

PO BOX 271227 + Flower Mound, TX + 75027 + 1-800-803-0118 + www.dritaly.com

EWTN Exploring the Catholic Church #1: Who Needs the Catholic Church?

by: Marcellino D'Ambrosio, Ph.D.

I. Intro

A. The Problem, the question: Who needs it?

1. My own background in highschool: cradle Catholic, last thing I expected from religion was adventure, excitement. Rock musician. Excited about Christ: center of my life. Discovered God as loving Father, Holy Spirit as source of power, joy.
2. **QUESTION:** With bible, Holy Spirit, & Jesus, Who needs the Catholic church? Big institution, hierarchy, Property, buildings. Gets in the way
3. **Laity:** "God's frozen people."
4. **Clergy:** problems from the beginning. Peter denied him; Judas betrayed
5. **Music:** pretty bad. *Why Catholics can't sing.*
6. Some friends left Catholic church: solo flights or joined churches more to their liking. Some even started their own churches.

B. Community is part of the Lord's plan (CCC 772-776)

1. Sin means division, fragmentation *Gen 3 & 11 Babel.*
2. To undo Fragmentation: at-one-ment. This is part of Jesus work.
 - a. Jesus died "to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad." *Jn 11:52.*
 - b. *Mat 12:30* "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters."
 - c. "For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth." *Eph 1:9-10.*
3. Unity not just in heaven, but imperative now:
 - a. On the night before he died, Jesus prayed *Jn 17:21.*
 - b. Also *Jn 10:16* "So there shall be one flock, one shepherd."

PO BOX 271227 + Flower Mound, TX + 75027 + 1-800-803-0118 + www.dritaly.com

4. Why God have such a passion for unity? God is not solitary. Trinity. We're made in his image and likeness. (CCC 813)
 - a. Nothing important in human life is completely private, solitary venture. I don't have all gifts. I need to receive. I need to give.
 - b. Heaven is not a bunch of private cubicles. Wedding feast.

II. SELECT IMAGES OF CHURCH

- A. **How many are there?** (CCC 753-757)
 1. Not defined but described by 96 NT images
 2. None is perfect. All analogies limp.
 3. Focus on just three: Body of Christ, Family, People of God

- B. **Body of Christ** (CCC 787-795) 1 Cor 12:12; Ro 12:4
 1. Can't love him and hate the church—it is his body! He identifies himself with it! Acts 9:4 "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" Cf. Mat 25: 31-46.
 2. Everybody has a role: We need each other Hebrews 10:25 "We should not absent ourselves from the assembly, as some do, but encourage one another."

- C. **Church as family**
 1. "Household of God" (1 Pet 1:22; Eph 2:19; Titus 3:15; 1 Pet 4:17)
 2. God Father, Jesus brother, same Holy Spirit in each. All brothers
 3. Doesn't every family has to have **a mother?**
 - a. John 19: 25ff. Beloved disciple our model
 - b. Ex 20: 12 4th commandment Honor her. Pictures in house
 4. **Relationships** primary. But demands institutional dimension in order to support and sustain that life. People even call marriage an institution. Property, legal status. Church a large family: 1 billion.
 5. In families, there are **elders, authority.**
 - a. Priest comes from the word in Greek for elder. God is the Father, but he expresses his fatherly care for us through elders who we often call "Father."
 - b. St. Paul called himself the father of those whom he converted since he begat spiritual life in them. 1 Cor 4:15; see also 2 Cor 12:14
 - c. Pope simply comes from "Papa"
 6. **Family ceremonies:**
 - a. Help the family maintain and deepen its bonds.
 - b. Eucharist family meal

- c. All Sacraments, blessings.

D. **Church as People of God**

1. **Holy Nation.** 1 Pet 2:9-10
 - a. Like the Jews in the OT: imperfect, but beloved of God. Ever in need of reform.
 - b. Unique kind of nation: "Catholic" means universal. Pentecost, Acts 2. Rev 7:9 "a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues."
2. **Every nation has a history, heroes.** (Saints)
 - a. Their lives & writings inspire us, their intercession assists us.
 - b. Statues, pictures, tell their stories.
3. **Every nation has a holidays:** defining events
 - a. **Yearly events:** Christmas, easter, pentecost
 - b. **Weekly events:** Every Fri & Sunday.
 - c. **Saints days:** yearly remembrance.
4. **Nation needs constitution & Tradition by which to interpret it**
 - a. Scriptures: like constitution, foundational documents
 - b. Can misinterpret documents
 - c. Tradition: Body of literature & principles used to interpret constitution, entire culture passed on from generation to generation
 - d. 2 Thes 2: 15 "Brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter."
 - e. CCC is a wonderful synthesis
5. **Every nation has to have government** (CCC 871-896)
 - a. **Apostles-bishops**
 - (1) apostles 12 patriarchs of the New Israel Mk 3:14-5; Mt 19:28; Lk 22:30.
 - (2) Rev 21:12-14 foundation stones of the New Jerusalem
 - (3) Apostles ordain "bishops"/ "elders" to govern new churches Acts 14:23. Paul tells them to entrust ministry to others. 2 Thes 2:15
 - (4) This unbroken chain of ordained leaders called apostolic succession
 - (5) Under, not over the Scripture & Tradition. Bound by it, interpret it authoritatively. Like a country's highest court. Testimony Paul VI's funeral 1978: open book of gospels.

b. **Peter-the Pope**

- (1) Jesus chooses Peter as “president” of apostles *Mat 16:13*.
- (2) significance of name change; the only one. All 4 gospels note this.
- (3) he is imperfect; yet given ministry to others *Lk 22:31; Jn 21:15*.
- (4) bishop of Rome his successor; Peter martyred in Rome
- (5) Spokesman before the world, like Peter at Pentecost. Today needed more than ever. *Acts 2*.
- (6) Bishops & pope as personal link to the apostles; Scripture our written link.
- (7) Mooring keeping it from being blown out to sea by the wind of the latest fad. Protection

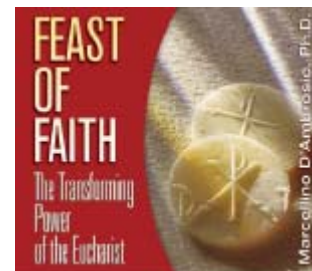
III. **Conclusion:** help not hindrance. Treasures.

- A. I need its sacraments: some of my richest experience of his presence.
- B. I need the direction and wise government of its pastors: Stability and continuity.
- C. I need the rich treasure of its tradition to help me interpret the Holy Scriptures.
- D. I need the maternal care of its mother.
- E. I need the example and intercession of its great heros.
- F. I want more of Christ, fullness *Jn 10:10*

This outline is found in the [Liturgy & Sacraments](#), [Christian Lifestyle](#) and [Eucharist](#) sections of [The Crossroads Initiative Library](#).

Feast of Faith - The Transforming Power of the Eucharist

Pope John Paul II has decreed a special "year of the Eucharist" beginning this month. Make the most of this opportunity with "The Feast of Faith," an enlightening, four-part adult faith formation series (on 2 CDs, 2 Audio Tapes, 2 VHS, or 2 DVDs) guaranteed to unlock the life-changing power of the Eucharist in your life. Be sure to order the Feast of Faith Workbook, you may view it online, to get the most out of this amazing Eucharist Series!



Part One – Sacrifice – discusses how the Mass is a true sacrifice, the “re-presentation”

PO BOX 271227 + Flower Mound, TX + 75027 + 1-800-803-0118 + www.dritaly.com

of Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross.

Part Two – Real Presence – The uniqueness of Jesus' presence in the Eucharist is contrasted with the other ways he is present in the world. Out need to be properly prepared to receive Jesus in the Eucharist is discussed in...

Part Three – Preparation – we need to have more faith, more appetite, more repentance, and more forgiveness. Finally...

Part Four – Adoration – explains the meaning and purpose of Eucharistic adoration and offers practical ways we can spend time before our eucharistic Lord in a way that transforms our lives. This is a must-have series for RCIA and Parish Adult Faith Formation.

[Feast of Faith DVD - \\$44.95](#)

[Feast of Faith – CD - \\$19.95](#)

[Feast of Faith – Audio Tape - \\$19.95](#)

[Feast of Faith – VHS - \\$39.95](#)

[Feast of Faith Workbook - \\$5.95](#)

Don't forget to purchase the study guide specifically designed to facilitate this process for individuals, study groups, and religious education classes. It is chocked full of quotes from Scripture, Church teaching, and great saints on the meaning and power of the Eucharist.

[Feast of Faith DVD and Workbook Set](#)

[Feast of Faith CD and Workbook Set](#)

[Feast of Faith Audio Tape and Workbook Set](#)

[Feast of Faith VHS and Workbook Set](#)



Bring [Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio](#) to your Parish to celebrate The Year of the Eucharist with all day [Feast of Faith: The Year of the Eucharist Seminar Retreat](#) or two night [Feast of Faith: The Year of the Eucharist Parish Mission](#). Please call 1-800-803-0118 or e-mail info@crossroadsinitiative.com to schedule your event today!

PO BOX 271227 + Flower Mound, TX + 75027 + 1-800-803-0118 + www.dritaly.com