



To speak of the attributes of the Church is to delve into the very essence of what it means to be Christian and to belong to the Body of Christ. The Church, founded by Jesus, is not merely a human institution but a profoundly spiritual reality with a unique role in the history of salvation. To understand its identity, Catholic tradition, based on the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, highlights four fundamental attributes: **one, holy, catholic, and apostolic**. Each of these attributes invites us to reflect on our faith, grow in communion with others, and live consistently with our Christian vocation.

In this article, we will explore each of these attributes, their theological foundation, and their practical relevance in daily life.

The Church is One

Theological Foundation

The unity of the Church comes directly from its origin in God. Jesus, in the Gospel of John, prays to the Father, saying: *“That they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you”* (Jn 17:21). This unity reflects the Trinitarian communion: one God in three persons. The Church, as the Body of Christ, is unified by the Holy Spirit, who acts as the bond of love among its members.

St. Paul also reminds us of this unity when he declares: *“One Lord, one faith, one baptism”* (Eph 4:5). Although there are cultural, linguistic, and liturgical differences among Christians worldwide, we all share the same faith in Christ and are united in the celebration of the Eucharist, the sacrament par excellence of unity.

Practical Relevance

The Church’s unity challenges us to work for reconciliation and mutual understanding, both within our parish communities and in ecumenical dialogue with other Christian denominations. This call is not optional: every Christian has the responsibility to be a builder of unity. How can this be lived out daily? By forgiving offenses, actively participating in parish life, and seeking to understand others, even in the midst of differences.

Today, in a world fragmented by political, ideological, and social divisions, the Church is called to be a prophetic sign of unity. As Christians, we must bear witness that true communion is possible when lived in Christ’s love.



The Church is Holy

Theological Foundation

The holiness of the Church does not stem from its human members, who are sinners, but from its founder: Jesus Christ. He gave His life to purify and sanctify it. St. Paul describes the Church as the bride of Christ, whom He *“loved and gave himself up for her, to make her holy”* (Eph 5:25-26). Moreover, the Holy Spirit continually works to sanctify the faithful through the sacraments, the Word of God, and a life of prayer.

The Church also becomes holy through its saints. Throughout history, men and women from all walks of life have been living models of holiness, demonstrating that it is possible to live according to the Gospel in any circumstance.

Practical Relevance

Holiness is a universal call. It is not something reserved for a select few, like priests or religious, but a goal for all the baptized. In the words of Pope Francis in his exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*: *“The Lord wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence”* (GE, 1).

How do we respond to this call? By participating in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Confession, practicing works of mercy, and cultivating a consistent life of prayer. Being holy does not mean being perfect but walking hand in hand with God and allowing Him to transform our hearts.

The Church is Catholic

Theological Foundation

The term “catholic” means universal. The Church is catholic because Christ is present in it and because it has been sent to proclaim the Gospel to all peoples, cultures, and generations. Jesus commanded His disciples: *“Go and make disciples of all nations”* (Mt 28:19), marking the universal mission of the Church.



The Church's universality is also evident in its ability to embrace people from all backgrounds and cultures, respecting and valuing their richness while integrating them into the communion of faith.

Practical Relevance

The Church's catholicity invites us to open our hearts to diversity. In a society where barriers of exclusion are often raised, the Church is a sign of unity in diversity. We can live out this dimension by welcoming immigrants, respecting other cultures, and participating in missionary efforts.

Furthermore, catholicity reminds us that faith is not a private matter. As members of the Church, we are called to be missionaries, bringing the light of Christ to every corner of the world, whether through words or the testimony of our lives.

The Church is Apostolic

Theological Foundation

The apostolicity of the Church refers to its origin in the apostles, to whom Jesus entrusted the mission of guiding and teaching His people. This mission is transmitted through apostolic succession, ensuring fidelity to Christ's message. The bishops, in communion with the Pope, are the successors of the apostles and have the responsibility of preserving and transmitting the faith.

Practical Relevance

Apostolicity connects us to our roots and ensures that the faith we profess is the same one Jesus entrusted to the apostles. This invites us to study Scripture, deepen our understanding of doctrine, and continuously grow in faith.

Practically, we can live out apostolicity by actively participating in our parish and supporting our priests and bishops in their mission. Additionally, it encourages us to be evangelizers in our families, workplaces, and communities, courageously sharing the Good News with those who have not yet encountered Christ.



Final Reflection: The Attributes as a Life Guide

The attributes of the Church are not mere theological concepts; they are a living guide for our relationship with God, with others, and with the world. By reflecting on them, we find inspiration to live a more authentic and committed faith.

The Church, with its lights and shadows, remains the instrument God has chosen to carry out His plan of salvation. By meditating on its unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity, we discover our place in this great mystery and renew our commitment to being Christ's disciples in today's world.

May these attributes inspire us to work for unity, seek holiness, embrace universality, and live with an apostolic spirit, always remembering that we are part of a living Church journeying toward the Kingdom of God.