

among self-governing Churches.²⁴⁵ This primacy is fulfilled through the Petrine ministry of the Bishop of Rome. Our Church professes the Pope's ministry by titling him "the most holy universal Pontiff."

292 the communion of self-governing Churches creates the catholicity (*sobornist*) of the Church. The highest manifestation of the catholicity of the Church is the Ecumenical Council. "The Council reveals itself to be the assembly of the chief shepherds of the Church of Christ, who give witness to the faith and life of the Churches entrusted to their pastoral and teaching ministry."²⁴⁶

293 Christ entrusts the ministry of serving the catholicity (*sobornist*) of the Church to the apostle Peter: "I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers" (*Lk 22:32*). The Bishop of Rome, the bearer of the Petrine ministry, convenes Ecumenical Councils, approves their decisions, stands behind and expresses the infallible faith-teaching of the Church, and resolves difficulties that arise in the life of various self-governing Churches. The ministry of the Roman Pontiff is a testimony to the "deepest apostolic past."²⁴⁷ His ministry is to "strengthen the brethren" in common faith (*see Lk 22:31-42*), to be a "rock" (*see Mt 16:18*), and "shepherd" (*see Jn 21:15-18*). "To [the Roman Pontiff] was committed in the person of blessed Peter the full power of feeding, ruling, and governing the whole church, as was established at ecumenical councils and in the sacred canons."²⁴⁸

d. The Church is Apostolic

294 Christ called twelve apostles (meaning *those who are sent*). Upon them he founded the Church and sent them into the world to preach the Gospel: "He called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be

²⁴⁵ See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* [Light of the Nations], 13; *also, ibid.*, 18: "in order that the episcopate itself might be one and undivided, he placed Blessed Peter over the other apostles, and instituted in him a permanent and visible source and foundation of unity of faith and communion [See VATICAN COUNCIL I, Session IV, Const. *Dogm. Pastor aeternus* (July 18, 1870), *H. Denziger*, 3059ff]. This teaching concerning the "institution, perpetuity, and nature of the Sacred Apostolic Primacy, in which the strength and solidarity of the whole Church consist, [is] to be believed and held by all the faithful."

²⁴⁶ PATRIARCH JOSYF SLIPYI, *Завіщання* [Testament] (December 22, 1981).

²⁴⁷ See DMYTRO TUPTALO, *Життя Святих. Місяця жовтня в 11 день. Спомин VII Вселенського Собору* [Lives of the Saints, October 11, Commemoration of the VII Ecumenical Council] (translated from Ukrainian).

²⁴⁸ COUNCIL OF FLORENCE, *Bull Laetentur caeli* [Let the Heavens Rejoice] (July 6, 1439).

with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message" (*Mk* 3:13-14), The apostolic ministry continues in the ministry of the Church hierarchy and in the apostolate (mission) of all the faithful. "the Church, though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith ... [and] carefully preserves it ... proclaiming and teaching them ... with perfect harmony, as if she possessed only one mouth."²⁴⁹ For this reason, in the Symbol of Faith we profess the Church of Christ to be apostolic. The apostolicity of the Church is realized in the ministry of bishops, priests, deacons, monastics, and laity, who work together for the sake of salvation of the whole world.

295 In the Church, the successors of the apostles are the *bishops*. through them is handed on the apostolic inheritance—saving grace and the true faith. It is accomplished through the hierarchical imposition of hands (in Greek, *cheirotonia*). "The apostles ... according to the successions of the bishops ... have handed down the Church."²⁵⁰ the bishops are called to teach, to sanctify, and to shepherd. "We are the successors of the apostles, and we govern the Church with the same authority with which they governed."²⁵¹

296 The bishop, who presides in love, ordains for ministry his assistants—the priests (presbyters). "Between presbyters and bishops there was no great difference. Both had undertaken the office of teachers and presiders in the Church; and what [*the apostle Paul*] has said concerning bishops is applicable to presbyters."²⁵² The apostolic role of the priest consists in acting as the head of the Eucharistic community on behalf of the bishop, expressing communion with the bishop by commemorating his name, and ministering for the sanctification and salvation of the people of God entrusted to him.

297 The apostolic role of deacons consists of taking care of the daily needs of church communities (*see Acts* 6:3): "Strengthened by sacramental grace, in communion with the bishop and his group of priests they serve in the diaconate [*ministry*] of the liturgy, of the word, and of charity to the people of God."²⁵³

²⁴⁹ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, I, 10, 1-2: PG 7, 549-552.

²⁵⁰ IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, IV, 33, 8: PG 7, 1077.

²⁵¹ CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE, *Letters*, 4, 6.

²⁵² JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on 1 Timothy*, 11, 1: PG 62, 553.

²⁵³ VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen Gentium* [Light of the Nations], 29.