and virtuous and helpful.

If a father, children should also be submitted and well-behaved.

Ref: Acts 1:24, Acts 6:1-6, 1 Tim 3, 2 Tim 2:2, Titus 1:6-9, 1 Cor 4:1-2,15-17, Philippians 2:22

Note: It is not explicitly emphasized, but the Scriptural text assumes the candidates are men.

Note: Scripture does not list qualifications for the *functional* roles as it does for *positional* roles.

Ordination for *Positional* Roles vs. Recognition-Designation of *Functional* Roles

The *position* roles or “offices” of the Church are something you have to be:

- Chosen for, by God, and confirmed by the existing Church authority over you.

You cannot make yourself a Bishop, Priest, or Deacon.

- You have to be tested, meet certain qualifications, and then be “ordained”,

Ordination involves use of the Church’s liturgical ordination rites.

“Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. And no one takes this honor on himself, but he receives it when called by God, just as Aaron was.”

- Hebrews 5:1,4 Leviticus 8

It is similar but different, for *functional* roles of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher

- Chosen, appointed, and anointed/empowered/gifted by God for that role

Despite self-claim to be, you need to be recognized or designated by others.

- Historically *recognized* or *designated* as such without “ordination” rites

At times involved anointing or prayer for empowerment

"While they were worshiping the LORD and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. – Acts 13:2-3

"when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. - Galatians 2:9

Sometimes, those serving in *functional* roles are also later ordained into actual *positional* roles/offices. Protestant churches somewhat confused the differences, when they rejected the historical structure of the *positional* offices of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon, and introduced ordination rites/ceremonies for Pastors, etc. which was previously a *functional* role vs. a *positional* role/office. Nonetheless, the roles of the *functional* "five-fold ministry" and the *positional* "three-level office structure" of Bishop-Priest-Deacon have always been somewhat blurred or confused, somewhat because they can overlap with each other.

Overlap of *Functional* and *Positional* Roles

Functional and *positional* roles in the Church, even multiple, can be filled by the same person, but they are not always. A person may have multiple callings/giftings as a servant of Christ. Christ himself was an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher.

Jesus is referred to as the "apostle and high priest of our faith" - Hebrews 3:1.

And while He is our Lord, He came among us as "one who serves" (a deacon) – Luke 22
Deacon Phillip was known as an evangelist. – Acts 8:5, 21:8

Other examples:

"The **elders (presbyters)** who direct the affairs of the church well, are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is **preaching and teaching.**" -1 Tim 5:17

"But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an **evangelist**, discharge all the duties of your ministry." -2 Tim 4:5

The "overlap" of functional and positional roles contributes to the reason why different church communions and denominations may have different organizational structures.

What do they do?

Bishop *(There is very much overlap with Apostle due to historical development)*

- Oversees, governs, shepherds, the churches, the flock of a particular geographical area.
- Ordains priests and deacons, and joins other bishops in episcopal consecration rites
- Defender of the Faith, and Primary Teacher of Scripture and the Doctrines of the Church
- Presides over the ministration of all the Sacraments of the Church, and delegates authority.

Priest

- Administers all the Sacraments of the Church in submission to the Bishop's authority.
- Serves, Preaches, Pastors, Teaches, and Defends the Faith under the Bishop's authority
- Pastors the flock under his care under the Bishop's authority

Deacon

- Assists the Bishop and his priests in the service of the sanctuary and administration of the Sacraments of the Church
- Leads the Church in service to the poor and others, so that the Apostles/Bishops can remain faithful to their own call and responsibilities.

Apostle *(There is very much overlap with Bishop due to historical development)*

- One who is **sent** into the world to Preach the Gospel and Minister the Word of God to others.
- One who plants churches and appoints/ordains elders and deacons.
- Defender of the Faith and Teacher of Doctrine
- Usually moves on to another geographical area once work is completed, and does not settle.

Prophet

- One who hears and speaks the mind and heart of God, to exhort, correct, direct, encourage, edify or challenge, both individuals or groups, both God's people or non-believers, etc.
- One who is sometimes sent somewhere or to someone to communicate a message from God.

Evangelist

- One who preach the Word of God to convert others, like an apostle, but does not have the other callings and responsibilities of an apostle. i.e. John the Baptist

Pastor

- One who shepherds the flock: leads, feeds, defends, cares

Teacher

- On who instructs the Church on Scripture, Doctrines of the Church, and other related matters

“Call No Man Father” *(A controversial issue between Catholics and Protestants)*

Due to aspects of Church History and the resulting Protestant Reformation, some in the Church protest against the use of the term/title “Father” when applied to an ordained priest.

The Scriptural referenced used is MATTHEW 23:9-11

“But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. ⁹ Do not call *anyone* on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. ¹⁰ Do not be called leaders/masters; for One is your Leader/Master, *that is*, Christ.”

If this Scripture was to be taken literally, and to its full application, then no male parent should be called “father”, no judge “your Honor”, no teacher “Professor”, no ruler “President or King”, etc., and in the Church, the titles “Pastor” or “Reverend” should be abandoned as well.

So what did Jesus mean?

1-warning against the pride/hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders and people worshiping them

2-was saying no man should be elevated above or equal to the Christ, or take His place

The Jews were claiming Abraham as their “Father” and Moses as their “Teacher”, but rejecting the need to put their faith in Christ which both Abraham and Moses did.

– Ref. John 8:39,56 John 5:46

The usage of term/title “Father” in the Church has its roots in the New Testament as well. Its usage relates to intimate familial relationship between a spiritual father and spiritual son, which the apostle Paul used to communicate regarding his spiritual relationship with Timothy, the Corinthian church, and others. The Apostle John also used the relational imagery in his first epistle. It is different from the metaphor and usage of Pastor – Sheep, but just as biblical.

“Even if you had ten thousand guardians/teachers in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. -1 Cor 4:15

Other: Acts 7:2, Philippians 2:2, 1 Timothy 1:2, 1 John 2:1 OT - 2 Kings 2:12

Celibacy

Although Jesus was celibate, he never required the apostles to remain or become celibate, but he did encourage those who had the gift or were able, to make use of it. Nor did he only call unmarried men to become apostles to begin with, if that was a requirement.

– Ref. Matthew 19:9-12

Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers (James) and Cephas (Peter)? - 1 Cor 9:5

Mandatory Celibacy of Clergy in Church History:

- The Quinisext Council in 692 AD condemned mandatory celibacy.
- In 1022 AD Pope Benedict VIII officially declared that priests were banned from taking on wives or mistresses in order to protect church property rights, although those who were married before entering the priesthood were allowed to keep their wives.
- Finally, in 1139 AD, Pope Innocent II declared all priest marriages annulled, declaring celibacy the rule for all Catholic priests from that day forward.

Women Clergy

Jesus was radical and associated with and commended women, which was not the cultural norm. He also welcomed Gentiles which was anathema to the Jews. He would have had no problem appointing women, especially Mary his mother, or Mary Magdalene and other women who faithfully followed Him, to the role of apostle or instructing the apostles to be open to ordaining such women. This was not just cultural. Jesus' mother Mary, who was the most qualified of women, also submitted to the apostles' authority. –Ref. 1 Tim 2:11-14, Acts 1: 14

While we see women being empowered by God with *functional* roles and gifts of: prophecy, evangelism, pastoring, and teaching; we never see authority given to women over men. In the rare exception when God had Deborah the prophet – ref. Judges 4 – leading Israel, she even inferred the shame of the opposing king being handed over to a woman.

The argument that Phoebe was an ordained deaconess in Romans 16:1 is not defensible because the word “diakonos” is a general word that is also applied to other “servants” in the Church, including Epaphras and Timothy, neither who were ordained deacons.

- each person of the Godhead is referred to with male terminology, Father, Son, “He” Holy Spirit
- the issue relates to *authority, submission, and order* according to God the Father's design
- the issue relates to the *positional* relationship: of God to man and man to woman, in order
- a female priest would contradict God's order and design in creation of male and female
- a female priest would contradict the order, design, and imagery of husband and wife
- a female priest confuses the image of Christ as husband and the Church his bride; *perverts* it
- a female cannot match and fulfill the male *priestly image* and call of Christ to die for bride
- a woman is not suppose to *exercise authority over men* in the Church, or be *head of the family*
- a man is designated the head of the woman by Scripture, and *Christ the head of every man*
- the qualifications for the office of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon infer the exclusion of women
- the historic Apostolic Church, while considering the possibility, state they cannot *by command*
 - Ref. Ephesians 5:20-33 1 Cor 11:3 1 Tim 2:11-15

The Priesthood of All Believers

It is not the responsibility of the clergy and five-fold ministers to do all the work of God. In a general sense, all believers are now part of God's Holy Priesthood, through Christ. 1 Peter 2:5 states that "you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy *priesthood* to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

The call of the *Priesthood of All Believers* is to:

- Sacrifice : out of love, for the Church and the world
- Serve : in humility, in the Church and the world
- Intercede: in prayer, for the Church and the world
- Proclaim: with power, the saving works of God, in the Church and the world

The Saints of the Church

Scripturally, "the saints" are all believers who have been "set apart" for God, for salvation and service, in His Kingdom. There are some well-known saints who are held in high esteem and serve as exemplary models of faith in God. These have been highlighted, esteemed, and given the "title" of Saint (with a capital S) through Church history, in similar way that certain Old Testament saints were highlighted in Scripture and commended for their faith in Hebrews chapter 11, to serve as a kind of "Hall of Faith (Fame)" listing for our encouragement.

Scripture does not encourage us to pray "to" the Saints/saints in Heaven, and warns us not to seek the "consultation" of the dead (Deut 18). However, all the saints who have "fallen asleep" (died) are biblically considered "alive with Christ", and Scripture does not forbid us from "asking for prayer" from anyone. So there is a debatable question as to whether or not "asking" via prayer for the intercession/help of a Saint, is permissible or legitimate, or if the saints in heaven can even actually hear and receive our prayers, like God. Maybe God employs those glorified somehow in a mystery that we cannot comprehend at this time. Some who object to asking Saint Joseph to pray for them, have no problem asking their deceased parent or spouse, who are with the Lord, to pray for them. Also, the glorified saints are likely very good intercessors.

Scripture does instruct us that we are to approach God through His Son (vs. his mother or anyone else), "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, a man, Jesus Christ, who has given himself as a ransom for all, the testimony in its own time" (1 Tim. 2:5-6), and that we are to "approach the throne of grace with confidence and find help in our time of need". (Heb 4:16). We are all called to mature in our relationship with God the Father.

BETA 7

Church History and the ICCEC

This is a quick survey, not an in-depth study, of Church history

Beginnings to Constantine

The Feast of Pentecost

Acts of the Apostles

The Early Church(es)

- Development & Formation of the Church

- Persecutions

- Jewish – Gentile Tensions

- Gnosticism
 - belief physical was bad, only spiritual mattered
 - emphasis on spiritual elitism, related to having special knowledge

- Montanism
 - over-emphasis on prophetic revelation, over the Apostolic faith

The Desert Fathers: Orthodox Christian hermits, ascetics, and monks who lived mainly in the

- Scetes desert of Egypt beginning around the 3rd century AD -

- origins in Old Testament ascetics, prophets

- Anthony of the Desert

- Benedict and the Rule of Life for Western Monastics

Constantine's Conversion and the Edict of Milan 313

Constantinople – 324 made new capitol city of East Roman Empire, Rome capitol of the West

- Latin spoken in Roman West and Greek spoken in Byzantium East

The Councils to the Great Schism

Constantine assembles first Ecumenical Council

Council at Nicea 325 AD

- Arianism condemned – the claim Jesus was created vs. eternally begotten

- The Nicene Creed drafted

- Rome as the 1st See (among equals)

Augustine of Hippo 354- 386 AD Church Father / Doctor of the West

Cappodocian Fathers 330-390 (Basil, Gregory of Nissa, Gregory Nazianzus) Doctors of the East

- had great influence on Church Doctrine and Theology

Council at Constantinople 381 AD

Completed & Confirmed Nicene Creed and Doctrine of the Holy Trinity
Constantinople listed as the 2nd See (among equals)

Ireland & Scotland & England 5-6th century

- Patrick 402 - 491 AD former slave, missionary to Ireland
- Columba 521 – 597 abbot of Iona and missionary to Scotland
- Pope Gregory sends Augustine of Canterbury to Britain 600 AD

Council at Ephesus 431 AD

Condemned Nestorian heresy emphasizing humanity vs. the dual natures united
Mary declared "Theotokos" = God-Bearer, in defense of Christ's divinity
Forbidden to alter the Nicene Creed

Nestorian Schism – churches separated from Constantinople > > East Syrian rite of Orthodoxy

Council at Chalcedon 451 AD

Condemned Monophysite heresy emphasizing divinity vs. the dual natures united
Bishop of Constantinople as 2nd in rank to Bishop of Rome

Monophysite Schism lead to the Oriental Orthodox Church and Coptic Church in Egypt

Benedict of Nursia – 480 – 540 AD Rule of St. Benedict – Precepts for Monks

Council at Constantinople II 553 AD

Reaffirmed the Catholic/Orthodox teaching on Christology of previous councils,
including usage of term Theotokos (God-Bearer) vs. Christotokos or Anthropotokos

Council at Constantinople III 680

-Monothelite Heresy claiming single divine will vs. two wills, divine leading the human

>Quinisext Council 692 – Also known as Council of Trullo - Constantinople

- considered and extension of the 5th&6th Councils, dealing with "natures and wills"
- obligatory clerical celibacy condemned
- 5 Sees confirmed

Nicea II 787

- Icons allowed to express devotion to what they depict, but only God can be worshiped.
- Clergy cannot be appointed by secular authority

The Rise of Islam (into Christian lands) 7th century > >>>

Middle East and Northern Africa, Europe, Constantinople and Asia Minor

Slavic Christianity > developed and was split between Rome and Constantinople allegiance

Russian Orthodoxy 9th-13th century beginnings

The Great Schism 1054

Nicene Creed and the Filioque Clause re: Procession of the Holy Spirit

Territorial Competition and Political Entanglements

Mutual Excommunications between Rome and Constantinople

The Great Schism to the Reformation

The Crusades 1095 – 1272

The Sacking of Constantinople by Roman Catholics - 1204

Francis of Assisi 1181 – 1226

Founding of the Franciscan Friars

Thomas Aquinas 1225 - 1274

Doctrine of Transubstantiation

Scholasticism – emphasis on Aristotelian philosophy and use of reason

John Wycliffe and the Lollards

translated Latin bible into English 1324 and attacked many aspects of Catholicism

Bohemian Reformation – The Brethren & Moravian Church 14-15th centuries – Jan Hus

-Bohemian Empire broke from Rome and began independent church

Protestant Reformation and Anglicanism 1500 (Evangelical & Pentecostal roots)

Martin Luther (Germany) 1517 95 Theses

Zwingli (Switzerland) – Bible Authority and Anti-Sacramental

Anabaptists and Mennonites – Believers' baptism

Calvin (France-Switzerland)

Institutes of the Christian Religion - Predestination

Baptists (Amsterdam) John Smith - Believer's baptism & Sola Scriptura

Presbyterians (England-Scotland) John Knox

The Rise of Nationalism and European Wars 1524 – 1648

The Catholic Reformation

Ignatius Loyola and the Founding of the Jesuits 1534

Council of Trent 1545 - Condemned Protestantism, Clarified Catholicism & Reforms

The Church of England – English Reformation – 16th century

King Henry III excommunicated, declares authority over Church in England

Act of Supremacy – Elizabethan Settlement

Book of Common Prayer – Thomas Cranmer

The Quakers & George Fox (William Penn) & Puritism

Pietism and Moravianism 17th – 18th century Europe

Methodism & John Wesley

The Salvation Army

The Great Awakening to Modern Pentecostalism & Movements

The Great Awakening 1720-1750 in America

2nd Great Awakening 1795-1835 (i.e. American Bible Society)

Papal Infallibility 1870

Apostolic Curiae and the Rejection of Anglican Orders

The Old Catholic Church of Europe

Polish National Catholic Church

Catholic Apostolic Church of Brazil

Pentecostal/ Charismatic Movements - Church of God – 1886 beginnings

Azuza Street Revival 1906-1915

Assemblies of God 1914

Pentecostal Holiness early 1900's

Foursquare Gospel Church 1923

Charismatic Renewal of Episcopal & Roman Catholic churches – 1960's Fr. Dennis Bennett

Second Vatican 1963 - Vernacular Mass & Liturgical Changes

Mutual Excommunications between Rome and Constantinople removed – 1965

Non-denominational /Independent / Neo-charismatic / Convergent Churches

i.e. Calvary Chapel, The Vineyard, Communion of the Evangelical Episcopal Church

ICCEC – International Communion of the Charismatic Episcopal Church – 1992 >

Spirit-Filled Bishops - Sacramental, Evangelical, Charismatic Together

Apostolic lineage traced through multiple lines back to the apostles.

BETA 8

How Does the Church Worship?

Part 1

Jesus Said, "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth. " - John 4:23-24

So, what is worship?

Definition = Worship is an acceptable expressive response to the Presence of God by those creatures who are not God

The Greek word used for "worship" is Proskuneo

1. to kiss the hand to (towards) one, in token of reverence
2. to fall upon the knees and touch the ground with the forehead as an expression of profound reverence
3. kneeling or prostration to do homage (to one) or make obeisance, whether in order to express respect or to make supplication

Hence, worship of God, involving praise, adoration, thanksgiving, reverence, obedience, love, etc. is expressed both internally and externally, with the whole person, in a variety of ways:

Verbally	- through reading, speaking, singing	1 Cor 14:26, 1Tim 4:13
Physically	- with bowing, kneeling, hands raised	Rom 12:1, 1Tim 2:8, Rev 5:14
Spiritually	- with/through the love and power of God	Acts 2:4, Gal 4:6, Rom 5:5
Artistically	- with instruments and decoration	Ex 31, 2 Chron 3:6, Rev 21:19
Materially	- with natural and constructed elements	Haggai 1:8, Luke 22:8
Monetarily	- from God's provision to us	Gen28:22, Mal 3:10, 2Cor 8:5
Personally	- every individual	Rev 22:8, 1 Tim 2:8
Corporately	- communal prayer and responses	Rev.19:3
Acceptably	- in ways God desires and approves	John 4:23, Luke 22:19

Historically, communal worship in the Church became different in style and emphases, being divided over multiple factors, theological and cultural, leading to limitations and lack of fullness.

The ICCEC is a worship movement in the Church.

- based upon what we believe God has revealed, imparted, and called us to participate in
- in agreement with Holy Scripture
- in agreement with God's original design for the whole Church as per the early Church
- affirmed by the Ancient Traditions, Writings, and Witness of the historical Church
- accepting of reforms and renewals of the Holy Spirit throughout Church history

The ICCEC practices “Three-Streams” worship, which is the convergence of the three major styles or emphases of Christian worship that were united in the beginning.

The 3 “streams” that are converged in our worship of God are:

Charismatic-Pentecostal	Emphasis on <u>the Manifestations & Gift of the Holy Spirit</u>
Evangelical-Scriptural	Emphasis on <u>the Word of God</u>
Liturgical-Sacramental	Emphasis on <u>the Visible Presentation of God’s Grace</u>

This model manifests the incarnational life of the early and undivided Church:

Holy Spirit-filled on the Feast of Pentecost, became prophetic with signs and wonder
Abided in God’s Word, preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ, taught the Kingdom of God
Gathered with the Apostles on the Lord’s Day to celebrate the Holy Eucharist

This model matches the incarnational life of Jesus Christ:

Baptized with Holy Spirit at the start of His public ministry, performing many signs.
Spoke the Word of God, taught the Kingdom of God, called all to faith in Him.
Celebrated the Passover, the 1st Eucharist, and then died his sacrificial death on cross

Worship Model = The Spirit filled Word made Flesh given for the life of the world.

Just as Jesus’ life, public ministry and mission, led to and culminated with his sacrificial death on the cross, so the Church’s worship leads to and culminates with the remembrance of His holy sacrifice in Eucharistic celebration. “Do this in remembrance of me.”

The Worship of God, can only and must be, completely fulfilled in Christ!

Based on Biblical & Historical Records

“On the first day of the week we came together to break bread.” - Acts 20:7

“So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat...” 1 Cor 11:20

“For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. - 1 Cor 11:26

-Other Ref: Acts 2:42, Luke 22:19-20, Mark 14:22-25 , 1 Cor 11:20 -26

“On the day of the resurrection of the Lord, that is, the Lord's day, assemble yourselves together, without fail, giving thanks to God, and praising Him for those mercies God has bestowed upon you through Christ, and has delivered you from ignorance, error, and bondage, that your sacrifice may be unspotted, and acceptable to God, who has said concerning His universal Church: In every place shall incense and a pure sacrifice be offered unto me; for I am a great King, says the Lord Almighty, and my name is wonderful among the heathen.” - Apostolic Constitutions

Convergence and the Unity of the “Three Streams” are Trinitarian in Operation

The Convergence of the Three Streams, also means that the entire service of worship is charismatic, evangelical, and liturgical-sacramental, all at the same time, although one aspect may be more visible and apparent at certain times, all three streams are in unity and working together in worship, just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are One and work together in unity.

i.e. Prophetic expression is encouraged in Scripture, but in proper and decent order.

i.e. Holy Scripture is read, chosen via the Lectionary, but preached with Power.

i.e. Mystery of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist is affirmed in God’s Word.

Charismatic-Pentecostal (the Fire)

Filled and Empowered by the Holy Spirit.	Acts 1:5, 2:1-4, 18, 1 Cor 1:4-7
Manifestation of the various gifting, workings, and service of the Spirit.	1 Cor 12:7-10
Full of joy, praise and thanksgiving	Acts 2:46-47
Praying in the Holy Spirit	Rom 8:26, 1 Cor 14:15, Jude 20
Open to the Prophetic -- do not despise, edifying, best	Acts 2:17, 1 Cor 14:1, 24-27
Signs & Wonders	Acts 2:43, James 5:14

Evangelical-Scriptural (the Wood)

The Proclamation and Application of God’s Word	Acts 2:42, 6:2-4. 1 Tim 4:11-16
The Call to Repentance, Faith, and Baptism	Acts 2:38. Romans 5:1
The Call to Evangelize and Make Disciples	Matthew 28:16-20
The Call to Follow Christ and Gospel Living	Romans 1:16
The Call to Help Others	Luke 10:25

Liturgical-Sacramental (the Fireplace & the Flesh)

The Dramatic Recalling and Ordered Sequence of Gospel Events	
Making the Visible the Kingdom of God	Heb 8:5, Rev 1:12-16, 4:1-11, 7:9-12,
Re-Enactment of the Last Supper	1 Cor 10:16, 11:20-29
The Towel, the Garments and Stoles	Luke 22:21-30, Rev 1:12-13, 7:9
The Table and the High Priest	Matthew 26:17-30, Acts 2:42
The Bread and Wine	
The Water and Oil	
The Plate and Cup	
The Prayers and Words of Remembrance	
The Reception of Grace	John 6:53-64, 1 Cor 10:16, 11:27

Terms to Understand

The **Shape** of the Liturgy: This refers to the ordering of the content and conditions for worship, that establishes the form and flow of the Church's gathering. i.e. What do we read, say, and do, and when do we do it? This cannot be guessed on, randomly ordered, or subjectively decided, but follows an ancient pattern of historical Church practice rooted in Scripture and patristic records. This provides structure, or "bones", for the gathering of the Body of Christ. It provides a "fireplace" for the "firewood" to burn, in a safe and contained way, and the proper administration of God's sacramental grace.

The **Work** of the People: This refers to the participation of God's people in the worship of God, because worship is not a matter of merely passive observation. *Liturgy* is a Greek word that means "work of the people". In liturgy, the people of God fulfill their role as the Priesthood of all Believers. It provides for a communal response to God when gathering as the Church.

The **Unfolding Drama** of Redemption: This refers to the gradual progressive revelation of God and the salvation of the world, as recorded in Holy Scripture from the beginning of the Book of Genesis to the redemption of God's people through the incarnation, death, and resurrection of God's Son, as recorded in the Four Gospels and witnessed to and affirmed by and in the Church and additional New Testament writings. The final culmination of the drama is anticipated by the Church as it awaits Christ's return. This drama is recalled (past), reenacted (present), and rehearsed (future) in different parts of the liturgy, generally guided by historical timelines.

Heavenly Worship and **The Communion of the Saints**: This refers to the supernatural reality that our worship of God is not limited by natural perception; that we "are seated with Christ in the heavenly realms" even now and that we are joining into the worship of God that is already and constantly going on in Heaven. Therefore, the celebration of the Eucharist is a meeting time between Heaven and Earth. Not only do we enter into the Presence of God, who is not limited by the natural realm, but we acknowledge that we are joining all the company of Heaven, including angelic beings, and the saints who have literally entered Heaven before us, just as the apostles witnessed and were present with Moses and Elijah at the Transfiguration of Christ on the Holy Mountain, when the cloud descended upon it. – Ref: Matt 17:13, 2 Peter 1:18, Heb 12:24-28 Rev 1:10, 4:2-8, 5:11-13

All these things combined, affect how the Church worships God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

BETA 9 How Does the Church Worship Part 2

In order for the “*Shape of the Liturgy*”, the “*Work of the People*”, the “*Unfolding Drama of Redemption*”, and “*Heavenly Worship*” to take visible form, they require components of worship. These components all have their origins from the biblical historical development of worship among God’s people, from the Beginnings to the Patriarchs, through the formation of the Nation of Israel, to the appearance of Christ and the formation of the Church. These components are used to shape, work through, and dramatize God’s redemptive acts in heaven and earth. Some examples of these are:

Acknowledgement of God’s Existence and Presence
God’s Word and Man’s Response
The Fall of Man to Sin and Death
The Movement of God’s people from one place to another
The Necessity of Repentance and Forgiveness
Teaching of God’s Commandments and Prophetic Communications
Miraculous Signs and Wonders
The Giving of Thanks and Praise to God with Music and Songs
Giving of Tithes and other Offerings
Fellowship Meals
Use of Created Elements, i.e. bread, wine, oil, water, wood, stone, metals, furs
God’s Call for His People to Assemble
Calling upon the Name of the Lord
The Building of an Altar/Preparation of a Table

Some Scriptural references of the “components and origins” are:

Note: (Do not need to read every example below. These are for references.)

Adam and Eve - Ref: Genesis 3:8-13, 21-22

They **confessed** their sins in His Presence, and God provided a **covering for their shame**.

Cain and Abel - Ref: Gen 4:2-5

Cain offered some of the produce of his labor, in time, to God, and was rejected.

Abel **offered the first-fruits** of his labor to God, and was **accepted**.

Noah - Ref: Genesis 8:20-21

God saved Noah, “a **preacher of righteousness**” from the flood waters of judgment.

Afterwards, Noah **built an altar and offered a sacrifice** to God

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - Ref: Genesis 14:18, 26:25, 28:22

Then Melchizedek king of Salem **brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High**

After the Lord appeared to him again, Abraham **built altars and called upon His Name.**

Abraham's sons, Issaac and Jacob, also responded to God, and **built altars, called upon the Name of the Lord, and offered the first-fruits** of what God blessed them with.

Moses and Aaron - Ref Exodus 11:14-17, 24 -28

God gave instructions to celebrate the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread for generations to come. They told the people, who **bowed down and worshipped God**

"...then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. **Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.**" Exodus 25:8-9

"Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses...**No one should appear before the LORD empty-handed:** - Ref: Deut 16:16

'**Let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD.** - Leviticus 1:3

Ezra - Ref: Nehemiah 8:4-6

Ezra the teacher of the Law stood on a high wooden platform built for the occasion..... Ezra **opened the book.... as he opened it, the people all stood up.** Ezra praised the LORD, the great God; and **all the people lifted their hands and responded, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.**

David - Ref: 2 Samuel 6:5

As the ark of the covenant was being brought to Jerusalem, "David and all the house of Israel were **celebrating before the Lord with all kinds of instruments made of fir wood, and with lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets and cymbals.**"

Solomon -Ref: 2 Chron 5

the house of the Lord was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for **the glory of the Lord filled the house of God."**

Zechariah - Zech 9:12

Come and celebrate, people of God! Sing and shout your praise! For our God comes to us: triumphant and victorious, yet gentle and humble of heart.

Jesus and Disciples - Matthew 26:18

I am going to **celebrate the Passover** with my disciples at your house.'" So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and **prepared the Passover.**

Jesus - Luke 4:16

"on the Sabbath Jesus went into the synagogue as was his custom. **He stood up to read..."**

Mary Magdalene - Matthew 28:1

After the Sabbath, at dawn **on the first day of the week**, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

Jesus and the Church - John 20:19

So when it was evening on that day, **the first day of the week**, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, **"Peace be with you."**

The Church – Acts 2:46-47

they continued to meet in temple courts and met from house to house

The Church - Acts 20:7

on the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people...

The Church - Acts 2:42

They devoted themselves to **the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.**

The Church – 1 Cor 14:5

Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.

The Church - 1 Cor 14:26

When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up

The Church – 1 Cor 16:2

On the first day of every week each one of you is to **put aside a sum of money**, in keeping with your income

The Church in Heaven - Rev. 7-11

All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God

Angels and Saints - Rev. 5:8

.. they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints

The Fulfillment, Translation, and Usage of Worship Components

All the *components* of worship found in the biblical history of God's people find their fulfillment in Christ and so are expressed in communal worship as such. Everything is understood and translated in light of Christ's finished work.

Hence, the New Covenant instituted by Christ required a change in how God's people worship. The principle components of worship remain, but their meaning, purpose, application, and administration are translated anew because they are fulfilled in Christ, who is the true worship leader of God and the Church.

These changes began with the place, day and times, that we worship God through Christ:

Old Testament	Open Altars > Tabernacle + Homes > Temple + Synagogues + Homes
New Testament	Temple Courts and Homes >> Homes and Churches
Old Testament	Sabbath (Fri/Sat.), the Last Day of the week, starts at night
New Testament	The Lord's Day (Sun.) the 1 st Day of the Week, starts in morning

The affirmation of this and other changes are found in both Scripture and Church history, and apply to all the various components of communal worship, still used, but newly translated for Christians. These components are incorporated into the Liturgy of the Church.

For example:

- Gathering in the Name of Christ
- Gathering Place and Furnishings
- New Music and Songs for the Christian Faith
- Prophecy and other Gifts of the Spirit
- Special Prayers and the Creeds of the Faith
- Fulfilled Old and New Scripture Quotations and Declarations
- Lectionary Readings of Scripture based on the Church Calendar - 3 Year Cycle (WHY?)
- Prepared Sermons to Edify the Church
- Tithes and Offerings for the Advancement of the Kingdom
- Usage of the Lord's Table/Altar of Sacrifice
- Liturgical Supplies & Items: Elements, Vessels, Vestments, Banners, Signs and Symbols
- Sacraments and Sacramentals Communicating the Grace and Truth of Christ
- Ordained Ministers and other Servants of Christ
- The Priesthood of all Believers in Unity
- The Presence of God, revealed and known as the Holy Trinity

The Liturgy of the Church

The *Liturgy* of the Church provides for and facilitates the ordered framework of the fulfilled and translated worship components, in both summary and detailed form.

In the communal worship service, the various translated components and fulfilled acts of God, out of necessity, are “recapitulated” in the present time and space, through the Liturgy.

Recapitulation = an act of summarizing and restating the main points of something:

The Liturgy is therefore categorized into two major sections, each with detailed sub-sections:

1- The Liturgy of the Word

2- The Liturgy of the Table

The Order of Liturgy of the Word

Part I – Beginnings of Worship

Procession and Entrance into God’s Presence with Praise

Acclamation of God

Collect Prayer of Purity

Summary of the Law

Confession of Sin and Absolution

The Gloria or Kyrie

Additional Praise and Thanksgiving

Manifestations of the Holy Spirit

Collect Prayer of the Day

Part II – Proclamation of God’s Word

Sunday Lectionary Readings - 3 year cycle

Old Testament, Responsorial Psalm, New Testament

Gospel Procession

Sermon

Altar Call

Part III - Affirmation of the Faith

Nicene Creed (summary statement of what the Church believes)

Prayers of the People (as commanded by Scripture)

The Exchange of Peace

The Order of the Liturgy of the Table

Part I - The Offertory

The Collection of Tithes and Offerings

The Presentation of the Gifts:

Bread, Wine, Water, Tithes and Offerings

Preparation of the Altar:

Vessels, Elements, Incense

Part II – Eucharistic Prayers

Sursum Corda = “Lift Up your Hearts” - turning of our hearts to God

Preface of Prayer - recalling God’s saving activity

Sanctus – “Holy, Holy, Holy...” Glorification of God - Ref. Book of Revelation

The Words of Institution - Provided by Jesus and affirmed usage by the apostles

The Epiclesis - The calling on the Holy Spirit to descend upon the elements

Prayerful Declarations and Recallings of Gospel Truth and the Giving of Thanks

The Doxology - Messianic and Trinitarian Acclamation

The Lord’s Prayer – “Our Father...”

The Fraction - “The Breaking of the Bread”

Distribution and Reception of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Jesus

The Sacrament of Anointing with Oil for Healing

Part III – Post Communion

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Benediction & Blessing

The Dismissal and Sending Forth of the Church into the World

The *Liturgy* is used with some variations throughout the Church year, with allowances for seasons, special feast days, and other sacramental occasions, such as: baptisms, ordinations and marriages; and of course leadings of the Holy Spirit, as discerned by the celebrant under episcopal authority.

The *Liturgy* provides for a safe, free, and full expression of Christian communal worship, with:

-dramatic movement (The Unfolding Drama of Redemption)

-participation (The Work of the People)

-form (The Shape of the Liturgy)

-faith and acceptance of the supernatural reality that we are gathered in the Presence of God, and with His angels, surrounded by the great cloud of witnesses in heaven

(Heavenly Worship and the Communion of the Saints)

The Church Calendar

Genesis 1:14 --Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years;

Just as there are times and seasons in the natural world, there are seasons in the spiritual world, and the two are often/usually connected. *I.e, Day and Night, Spring and Fall Harvest Times, Rainy Seasons, Vernal Equinox, Feast Days marking Special Times and Events*

Similar to Jewish customs of celebrating and remembering God' activity in their national life at different times and seasons according with God's command to do so, the historical Church, deemed a "Holy Nation" by Scripture, has established times and seasons of special focus and festal celebration in line with the saving activity of God's Son, Jesus Christ -- taking us through his birth, early appearance, adult public ministry and Kingdom teachings, and the fulfillment of his mission through his crucifixion, resurrection, and the commission of his Church, to serve as a spiritual discipline and tradition of the corporate Body of Christ. Along with thematic changes of Song, Scripture Readings, and Sermons, these special times and seasons are marked by visible, symbolic, meaningful, and purposeful changes to differentiate them and highlight their particular focus on Jesus' life and the impact on the Church and its subsequent activity in the world -- past, present, and future.

- Advent - Preparation for the Coming Return of Christ in light of His first appearance
Color= Deep Blue (Preparation and Expectancy of a New Day)
- Christmas - Celebration and Remembrance of the Incarnation and Birth of God's Son
Color = Gold/White (Birth of Royalty)
- Epiphany the Revealing of the new born King and Christ to the whole world
Color = White/Green (Announcing Light and Life/ Growth)
- Lent Preparation for Appreciation of Christ suffering and sacrificial death
Color = Purple (Repentance and Suffering)
- Easter Celebration of Christ's victorious Resurrection from the dead.
Color = White (Victory of Light over Darkness)
- Pentecost Celebration and Remembrance of Jesus' sending the Holy Spirit upon the Church
Color = Red (Fire of the Holy Spirit)
- Ordinary Time /Kingdomtide - Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God and how to live in it
Color = Green (Ordinary Life / Continued Revelation of Christ to the World)
- Other Colors: Deep Red (Passion / Martyrdom) i.e. Holy Week
Black (Mortal Death) i.e. Ash Wednesday

BETA 10 How Do We Live in the Kingdom? Part 1

Modeling Prayer

In response to the request, “Lord teach us to pray”, Jesus taught the “Our Father”, which included five prayer points to address:

- 1- Hallowing God our Father in Heaven
- 2- Advancing the Kingdom and Doing God’s Will
- 3- Dependency on God’s Daily Bread
- 4- Forgiveness of Trespasses/Sins
- 5- Overcoming Temptation and Evil

The Presupposition of Prayer

The Our Father, being a prayer itself leading to life in the Kingdom of God, presupposes that prayer is inherently essential to living in the Kingdom, an acknowledgment that God exists and is the source of all that is needed for life and fulfillment. Every day, Jesus would get up very early to pray in solitary places, and also fulfilled the requirements of the Law regarding prayer and temple services. We follow his example in:

Daily Prayer

The Daily Office or other formats of prayer

(Pray shortened sample version of Daily Office – format to be provided)

Times of Corporate Prayer

Sunday Worship and other weekday gatherings

- 1- Hallowing God our Father in Heaven

We are taught to acknowledge and call upon God as our Father, who is the primary person of the Holy Trinity. Why?

God the Father wants his children to have a personal relationship with Him, who is love. We need to know and respect the Holiness of God, among His other Divine attributes. Our true identity is as His sons and daughters, and each other as brothers and sisters. We are taught to acknowledge our temporal life on earth vs. our heavenly destiny.

2 - Advancing the Kingdom and Doing God's Will

In the present time, the *Coming of the Kingdom* on earth is also dependent upon the Church's cooperation with God, which is why Jesus' couples both phrases together. He would know.

In response, to the disciples inquiry about establishing the Kingdom, Jesus said only the Father knows the time, but that the Church would receive power in the meanwhile to bear witness to its coming. Notice the progression of Jesus' life, which is a pattern for our lives "in the Spirit" in the Kingdom.

Born (Again) of the Spirit of God	(Luke 1:35, John 3:3)
Growing and Becoming Strong in Spirit	(Luke 2:40, 52)
Waiting on the Holy Spirit - Filled & Empowered	(Luke 24:49, Acts 2, 4:14,31)
Led by the Spirit	(Luke 4:1, Romans 8:14)
Sanctified by the Spirit	(Heb 4:15, 2Cor 3:8, Gal 5:22)

In order for *God's Will to be Done*, God's people also need:

Desire and Submission – "Here I am, I have come to do your will" (Hebrews 10:9)

Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge:

of God's Word – Study, Prayer, Action

of God's Ways – Learning and Experiencing

of God's Will – Testing and Approving

God-given Talents and Gifts given through the Spirit by Jesus –(1 Peter 4:10)

and God-given natural talents and vocations

Gifts – Services – Workings (Rom 12:3-8, 1Cor 12:7-11, Eph 4:8-12)

Exhortation – Giving – Leadership – Mercy – Prophecy – Tongues -

Interpretation - Teaching – Administration – Discernment - Faith –

Healing – Helps – Service - Knowledge – Wisdom - Miracles

Apostle – Prophet – Evangelist – Pastor –Teacher – Intercessor + more

Vocations: (Gen 4:2, 20-22, Ex 31:3,6 Deut 8:18)

These consist of any God-given gift, in agreement with who He created and call you to be, that you excel in, which gives glory to God.

This applies to all skills, careers and industries, etc. but which can also be used to build God's Kingdom on earth

3 - Dependency on God's Daily Bread

Daily Bread – Natural and Spiritual

Firstfruits - Tithes and Offerings

God and Mammon - Serving one Master

Treasures in Heaven

Seeking first the Kingdom and its Righteousness

Daily Bread:

We rely on God for our material provisions: of food, clothing, shelter, etc.

(Genesis 9:3, Acts 14:15-17)

We rely on God for our spiritual provisions: salvation, grace, virtue, etc.

(Luke 11:13, John 15:6)

Firstfruits – Tithes and Offerings:

From the beginning, man was called to offer back to God a portion of what God had provided, as an act of thanks giving and worship, and as acknowledgment of dependent trust.

(Genesis 4:4, Gen 28:22, Mal 3:10, Heb 7:9, 11:4)

These offerings are expected by God are used By God to advance His Kingdom.

-helps support the God's servant leaders so they can remain devoted/focused

-helps care for the poor, especially orphans and widows

-helps with the work of Christ's Church to build the Kingdom on earth

(Luke 8:3, Acts 8:1-2, 1 Cor 9:13-14, 16:1-4, 2 Cor 8:5, 2 Tim 2:4-6, Jam 2:16)

God and Mammon:

Jesus makes it clear that we cannot serve both God and money. (Mt. 6:19-24)

Treasures in Heaven:

Investing into the Kingdom of God is a matter of the heart.

(Mt. 6:21, Mk. 10:28 Ps. 73:25, Acts 5:1-11)

Seeking First the Kingdom and its Righteousness:

We are instructed by God's Son not to worry about provision, but to prioritize the pursuit of God's Kingdom, trusting in God for all our needs. (Mt. 6:33)

4 -The Forgiveness of Trespasses/Sins:

The *forgiveness of sins* is paramount in the life of the Kingdom. (Col 1:14)

- God's forgiveness of our sins (commission or omission)
- Our forgiveness of those who sin against us

Reconciliation, Healing, Freedom, Joy, Peace, Thanks come with the forgiveness of sins.
Preaching the Good News – The Grace of God through Christ is what the Church offers.

5 – Overcoming Temptation and Evil

We need God's power to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, from whence evil temptation comes. Because we are weak, we ask for God's help: for His guidance and grace to choose what is good. Jesus also said that each day has its own sufficient evil.

(Mt. 6:34, 1 Cor 10:13, James 1:13-14)

The Kingdom of God and its members are engaged in spiritual warfare against forces of wickedness. Therefore, we need to be trained and equipped for battle. (Eph 6:10-18)

BETA 11 How Do We Live in the Kingdom? Part 2

Modeling Love

The Ten Commandments were given to Israel, His Covenant Nation, as moral law for all creation for all time. The Ten Commandments can be broken up into two sections:

Love of God

Love of Neighbor

- 1 *"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me."*
- 2 *"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My Commandments."*
- 3 *"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."*
- 4 *"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."*
- 5 *"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you."*
- 6 *"You shall not murder."*
- 7 *"You shall not commit adultery."*
- 8 *"You shall not steal."*
- 9 *"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor"*
- 10 *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."*

-Christians are not justified by the Law, but by faith in Christ Jesus, who fulfilled the Law.
-Christians do not live under or by the Law, but are under Grace and live by the Spirit of God.
-Christians are, however, called to obey these commands, as a universal standard of righteousness, and Jesus summarized them when he said that the two greatest commandments are to:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength."

"Love your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus, having modeled pure love for us, calls us to the same perfection despite our imperfection. When we sin, we offend God, hurt ourselves and others, and fall out of God's perfect will.

Modeling Blessedness

The nine "Beatitudes" (sentences of blessedness) affirm that we are blessed by God in the world, when we do the things that are expectant of His Kingdom and fashion our lives after God's Son, who came into the world, bringing the Kingdom into our midst.

- *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
- *Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.*
- *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.*
- *Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.*
- *Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*
- *Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.*
- *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*
- *Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
- *Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

The beatitudes are not commandments, but we receive and walk in God's blessings when we freely enter into and fulfill them. Thus, in each Beatitude, there is first an act of faith and then the reward which follows.

Even though the "rewards" for fashioning our lives after the King, are promised in future terms, the state of blessedness exists in present terms. We are to believe this truth and live in it.

Modeling Christ

When we apply all these truths and principles into the lives God has given us, modeling Christ's prayer, love, and blessedness, then we will find that we are living as members of His Kingdom.

We will be the salt of the earth and light of the world.