

Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn confirms our way of thinking."²³⁷ For every self-governing Church, the standard for orthodox teaching ("rule of faith") is Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition, with the ministry of the Bishop of Rome serving to guarantee the preservation of orthodox teaching, and fidelity to it.²³⁸

b. The Church is Holy

288 In Holy Scripture, the Lord God refers to himself as the Holy One: "For I am God and no mortal, the Holy One in your midst" (Hos 11:9). This God calls humankind to become like him in holiness: "For I am the LORD your God; sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy" (Lev 11:44). God's holiness is the source of holiness for the Church.

Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendour, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish (*Eph 5:25-27*).

The Church affirms this holiness liturgically, inviting the faithful to approach Communion with the words: "The holy things for the holy."

289 The Church is where we are to grow in the holiness that is granted by the grace of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads us on the path of holiness, offering the grace of repentance and divinization in the Holy Mysteries of the Church. The Holy Spirit reveals to us the truth that "the Church, embracing in her bosom sinners, [is] at the same time holy and always in need of being purified."²³⁹ Those who enter the Church through the doors of repentance, pass through the doors of Paradise into God's sanctification and blessing. The greatest miracle that takes place in the Holy Church is the transfiguration of a sinner into a saint. As members of the Church grow in holiness, the Lord transforms all creation, liberating it from the dominion of "this world" and its forces, and directing it towards the fullness of the "new earth" (see Rev 21:1).

c. The Church is Catholic

290 The Church reveals that she is catholic (from the Greek *katholike*, meaning according to the whole or fullness) when she gathers the com-

²³⁷ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, IV, 18, 5: PG 7, 1028.

²³⁸ See IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, III, 3, 2: PG 7, 848-849.

²³⁹ VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen Gentium* [Light of the Nations], 8.

munity of faithful around the Eucharistic table. "The assembled community of the Church creates the Eucharist, and the Eucharist creates the Church. This happens in the communion of the faithful with Christ and of the faithful with each other: "And what do they become when partake of it? The Body of Christ: not many bodies, but one body. For the bread consisting of many grains is made one ... so are we conjoin both with each other and with Christ."²⁴⁰ The Eucharistic gathering presided over by the bishop—the "vicar of Christ."²⁴¹ He is the presider (the one who stands in the first place) in as much as he *stands before* God and heads the liturgical gathering. At the same time, he is also the icon of God for the community.²⁴² His *primacy* in the community gathered at the Eucharistic *agape*, that is, the "feast of love," is a *primacy in love*. Since the bishop presides at the Eucharist, which is realized in specific local community, he heads the local Church (*eparchy*): "Let no one do anything connected with the Church without the bishop."²⁴³ The bishop is the head of the eparchy as Christ is the Head of the Church. The bishop's title identifies the city of the episcopal throne, which is the place where he actualizes the celebration of the Eucharist.

291 In the Eucharist celebrated by the bishop, as well as through a common faith, every local Church enters into communion with other local Churches. Local Churches in communion with one another form a self-governing Church, headed by one who presides: a bishop, archbishop, metropolitan, or patriarch. The first among self-governing Churches is the Church of Rome, because its presider is the Pope of Rome, the successor of the apostle Peter. He is the teacher and the standard of the apostolic faith; to him the Lord has granted the gift of infallibility in matters of faith and morals [when proclaimed *ex cathedra*], in order to preserve the purity and immutability of divine teaching. As the apostle Peter manifested his love for Christ more than others, and received from Christ the mandate to shepherd his flock (see Jn 21:15-18), so the Roman See of Peter "presides in love"²⁴⁴ and maintains a primacy (in Latin, *primatus*)

²⁴⁰ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, Homily on 1 Corinthians, 24, 4: PG 61, 203.

²⁴¹ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* [Light the Nations], 27.

²⁴² See IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, Epistle to the Smyrneans, 8,2-9,1: PG 5, 713.

²⁴³ IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, Epistle to the Smyrneans, 8, 1: PG 5, 713.

²⁴⁴ IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, *Epistle to the Romans*, 1, 1: PG 5, 688.