

Day 130 (Tuesday, July 28)

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I believe in one, holy,

*I believe in one, holy,
catholic and apostolic Church.*

People often ask me, “Father, why does *the Church* ... ?” I know they’re referring to the Church’s *leadership*. But I want to say, “*You are the Church!*” To understand what we are as Church, the creed gives us four “marks of the Church”: *one, holy, catholic and apostolic*.

There is *one* way for us to really know Jesus and what he’s about — in the Church, its sacraments and teachings. Though made up of different people and expressions of Catholic life, the Church remains a unity because God is one, and we profess Jesus as “one Lord.”

The Church’s teaching is reliable, because it’s *apostolic* — connected to Jesus through his apostles and those who came after to continue his work.

Being *catholic* means Jesus is fully present in the Church, which fulfills Jesus’ command to carry his message to the ends of the earth. Although retold in many languages and cultures, the message of love and forgiveness remains constant.

It may be difficult for some to call the Church *holy* because of the failings of some Christians. The Church’s holiness is about what all of us are together as Church, as the “Body of Christ.” We belong to the Church in order *to become holy*, to share the life of Jesus through the sacraments.

Once we think about these four ways to describe the Church, perhaps it will be easier to say, “*We are the Church.*”

I confess one Baptism

*I confess one Baptism
for the forgiveness of sins ...*

I love baptizing babies — with the water, fragrant oil, white garment, lighted candle and proud family members gathered. The crying baby doesn’t hurt the effect, either!

As parents seek to give themselves to their children and as a community gathers to embrace new members (infant and adult), we understand how God’s life flows through us. That life has power to sustain us. In joyful celebrations, we sing our gratitude. In sad times, we trust God’s love. In moments of sinfulness, we seek forgiveness.

As a Church, we “confess one Baptism” and all that the life of Jesus, given in the sacraments, means to us.

... and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead

*... and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come.*

I've celebrated the lives of many Catholics in the funeral liturgy. Family and friends often talk about the faith of their loved one: "Mom always prayed her rosary." "Dad made sure we went to Mass." "She was a faithful parish volunteer."

Expressions like these say how much we belong to Jesus. They also point to how much we "look forward" to the "life of the world to come." We live our lives here and now, knowing there's more!

We may not be able to describe the "resurrection of the dead" in terms we can comprehend. But we recognize what awaits us when we see Catholics who live their faith fully.

In the end, the creed calls us back to its beginning: love. The God who made "heaven and earth" in love, embraced all creation in Jesus Christ, loved us even to the gift of his life and sent the Spirit of love into the world — that God awaits us in the life of the world to come.

In the end, we say *Amen* to love!

In the light of eternity, we're here for a very short time, really. We're here for one thing, ultimately: to learn how to love, because God is love. - James Finley

Sincerely,
Fr. Jim Kaptein