

St. Peter and Church Unity

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The Catholic Church alone can trace the origin of her authority across nearly 2000 years and over two hundred-sixty successive men to Simon Bar Jona, the man renamed by Christ as “Peter.” In fact, a very simple description of a Catholic is: one who belongs to that Church which has, as its visible head, the Pope. But to many, the foundational, dogmatic belief in the Papacy is itself the very stumbling block preventing them from becoming Catholics. Here we seek briefly and simply to make the case for the Papacy, in such a way as to convince those of good-will, so they may themselves enter the “Barque of Peter.”

Prior to His Ascension into Heaven, Jesus Christ founded His Church. He united it, in its Faith, its Sacrifice, and its Sacraments, under one visible authority.

“One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism.” (Eph.4:5.)

“He who hears you, hears Me; he who despises you, despises Me.” (Lk. 10:16.)

“If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican.” (Mt.18:17.)

So important did Christ consider the unity of this, His Mystical Body, that



He prayed fervently before He suffered: “That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou hast given me, I have given to them; that they may be one, as We also are One: I in them, and Thou in Me; that they may be made perfect in one: and the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast also loved Me.” (Jn.17:21-23.)

Clearly, visible unity is an essential quality of true Christians if the world is to believe in Christ. “See how they love one another!” the pagans observed of the first Christians, as Tertullian informs us.

To preserve this glorious unity of Love (or “Charity,” as it is often called in the theological sense), which is the most impressive proof for the Christian religion, Our Lord established a visible order in His Mystical Body. This order we call “the hierarchy.” At the Creation, He had established hierarchies in nature to help us understand and appreciate His Church’s supernatural hierarchy. First among these is the family, the basis of all human society. Children look to parents for guidance and nourishment. Between parents, the father has the last authority. As established by God before original sin, this perfect order of the family extending into society begets a bond of charity and peace that is often sighed after, but rarely



St. John Chrysostom, fourth century Papist bishop of Constantinople.

pursued. Strangely, many adults who rightly insist on strict obedience from children, themselves can be found in open rebellion on the supernatural plane. Let them hear the words of our Lord: “Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the