

WEEK SIX: ONE HOLY, CATHOLIC CHURCH, COMMUNION OF SAINTS

Statement... the Creed moves from the Holy Spirit to Church, linking the Spirit's work to the Church's birth. The same Spirit which birthed the church still sustains us. In his final prayer Jesus prayed that we might be one, and it is a prayer still awaiting its time. In affirming ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC CHURCH, we aren't ignoring church's flawed history or the many ways that we have fall short of our potential.

A BROKEN BODY...we are the BODY OF CHRIST, yet obviously a BROKEN BODY. Every part of Christ's body breaks his heart, getting sidetracked from its mission. Despite our flaws, one of main ways that God works in the world is through HIS PEOPLE. We who love Church know its flaws better than OUTSIDERS but also its BEAUTY. Christians have built HOSPITALS and SCHOOLS, fed the poor, cared for the needy, improved the quality of life of people. We fret about the state of the world, but it'd be a far worse place to live without Christians in it.

NO CHRISTIANITY APART FROM CHURCH...our church experience may be good or bad, but there is no Christianity apart from the Church. We need each other. Faith is SOMETHING WE DO TOGETHER. I am SAVED to be SAVED WITH YOU. We need the GIVE-AND-TAKE of Christian fellowship to test my beliefs, to deepen our faith.

PASSING ON THE FAITH...the Early Church was just a MINORITY MOVEMENT. Their motto seemed to be "GOD PLUS ME EQUALS A MAJORITY". Together they put Christianity on the map. It wasn't just a matter of keeping the faith but spreading the faith, passing it on.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS...will the Church survive? Christianity is ONLY 1 GENERATION AWAY from extinction. If we don't pass on the faith and inspire the next generation, then the Church as we know it may cease to exist. God will have a WITNESS! God is always at work: he can WORK THROUGH US but he can also work AROUND US. The bond Christian share isn't severed by death but extends to the next life in the CHURCH TRIUMPHANT. You don't have to be DEAD/SPIRITUAL GREAT to be named a saint, only willing to be faithful. Saints are just ordinary people whose lives make it easier to believe in Jesus. As Hebrews puts it:

WE ARE SURROUNDED BY SO A GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES, LET US LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT, RUN WITH PERSEVERENCE THE RACE SET BEFORE US