



THE CHURCH

ADULT CATECHISM CLASS



Christ centered

“I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

(John 15:5)



Community

The Family of the people of God:

Divine (invisible)

- Saints & Angels

Human (visible)

- People



Character

There is “one, holy, catholic,
and apostolic Church”
(Creed)



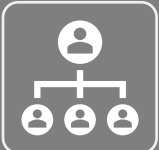
We will study the Church's



MISSION
(holy)



FUNCTION
(catholic)



STRUCTURE
(apostolic)





The Church's Mission

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.”

(Matthew 28:19-20)

- Spread the good news
- Call all people to holiness

Sacramental


- Christ delegated His disciples, the Apostles to teach and serve as priests on His behalf (Apostolic Succession)
- The Apostles, in turn, ordained priests and deacons to assist them in their mission (ordained ministry)



Universal

- All Orthodox Christians, by virtue of their Baptism, are called to spread the good news of the Gospel in words and action (royal priesthood)
- “You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2:9)



A group of people's hands are clasped together in a circle, symbolizing unity and support. The image is dimly lit, with a dark overlay. The hands are of various skin tones and are positioned in a way that suggests a collective effort or prayer.

— THE CHURCH'S FUNCTION

Image of the Trinity

- The Church is an icon of the Trinity reproducing on earth its mystery of unity in diversity
- We all have been endowed with a diversity of talents and come from different backgrounds, but we are one in Christ



The Body of Christ

- “We, who are many, are one body in Christ” (Romans 12:5)
- Christ is both God and Man, so we are joined with Him as members of His Church
- Christ is the Head, and we are the members
- “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 28:20)



A Continued Pentecost

- As Body of Christ, the Church is the temple and dwelling place of the Holy Spirit
- Just as each Apostle received the Spirit at Pentecost, we also receive it at Chrismation
- “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit”

(1 Corinthians 12:4)



A Sacramental Church

- What keeps the Church united as one is the communion of the faithful, led by their bishops, participating in the Sacraments
- Participation in the sacramental life of the Church is the criterion of our membership in the Body of Christ (theology of communion)



THE CHURCH'S STRUCTURE



Hierarchical In Nature

Councils

Bishops

Laity



Councils

- Governing body of the Church
- Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they decide matters of dogma and doctrine
- Ecumenical Patriarch has primacy of honor “first among equals,” (not universal jurisdiction, like the pope)
- Only 7 are considered “Ecumenical”
- Synods govern each autocephalous/autonomous Church



Bishops

- Apostolic Succession of bishops – extremely important
- special ordained ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons
- Authority to rule, teach, and celebrate the sacraments
- Their rule is not over the Church, but they are holders of an office in the Church
- Church is infallible, not a bishop alone



Laity

- Their role is to **preserve the integrity** of the Faith and stay united around their bishops in celebration of the Holy Sacraments
- Bishops are teachers of the Faith, and the laity are its guardians
- Have a duty to live according to Christ's commandment in Matthew 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."



The Living and the Dead

- The Church is one
- There is no division between its visible and invisible members
- We bear one another's burden by praying for each other
- Saints pray for us
- We pray for the departed and believe these prayers help them
- It is not clear what happens after death, and this is better left unexplained



Community of the Saints

- Virgin Mary retains a special place in worship
- Angels and saints worship together with us in the Liturgy
- We are one with them in prayer
- We look forward to live with them in eternity with God: "I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come. Amen." (Creed)





Thank You