

187. The Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints.

There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all.
Eph. 4, 4-6.

What is the Church? The whole number of believers; for only believers, and all believers, are members of the Church.

From this it is evident that the Church is not dependent upon any man. It has only one great Head, one Shepherd, one Chief Bishop — Christ. Nor does the Church's existence depend upon outward organization, rules, and rituals, but upon faith in Christ. That faith is engendered and maintained wherever the Gospel of Christ is preached and the holy Sacraments are administered according to Christ's institution; wherever that is done, there you find the Church of Christ, that is, believers in Christ.

The Church of Christ is *one* because all believers are one spiritual body, whose only Head is Christ. They all draw their religion from one Book, they are all begotten and taught by one Spirit, and are built upon one foundation. — Again, they are *holy*, the communion of saints, because all the members of the Church are sanctified by faith in Christ and serve God with holy works. — Again, this Church is truly catholic, that is, *universal*. Believers in Christ are to be found in every part of the world, wherever the Gospel is preached. — And it is an *invisible* Church, since men cannot determine which of those who profess this faith are true Christians at heart. As Christ says: "The kingdom of God is within you." The communion of saints cannot be seen because it is a communion of hearts. "The Lord knoweth them that are His." All we can do is, as we confess in the Third Article of the Creed, to *believe* in its existence. But believe in it we must, for it is just as real as the invisible God, who gives it its origin and who preserves it at all times, even to the end of the world.

Prayer.

Most glorious and blessed God, who through the Holy Ghost hast made Thy Church to be the body of Christ, we humbly beseech Thee to grant to us and to all Thy people strong and steadfast faith that we may ever abide in the unity of the Spirit and thus grow up into Him in all things who is the Head, even Christ, to whom be all honor and praise for preserving and protecting His Church! Amen.

My Church, my Church, my dear old Church,
My glory and my pride;
Firm in the faith Immanuel taught,
She holds no faith beside.
Upon this Rock
'Gainst every shock,
Though gates of hell assail,
She stands secure
With promise sure:
They never shall prevail.

This devotion is one of 318 taken from *Daily Bread* by F. E. Pasche, published by CPH in 1926, but now in the public domain. They have been copied and reformatted by Rev. Bruce G. Ley and made available for distribution by pastors and missionaries. You may contact Rev. Ley at: pastorley@leychalet.com.

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