

Why I Am Catholic

Because we serve a banquet, other denominations/faith traditions only serve a partial/incomplete meal.

Only the Catholic Church offers the fullness of the Christian faith. We celebrate the wedding feast of Heaven—the Last Supper and the banquet in heaven we one day hope to be a permanent part of. Christ offers His Body and Blood through the Catholic Mass and offers many of the other elements of His spiritual banquet exclusively through the Catholic Church.

Only the Catholic Church has everything—the Eucharist; the other sacraments; the Bible; 2000 years of tradition; the offices of ordained ministry of the early church: bishop, priest/presbyter, and deacon; the office of Pope established through Peter; the teaching office (*Magisterium*) that ensures our doctrine and dogma are consistently passed on in every Catholic Church; teachings of faith and morals that are more comprehensive and more consistent than any other church; comprehensive scriptural understanding and application; universality; the community of believers on earth and communion with the saints in Heaven; a heritage of prayers, spiritual writings, and devotions that help us to grow in faith; religious sisters, brothers, and monks; Catholic schools; the defense of life; charitable organizations, hospitals, and an offering of service (time and talent) that is unmatched; and so much more.

Other denominations/faith traditions have some of these. But not all. They are missing vital things and their members are missing out on so many spiritual aids and spiritual foods. To use the banquet analogy, they offer soup and salad or an appetizer, but not the main course and not dessert. Only the Catholic Church offers the complete spiritual meal. Christ is the food we need the most and He gives us Himself—the main course—His Body and Blood, during the Mass and during no other service in no other Christian church or non-Christian belief system.

None of the Protestant churches have the Eucharist, or our traditions, or our consistent teaching, or many other things. Their founders rejected those spiritual gifts—rejected a major part of what Christ had given to His Church—when they separated and started new denominations with beliefs chosen from the Catholic menu and others based on merely human thinking. They preferred a la carte (picking and choosing individual spiritual foods) to having the whole banquet. They didn't want a complete spiritual diet nor complete meal. They don't even realize what they are missing.

Even some Catholics don't want all the blessings. They are sometimes referred to as "Cafeteria Catholics." They want to pick and choose beliefs and Church teachings. They fail to see the unity of everything we believe and everything we do. And that rejecting any part of what we believe has spiritual and life consequences and leads to spiritual malnutrition.

The Second Vatican Council devotes an entire document to the subject of Christian churches that are in separation from the Catholic flock. "Some and even very many of the significant elements and endowments which together go to build up and give life to the Church itself, can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church: the written word of God; the life of grace; faith, hope and charity, with the other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit, and visible elements too. . . Nevertheless, our separated brethren, whether considered as individuals or as Communities and Churches, are not blessed with that unity which Jesus Christ wished to bestow on all those who through Him were born again into one body. . . For it is only through Christ's Catholic Church, which is 'the all-embracing means of salvation,' that they can benefit fully from the means of salvation." (*Decree on Ecumenism*, 3) The document further states: "It must however be admitted that in these Churches and ecclesial Communities there exist important differences from the Catholic Church, not only of an historical, sociological, psychological and cultural character, but especially in the interpretation of revealed truth. . . Though the ecclesial Communities which are separated from us lack the fullness of unity with us flowing from Baptism, and though we believe they have not retained the proper reality of the Eucharistic mystery in its fullness. . . The daily Christian life of these brethren is nourished by their faith in Christ and strengthened by the grace of Baptism and by hearing the word of God." (19, 22, 23