

Chapter 10 – The Church: Reflecting the Light of Christ

- At the center of the Gospel message is God’s desire to share the communion of Trinitarian life with us.
- The Holy Trinity brought the Church into being. The Father called the Church into existence. The Son established the Church. The Holy Spirit filled the Church with power and wisdom at Pentecost.
- The Church can be seen in three different contexts:
 - a people gathered together into one community, guided by bishops.
 - a specific geographic community, namely, a diocese.
 - a building where the faithful gather for the sacraments.
- There was a gradual formation of God’s family through a series of events described in the Old Testament. It was on the feast of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles, that the Church was born.
- The Church is a mystery both visible and spiritual. The visible Church is a public institution, with a hierarchical government, laws, and customs. The Church is also a spiritual reality, with interior bonds of faith and love forged by the Holy Spirit. It is a living body, sustained by the hidden work of the Holy Spirit.
- The Church’s mission is to be salt of the earth and light of the world. Its destiny is the Kingdom of God.
- The Church needs an institutional framework for its stability, continuity, and mission for serving the cause of the Gospel and opening people to God’s call to holiness.

Reflection:

- Why is the link between the Church and the Holy Spirit so vital?
- What are the implications for believing that Christ founded the Church, and that He is Head of the Body of which we are members?
- What are some common cultural misconceptions about the Catholic Church? How do you respond to them?