

4 marks of the church



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

“ A reaction paper on the four marks of the Church” There are a lot of different existing Churches worshipping the same God, who are trying to follow the way that Christ lived. But for the people to distinguish the Roman Catholic Church from all the other Churches there are these four marks of the Roman Catholic Church that was given so that the distinct characteristics of the Church would be evident to the people.

These characteristics are, the Church is One, the Church is Catholic, the Church is Holy and the last one is the Church being Apostolic. As we progress through this paper, each of these four would be discussed based on how I have understood about this topic which was discussed in our class. Some additional information based on my further research regarding the topic may also be injected to further enhance my reaction regarding the topic. The first mark that distinguishes the Roman Catholic Church from other Churches is the Church being one. The Church being one pertains to being a unified community. The Church being one means that the Roman Catholic Church is one body of Christ that functions as a unit, which means, that if one does not do its function, all the other people of the Church would fail to function properly because they all belong to a single body. It also means that the Church believes in one God, and that there is one Lord, one faith and one baptism.

Though people belonging to the Roman Catholic Church belongs to different nations, are of different vocations, have different talents and follows different cultures, the diversity found in this church does not prevent the people to act as one community where there is harmonious unity. This oneness is also visible in the Church's creed and other teachings, and so as in the

celebration of the sacraments. Basically the Roman Catholic Church is considered one because of three reasons, namely, its source, its founder, and because of its soul. The Church is said to be one because of its source which is the Holy Trinity, which is a perfect unity of three divine persons, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. The next reason is because of its founder, who is no other than Jesus Christ, who gathered and united the people through salvation from sin. And the third reason is because of its soul, which is the Holy Spirit, who resides in the souls of the faithful and unites them in communion. The Church being Catholic is the next characteristic that was given to the Roman Catholic Church.

The term “Catholic” which means Universal could actually explain this trait by the word itself. It simply says that being one body of Christ is not limited by race, culture, and not even by time. It means that anybody could become a part of the Church at any given time. This also states that the Church here on earth is also one with the Church in heaven and also the Church in purgatory. This is where the understanding about the communion of saints came from. It shows the union of the faithful here on earth to the union to the faithful in purgatory and those who are faithful in heaven, thus, making the Roman Catholic Church, universal. The third mark, which is the Church is Holy signifies the Church being special.

The word “holy” means set apart which only shows that the Church has a special purpose by and for God. The Church is also marked as holy because people are freed from original sin through baptism. The church is also marked by outstanding holiness shown in the lives of saints. Since the members of the church are human beings, it is only normal that they would

sin due to their human nature, which is the opposite of being holy. But, people who are faithful who sin would repent whenever they sin which is the path through holiness. The Church is also holy because of its source who is the Lord who is holy. Through the Church's teachings, worship and prayer, and good works, the Church is a visible sign of Holiness.

The last mark is the fourth mark of the Roman Catholic Church which is the Church is Apostolic. From its root word "apostle" we could derive that the Church was entrusted by its founder (Jesus Christ) to the apostles who served as the first bishops and entrusted special authority to St. Peter, who is the first pope and bishop of Rome. Through the apostles, the Church continued on and this authority over the church was handed down to each generation through what we call the apostolic succession. There are no bishop, priest, or deacon in the Church that was self ordained. Each one of them was called by the Church and ordained into what we call apostolic ministry which is given to us by the Lord to be exercised by the Church in one with the Pope. The Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture of the Church was also passed down and preserved by apostles under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

These four marks, namely, the Church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic are indicators that the Church is the Roman Catholic Church. Other churches may also reflect some of these marks but it is only the Roman Catholic Church who fully professes these marks. Though the four marks are different, they are all interconnected to one another. The Church is catholic because it is universal, that is the reason why it is also one. The church acts as a community that is why it acts in unison, but, its actions are all based on

holiness because the Church being one shows that it is the one body of Christ which follows one head who is also the founder of the Church who is Christ. The people of the Church know the responsibilities that Christ left them because of the Sacred Scriptures and Sacred Traditions which was passed down by the apostles. To lead the people, Christ also entrusted the authority to His apostles and entrusted St.

Peter special authority over the Church. This said authority is followed and passed down to the future generations through what we call apostolic succession. This said example is only one of the many ways on how these four marks are interrelated to each other. And the full work and manifestation of these marks as a mission sets the Roman Catholic Church apart and identifies them from the other Churches.