

Fil-Am Community Church  
Brother Barry Black  
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The Apostles Creed

### “We Are Family”

“WE ARE FAMILY” (“We are Family” Music playing in background)

Jesus said “I will build my church, and all the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.” Matthew 16:18

This topic today is that part of the Creed that deals with the I BELIEVE IN: The Holy Catholic Church, and the Communion of Saints .....

What? The Holy Catholic Church you say! I don't believe in that - I do not believe in that - I am a believer in Baptist Doctrine, Baptist theology, and the tenants of the Protestant faith.

We'll hold on, because, as I mentioned before we are dissecting this Creed into bit parts whereby we can get at what these parts mean.

First off - let's define the word Church. CHURCH - Those called out of the world by God to join together as followers of Jesus Christ.

Church is Not a Building; In fact, in the New Testament it NEVER refers to it as a building.

It is not a structure; do we want you to send money to the church - No.

The Church is the People. Remember the game we used to play - Fold the hands together and state “Here is the church, here is the steeple, Open the door and see the PEOPLE?

1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:5 so eloquently states – “The Church that Jesus is building is made of “Living Stones.” In other words People.

There was a day when society looked to the church to provide Moral and Spiritual Leadership – But, sadly today, that day is Long Gone.

So you are saying - I know about those people – in church I mean - they are Greedy – Unkind – Thoughtless – Critical – Contentious People (Now no one knows anyone in this church who is like that - Right?)

Yes; People are the Problem - But they are also the **HOPE OF THE CHURCH**.

And who did Christ die for – He died for you and me – the People.

GOD started the church and He still believes in it.

And IT – THE CHURCH – belongs to HIM.

So the first point is –

## **1. THE CHURCH IS ONE**

Jesus used that word - Singular **ONE**

No, He is not coming back for every church - every denomination - there will not be 20,000 different denominations around when HE sets up shop here on earth during the Millennium.

There is only 1 True Church - And the word is Ekklesia (a Greek Word)

It is defined as an Assembly called out of the world to Follow Christ. A verse from Paul - Ephesians 4:4-6, explains the Unity we have in Christ using the word **ONE 7 TIMES**.

Now, what is the no. 7 in the Bible denote for those of you into Numerology? One is the number of **completeness and perfection (both physical and spiritual)**.

The word one derives much of its meaning from being tied directly to God's creation of all things.

According to Jewish tradition, the creation of Adam occurred on October 7th, 3761 B.C. (or the first day of Tishri, which is the seventh month on the Hebrew calendar).

The word 'created' is used 7 times describing God's creative work (In Genesis 1:1, 21, 27 three times; 2:3; 2:4).

There are 7 days in a week and God's Sabbath is on what day? Correct - the 7th day.

In the book of Hebrews, written by the apostle Paul, he uses seven titles to refer to Christ.

And, in the book of Revelation; the first resurrection of the dead takes place at the 7th trumpet, completing salvation for what?

You are right again, the Church. **PRAISE GOD!!!!**

Now today: Protestants comprise somewhere near 20,000 denominations; The Catholic Church: from the ultra-conservative Latin Mass Catholics to the Liberation Theologians are divided as much as the Protestants.

During the Ecumenical Movement of the 1900s, beginning with the 1910 World Missionary Council, there was an attempt where this movement tried to get everyone together; In order to do this they had to de-emphasize Biblical Doctrine. So as you can imagine, they started shaving off some of the tenants of the church belief system. And, as you can also imagine, more and more people came together to believe in less and less until no one believed in nothing at all. Sounds like "Animal Farm" doesn't it?

It was hard to tell Right from Wrong.

Now today we do have a Commonality; We share a common faith in the Bible as the Word of God; We believe in the Doctrine of the Trinity comprised of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit; We Believe in the Virgin Birth; We believe in the Death of Christ for our sins; And we believe in His Resurrection from the dead.

Now this shouldn't come as a shock to anyone but not everyone who is in church is born again; that is saved; some don't clearly understand the gospel. And some simply prefer a religion of Good Works vice a Gospel of Grace - where it is not what we do but what He - Jesus has done for us.

John stated in John 10:27 that the "*Lord knows His sheep and they hear his voice and follow Him.*"

## 2. The Church is Holy!

HOLY means just that – set apart from God.

“Believers are a chosen race; a royal priesthood, a holy nation; a people for God’s own possession.” As it states in 1 Peter 2:9.

We belong to God by virtue of what Christ has done for us – By virtue of our redemption thru the Blood of Christ!

And the CHURCH IS both Salt and Light in the World

When does this happen? **When the Church is the Church;**

Now we all know that Salt is an Irritant but we also know what?

That Salt is also a --- PRESERVATIVE;

Do I have any fishermen out there? If so, I would ask you – Have you ever seen a dead fish going upstream? Of course you haven’t. Dead fish do not go upstream. It takes live fish to do just that.

Only a living vibrant fish (**the church**) goes upstream and fights the good fight - every day – and God gives us the strength to do just that.

## 3. The Church is Catholic

When the word catholic is used in this form with a small c, as used in the creed, it means Universal;

So the holy catholic church is a Holy (set apart for Christ)

Universal body of believers.

And the Message of the gospel is for **ALL PEOPLE; EVERYWHERE** – with EVERY GENERATION- and for EVERY SITUATION.

Jesus said in Matthew 28:19 “go and make disciples in every Nation”

In Acts 1:8 we are called as part of the Great Commandment to be “Witnesses to the ends of the earth.”

So by using the word catholic it means to “Preach the Gospel by every means possible, to reach as many people as possible, in every place as possible, so we can win as many people as possible to faith in Christ.”

#### **4. The church is Apostolic.**

This word apostolic means that the church follows the faith preached by the Apostles of Jesus.

And the Apostles took His message and preached it far and wide; On the Day of Pentecost some 3000 believers devoted themselves to the apostles teaching.

The True Church adheres to the teaching of the New Testament and it follows the **APOSTLES’ DOCTRINE**; which forms the foundation of our faith.

So the important point here is that we need each other! God never intended you to go it alone but with a body of believers who can hold you together during the rough times - Just as the adage we have heard on how “Iron sharpens Iron”, we are sharpened by our fellow brethren who can support us and hold us together thru the tough times.

The catholic church has a Heart for the Nations of the World.

#### **5. When we refer to the Communion of Saints**

We use a word, Communion, which means (in the Greek) **KOINONIA** - A Fellowship or Partnership.

Communion means: To share in a close relationship.

In Acts 2:42 Paul uses the word to describe an intimate closeness of early Christians. The Christians of the early church lived together, they ate meals together, they played Volleyball together, ([pause] just seeing if you were awake out there) and they shared all things in common.

The word “Saints” means - “Holy Ones.”

Which is a synonym for Christian or Believer!

So when we say I believe in the Communion of Saints, we are saying we have an intimate connection between all true believers in Jesus.

In Romans 1:16 – Paul states “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, FOR IT is THE POWER OF God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jews first and also to the Greek.*”

In the Greek it means Gentiles or non-Jews.

The Gospel of Jesus has the power to bridge the chasm of RACE; EDUCATION; AGE; SOCIAL STATUS; SKIN COLOR; FAMILY BACKGROUND; LANGUAGE; CULTURE; AND ANYTHING ELSE THAT DIVIDES THE HUMAN RACE.

## **Praise God!**

So we have Communion with Christ as stated in 1 John 1: 1-4. And thru Christ we have Communion with each other, all the Saints on the Earth.

We also have Communion with the Saints in Heaven. We realize it is not about me but about reaching out to others. And Hebrews 12:1 sums it all up!

It states “*We are surrounded by a great cloud of Witnesses!*” Loved ones looking down FROM Heaven cheering you on thru the struggles and trials of Life.

We are called to fight the good fight! We are called to take up the cross of Christ! Nothing can separate us as we are part of the church – God’s Holy **Church!**

So, as we wind down, I want to extend an Invitation for anyone who has never come into communion w/ Jesus and the Brothers and Sisters of Christ, accepting HIM as Lord and Savior.

As the worship team plays something soft I want to pray for you and offer you an opportunity to come forward as you are led. Let us pray.