

“Why Catholic?” Mini-course – Week 1 Summary

The Founding of the Catholic Church

In the Gospel of Matthew chapters 1-9

- *Jesus establishes His own divine identity and authority*
- *and his mission of restoring the kingdom,*
- The Kingdom of Heaven **is the Church** (cf. Mt 16).

Then the leaders of Israel reject Jesus

Therefore, in MT 10 Jesus gives his own divine authority to the twelve Apostles, to act in His name, and with His power,

- for it will be **upon them** that he will build his kingdom
- it will be **through them** that Jesus will **lead** and **teach** his people until the end of time.

Ephesians 2:17-21 St. Paul tells us that the household of God is built upon the Apostles with Jesus as the cornerstone.

Revelation 21: 9-14 St. John tells us the kingdom of God is built on the foundation of the Apostles.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states:

From the beginning of his public life Jesus chose certain men, twelve in number, to be with him and to participate in his mission. He gives the twelve a share in his authority and “sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal.” They remain associated forever with Christ’s kingdom, for through them he directs the Church.

Peter is the Vicar of Christ

In **Matthew 16: 13-20**, Jesus makes Peter and his successors, the bishop of Rome (the Pope), his representative on earth until Jesus the King returns in glory.

A vicar is one who acts in the place of another

Isaiah 22:15-24, *Hezekiah*, the Davidic King, dismisses *Shebna*, the former prime minister, and appoints *Eliakim* as the new vicar.

Five Key Points

1. **Is 22:15** *Over the household* *Al Bayyit*
 - Technical phrase for the Vicar:
Genesis 41: 41 Joseph over the house of Egypt
 - All the authority of Pharaoh
 - Numbers 12:7** Moses is “over the house” of God
 - Moses speaks and governs on behalf of God
 - Luke 12:32ff.** Who is the wise steward that the master puts “over the household”?
2. 22:19 This authority goes with the office;
3. 22:21 The prime minister is to be a father to the people;
 - In Italian a Papa; In English a Pope
4. The *Papa* will have the key of the House of David.
5. 22:23 The Prime Minister is the visible source and sign of unity.
 - Remove the peg and the source of unity is lost and the kingdom will fragment and shatter

Jesus entrusts the power to bind and loose to Peter

The power to bind and loose indicates the authority to

1. absolve sins, (loose in Latin is “absalvo”)
2. pronounce doctrinal judgments
3. make disciplinary decisions in the Church,
 - a. *to lead and teach all Christians for all time.*

In Matthew 18:18, Jesus extends the authority to bind and loose to all the Apostles when they remain in union with Peter (the Pope).

Matthew concludes his Gospel (28:18-20) with Jesus handing over of His own divine authority to the Church through the office of Peter and the Apostles, the first Pope and Bishops.

Jesus gives His authority to the Apostles for it will be **through them** that Jesus will continue to

- Shepherd his flock and give it Pastoral guidance
- Teach all nations the saving Gospel
- Give sanctifying grace through the sacraments

But how could they carry out the command to teach until the end of the age?

- They were to have *successors*

Acts 1:15-26, one of the Apostles is dead – Peter stands up as head of the Apostles

Psalms 69 and 109 prophesied that although Judas was “numbered among us,” he would fall and another would take his “office” (Acts 1:20)

The term for office in the Greek is *episkopoi*,

- which in English is episcopate, another word for bishop.

The Apostles appoint Matthias to take the place of Judas as his successor as Bishop.

This is what the Apostles did throughout the early Church.

- Timothy was bishop of Ephesus and Titus of Crete.
- 2 Timothy 1:12ff, Titus 1; cf. Acts 20:28

The office of the Apostles was to be perpetuated through successors

- The Pope and the bishops
- They continue the leadership of the Church in an unbroken lineage from the Original 12 Apostles

Through the Apostles and their successors

- Jesus remains with us
- to teach and govern and sanctify us
- until the end of time

Through faith and Baptism, Jesus lives in the souls of the Faithful

But He continues his presence with the Church in a unique way

- through the Apostles and their successors
- (the Pope and the Bishops in union with him)

Jesus remains with the Church and continues his **work** of salvation through the Church by means of the Apostles and their successors.

- This is the meaning of Tradition

Apostolic Tradition means that Jesus continues to shepherd, guide, teach, govern and sanctify the faithful until the end of time through the Apostles and their successors, the pope and the bishops in union with him.

A beautiful prayer of the Mass states:

You are the eternal Shepherd who never leaves his flock untended. Through the apostles you watch over us and protect us always. You made them shepherds of the flock to share in the work of your Son. . . .