

On the Ninth Article.

252. What is the *Church*?

The Church is a divinely instituted community of men, united by the orthodox faith, the law of God, the hierarchy, and the Sacraments.

256. How are we assured that the grace of God abides in the true Church?

First, by this: that her Head is Jesus Christ, God and man in one person, *full of grace and truth*, who fills his body also, that is, the Church, with like grace and truth. [John i. 14, 17.](#)

Secondly, by this: that he has promised his disciples the Holy Ghost to *abide with them forever*, and that, according to this promise, the Holy Ghost appoints the pastors of the Church. [John xiv. 16.](#)

The Apostle Paul says of Jesus Christ, that God the Father *gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body.* [Eph. i. 22, 23.](#) The same Apostle says to the pastors of the Church: *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you Bishops, to feed the Church of our Lord and God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.* [Acts xx. 28.](#)

270. Why is the Church called *Catholic*, or, which is the same thing, *Universal*?

Because she is not limited to any place, nor time, nor people, but contains true believers of all places, times, and peoples.

The Apostle Paul says that *the Word of the Gospel is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit* ([Coloss. i. 5, 6](#)), and that in the Christian Church *there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.* [Coloss. iii. 11.](#) *They which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham.* [Gal. iii. 9.](#)

**NOTE: Catholic does not mean 'Roman Catholic'

274. Why is the Church called *Apostolic*?

Because she has from the Apostles, without break or change, both her doctrine and the succession of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, through the laying on of consecrated hands. In the same sense the Church is called also *Orthodox*, or *Rightly-believing*.

Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. Eph. ii. 19, 20.

275. What does the Creed teach us, when it calls the Church *Apostolic*?

It teaches us to hold fast the *Apostolical doctrine and tradition*, and eschew such doctrine and such teachers as are not warranted by the doctrine of the Apostles.

The Apostle Paul says: *Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle. 2 Thess. ii. 15. A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject. Titus iii. 10. For there are many unruly, vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped; who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. Titus i. 10, 11. But if thy brother neglect to hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen man and a publican. Matt. xviii. 17.*

276. What ecclesiastical institution is there through which the succession of the Apostolical ministry is preserved?

The ecclesiastical *Hierarchy*.

277. Whence originates the Hierarchy of the Orthodox Christian Church?

From Jesus Christ himself, and from the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles; from which time it is continued, in unbroken succession, through the laying on of hands, in the Sacrament of Orders. *And he gave some, Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some, Evangelists; and some, Pastors and Teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ. Eph. iv. 11, 12.*

278. What hierarchical authority is there which can extend its sphere of action over the whole Catholic Church?

An œcumenical Council.