



May 10th

Jesus Is Not A Polygamist:

Schism, Unity and The Bride of Christ

I. Starting Point :What does the Holy Church teach regarding non-Catholic Christians?

817 of CCC: In fact, "in this one and only Church of God from its very beginnings there arose certain rifts, which the Apostle strongly censures as damnable. But in subsequent centuries much more serious dissensions appeared and large communities became separated from full communion with the Catholic Church - for which, often enough, men of both sides were to blame." The ruptures that wound the unity of Christ's Body - here we must distinguish heresy, apostasy, and schism - do not occur without human sin:

Where there are sins, there are also divisions, schisms, heresies, and disputes. Where there is virtue, however, there also are harmony and unity, from which arise the one heart and one soul of all believers.

818 "However, one cannot charge with the sin of the separation those who at present are born into these communities [that resulted from such separation] and in them are brought up in the faith of Christ, and the Catholic Church accepts them with respect and affection as brothers. . . . All who have been justified by faith in Baptism are incorporated into Christ; they therefore have a right to be called Christians, and with good reason are accepted as brothers in the Lord by the children of the Catholic Church."

819 "Furthermore, many elements of sanctification and of truth" are found outside the visible confines of the Catholic Church: "the written Word of God; the life of grace; faith, hope, and charity, with the other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit, as well as visible elements." Christ's Spirit uses these Churches and ecclesial communities as means of salvation, whose power derives from the fullness of grace and truth that Christ has entrusted to the Catholic Church. All these blessings come from Christ and lead to him, and are in themselves calls to "Catholic unity."

846 How are we to understand this affirmation, often repeated by the Church Fathers? Re-formulated positively, it means that all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is his Body:

Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation: the one Christ is the mediator and the way of salvation; he is present to us in his body which is the Church. He himself explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and Baptism, and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through Baptism as through a door. Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it.

847 This affirmation is not aimed at those who, through no fault of their own, do not know Christ and his Church:

Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience - those too may achieve eternal salvation.

II. Unity- The Forgotten Requirement

a. From The Gospels:

1. When Christ built on Peter as on an unshakable foundation the indestructible edifice of His Church He thereby indicated its essential unity and especially the hierarchical unity (Matthew 16:18).
2. He expressed the same thought when He referred to the faithful as a Kingdom and as a flock: "Other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd" (John 10:16).
3. Unity of faith and worship is more explicitly indicated by the words outlining the solemn mission of the Apostles: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19).
4. These various forms of unity are the object of the prayer after the Last Supper, when Christ prays for His own and asks "that they may be one" as the Father and the Son are one (John 17:21, 22).
5. Those who violate the laws of unity shall become strangers to Christ and his spiritual family: "And if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican" (Matthew 18:17).

b. From the Epistles

1. In faithful imitation of his Master's teaching St. Paul often refers to the unity of the Church, describing it as one edifice, one body, a body between whose members exists the same solidarity as between the members of the human body (1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4).
2. He enumerates its various aspects and sources: "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, . . . and in one Spirit we have all been made to drink" (I Cor xii, 13); "For we, being many, are one bread, one body, all that partake of one bread"

(ibid., x, 17). He sums it up in the following formula: "One body and one Spirit; . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:4-5).

3. Finally he arrives at the logical conclusion when he anathematizes doctrinal novelties and the authors of them (Galatians 1:9), likewise when he writes to Titus: "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, avoid" (Tit., iii, 10); and again when he so energetically condemns the dissensions of the community of Corinth: "There are contentions among you. . . every one of you saith: I am indeed of Paul; and I am of Apollo; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul then crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Corinthians 1:11-13). "Now, I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you; but that you be perfect in the same mind, and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

4. St. Luke speaking in praise of the primitive church mentions its unanimity of belief, obedience, and worship: "They were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

5. All the first Epistle of St. John is directed against contemporary innovators and schismatics; and the author regards them as so foreign to the Church that in contrast to its members "the Children of God", he calls them "the children of the devil", (1 John 3:10); the children "of the world" (iv, 5), even Antichrist (ii, 22; iv, 3).

c. Biblical Standard For Church:

6. Visible
7. Unified
8. Universal
9. Apostolic
 - a. Hierarchical
 - b. Male Priesthood
 - c. Able to defend it's self
 - d. Protects and holds the liturgy and sacraments

III. The Triple Threat: Heresy, Schism and Apostasy

- a. Heresy: perverts dogma and attracts a truth of the faith.
- b. Schism: By rebellion against the bishop separates from the church . Still all schism includes one or more heresies to justify it's rebellion. It rebels against the divinely appointed authority (which almost always includes a rejection of Peter's authority and the papacy of Matthew 16:18.) . Still it does not go so far as to reject Christianity outright which is Apostasy.
 - i. 1st Cor. **1:10**. “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no schisms among you: but that you be perfect in the same mind and in the same judgment.”
 - ii. No Schism in the body 1st Cor. 12:20-25

IV. The Consequence of Disunity