

Models of the church



Father Avery Dulles Jesuit priest (later cardinal) who developed the Models of the Church the Models of the Church_ helps us understand the Church's identity as well as her mission in the world throughout history. model a representation, an example, a symbol, and a pattern used to explain a larger concept; offer some useful information for understanding the subject at hand model(s) No one _____ is complete in itself; all _____ offer unique perspectives and must be used together to deepen our understanding of the subject.

The subject is always bigger than the _____ describe.

1st model Church as Institution
 2nd model Church as Mystical Body or Communion
 3rd model Church as Herald
 4th model Church as Servant
 5th model Church as Sacrament

Church as Institution Focus: church as visible society with formal structures and organization (official teachings, Sacrament system, etc.)
 Church as Institution Strength: provides strong sense of identity for members, clarity of beliefs, and sense of stability and continuity in the midst of a changing world
 Church as Institution Weakness: can put too much emphasis on rules and traditions, can seem too concerned about status quo, can be slow to change
 Church as Mystical Body/Communion Focus: relationships of person who are gathered in God through Jesus: horizontal (with others) and vertical (with God) dimensions maintained
 Church as Mystical Body/Communion Strengths: faith life in the Holy Spirit developed through strong, intimate relationships, gives evidence of the enduring Body of Christ image of Church
 Church as Mystical Body/Communion Weakness: can become too inwardly focused on relationships and without a sense of outreach to others, can minimize need for appropriate Church leadership
 Church as Herald Focus: power of the Word of God to challenge,

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comfort, heal, and encourage the world that God's Word (Jesus) is active in the world, Church as messenger of Jesus that brings his Gospel to all Church as HeraldStrength: clear mission for the Church to proclaim and live out the Word of God in the world, especially in creative use of media and the arts Church as HeraldWeakness: can be perceived as too "preachy" and too focused on getting to know just the text of the Word of God (the Bible) and not the Word of God as Jesus in our lives. Church as ServantFocus: Church's identification with Jesus as the one who was "[among us] as one who serves" (Luke 22: 27); direct service to all people is how the Church most embodies Christ Church as ServantStrength: clear sense of mission to transform human society into an image of the Kingdom of God through direct service (corporal and spiritual works of mercy) Church as ServantWeakness: could obscure the ultimate meaning of the service as preparation for the spiritual work for the coming Kingdom of God Church as SacramentFocus: summarizes other models; brings together the Church's institutional sense of itself as being a special sign to the world of Christ's faithful, transforming presence; Church celebrates those unique signs of Christ's presence called Sacraments so she can herself become a better Sacrament of Jesus in the world through her heralding, servant, and Spirit-led community building. We are called to become more and more what Christ is forming here to be. Church as SacramentStrength: a strong sense of Christ's gift of himself in the Sacraments for the life of the Church and for the world, Church meant to be visible manifestation of Christ to the world Church as SacramentWeakness: can become too ritualistic or formulaic in its Sacraments, can focus too much on the sign or gesture and miss the point of the Sacraments as meant to nourish the Church Institution Key Words teach, sanctify, govern, Magisterium,

The Church authority comes from Apostolic Tradition Institution Signs and Functions Pope, bishops, priests, Catechism of the Catholic Church, Canon Law, diocesan directories Institution Members all those who formally recognize themselves in relationship to an official Church community and Church teachings Institution Connection to Jesus Matthew 16: 13-20 Institution Early Church Acts of the Apostles 6: 1-7 Mystical Body/Communion Key Words People of God, fellowship, unity and diversity of gifts in community, Christ is the Head, Church is the Body Mystical Body/Communion Signs and Functions prayer groups, intimate relationships Mystical Body/Communion Members all who share in the body of Christ through the grace of the Holy Spirit Mystical Body/Communion Connection to Jesus John 15: 5 Mystical Body/Communion Early Church Acts of the Apostles 4: 32-37 Herald Key Words Word of God, conversion, witness, salvation Herald Signs and Functions Bible studies, evangelization, missions, media Herald Members all those who give witness to their life in Christ and see the Word of God as key Herald Connection to Jesus Matthew 28: 16-20 Herald Early Church Acts of the Apostles 2: 37-41 Servant Key Words service to the world, dialogue, liberation, justice, peace, prophetic Servant Signs and Functions hospitals, Saint Vincent de Paul Society, Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Habitat for Humanity, Catholic Relief Services Servant Members all who serve the needs of others as Christ did; " Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25: 40) Servant Connection to Jesus John 13: 3-15 Servant Early Church Acts of the Apostles 5: 12-16 Sacrament Key Words grace, nourished by the Sacraments, " Be what you have received." Sacrament Signs and Functions liturgy, light and salt for the world (to be a sign of Christ), communal prayer, source of grace Sacrament

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Members all who share in the liturgical life of the Church so as to be transformed by grace to be a sign of Christ in the world

Sacrament Connection to Jesus Luke 21: 19-20

Sacrament Early Church Acts of the Apostles 2: 42-47
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