

# The Catholic Christian Church

## INTRODUCTION

Before Jesus suffered and died, He made His apostle Peter the head of a new Church when He stated,

*“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church and the gates of Hell will not overcome it.”*

Matthew 16:18

During this session you will be taking a close look at this Church that Jesus instituted nearly 2000 years ago. You will be asked to think about questions regarding the following topics:

- What is the Church?
- What do I need from the Church?
- What does the Church need from me?
- How involved do I want to be in Christ’s Church?



## OPENING PRAYER

*“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more, as we see the Day approaching.”*

Hebrews 10: 24-25

## WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

*As Candidate, please write down your responses to each of the following questions associated with our Catholic Church. There is no right or wrong answers. Your responses are about what YOU believe at this point in your spiritual journey. When you finish, go back and discuss your responses with your Faith Partner. (Share only those you feel comfortable discussing).*

*As Faith Partner, look through the following questions your candidate in writing about. What are your responses to these questions? You are welcome to share these with your Candidate.*

1. When you think about the Church, what are your first thoughts or images that come to your mind?
2. To you, what is the one quality of the Church that is most important?
3. Who are the people who most represent for you what the Church is all about?
4. List your reasons as to why these people represent the best what the Church is all about.
5. What do you think Jesus would list as the key ingredients necessary for the Church to stay alive?
6. Write your definition to the question: What is the Church?
7. Does your definition of Church include the words; *Jesus, people, family, love, prayer, Bible, wisdom, follower, community*? All of these words are part of the meaning of Church as Jesus planned it.



## THE VISION OF JESUS

As we read the Gospels, we see the kind of life Jesus led. We see the model of the kind of Church He wants us to be part of. During His life, Jesus spent time with people. He prayed with them. He ate with them. He wept with them. He shared joy with them, and He healed them both physically and spiritually. Jesus was in relationship with others.

This is what each of us is called to BE and DO through our relationships with God and others as members of our Christian Church. In many ways, we are asked to be a family – people who care through listening, praying, celebrating, forgiving and helping one another. Christians put love for others into action, just like Jesus did.

The Church offers us a “give and take” relationship. There are things the Church needs from us to keep it ALIVE in its service to God and people. There are also things we need from the Church- on a regular basis and, at special times in our lives. You will now be taking a closer look at some needs of the Catholic Church Community, and some of your needs as a member of this community.



## WHAT DOES THE CHURCH ASK OF YOU?

Indicate your willingness to give the church each of the items below:

**V – very willing to give**

**S – somewhat willing to give**

**N – not at all willing to give**

*I offer the Church my presence*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ at Mass each Sunday and Holy Day
2. \_\_\_\_\_ at religious education classes
3. \_\_\_\_\_ at parish committee meetings
4. \_\_\_\_\_ at parish projects: bake sales, dinners, ect
5. \_\_\_\_\_ at social and fun events in the parish

*I offer the Church my money*

6. \_\_\_\_\_ to support minister: priests, sisters, deacons, DRE's and teachers
7. \_\_\_\_\_ to support educational programs
8. \_\_\_\_\_ to build and maintain a Church of St. Rita
9. \_\_\_\_\_ to care for the poor at home and abroad

*I offer the Church my time and talent*

10. \_\_\_\_\_ to clean the church, paint, shovel, ect
11. \_\_\_\_\_ to catechize younger children
12. \_\_\_\_\_ to plan liturgies, sing in the choir, ect
13. \_\_\_\_\_ to visit the sick and elderly
14. \_\_\_\_\_ to babysit for parents so they can attend Church functions
15. \_\_\_\_\_ to serve on parish committees, councils, boards
16. \_\_\_\_\_ to prepare and serve parish dinners; to help with parish events
17. \_\_\_\_\_ to be a lector, Eucharistic minister, usher, musician
18. \_\_\_\_\_ to coach, lector, tutor

*I offer the Church my efforts to deepen my faith*

19. \_\_\_\_\_ by daily personal prayer
20. \_\_\_\_\_ by reading prayer and scripture
21. \_\_\_\_\_ by full participation in Mass
22. \_\_\_\_\_ by frequent reception of the Sacraments
23. \_\_\_\_\_ by joining a prayer group
24. \_\_\_\_\_ by continuing to learn more and more about my faith
25. \_\_\_\_\_ by attending retreat, days of prayer, ect
26. \_\_\_\_\_ by honestly trying to live a moral life

## WHAT DO YOU ASK OF THE Church

Indicate whether the items listed below are things you want from the Church:

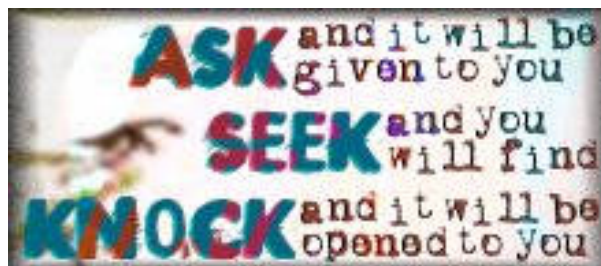
**V – very much**

**S – somewhat**

**N – not at all**

### *I ask the Church*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ to provide holy, committed leaders who will help me find God and serve well.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ to celebrate with me important events in my life and the lives of my loved ones.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ to teach me about God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ to build a beautiful place where I can worship God.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ to preserve over the centuries the truth God has revealed through the prophets and through Jesus.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ to pray with me when I am sick and dying.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ to help me raise my children well.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ to challenge me to be a good person.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ to help me go to know Jesus and grow in my love for Him.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ to show me ways to serve the poor, the sick, the lonely, the unloved, the suffering; to support me in this service
11. \_\_\_\_\_ to form with me a community of caring people where I can feel I belong.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ to help me remember Jesus and live according to His teachings
13. \_\_\_\_\_ to provide prayerful Eucharistic celebrations.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ to accept me as an adult member of the community and to make use of my gifts, ideas, and talents.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ to help me prepare for Confirmation, marriage, the Baptism of my children, ect.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ to help me overcome my sinfulness and to celebrate God's forgiveness with me.
17. \_\_\_\_\_ to console me and pray with me when my loved ones die.
18. \_\_\_\_\_ to keep the idea of God alive in people's minds and hearts.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ to prepare me to serve in some kind of Church related ministry.
20. \_\_\_\_\_ to include me in the Church's decision-making process in matters concerning education, finances, leadership, social events.



## THE BIG PICTURE

After you have done your check-off on the two previous pages, and discussed them with your Faith Partner, go over the lists again.

1. Are you more of a giver to the Church, or a receiver?

Who needs whom more?

Does the giving and taking balance out?

Now go on and discuss with each other these final questions.

2. Are there other ways not listed that you can be, or are involved in our Parish?

What are these opportunities?

Are you willing to be involved?

2. Are there other needs you have that you would like to receive from the Parish?

What are these needs?

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## IT ISN'T EASY BEING CHURCH

The Church is an organization, and as such, it involves giving and taking to thrive. It needs active members. It cannot survive by an attitude of "Someone else can do it. I'm only one person."

It is not easy to be an active member of the Church. Yet it is what Jesus is calling each of us to do. He wants us to be part of a community that is involved in praying to God, and involved in helping one another "fight the good fight."

This is the way *of* Jesus and the way *to* Jesus.

## CLOSING PRAYER

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning now and ever shall be world without end. Amen*

Please not any intentions you have for family, friends, community, Church, self, world.

Conclude with the *Lord's Prayer*.