

## **Why I Am Catholic**

### The Church

Every Pentecost we celebrate the birthday of the Catholic Church—the only Church that Jesus Himself started. Every other church traces its roots back to us.

Some say, "I don't have to go to Church to be a Christian." That is a false understanding of the faith. Because Jesus started a Church, it means His followers must be part of the Church and go to church to be true disciples. Sometimes illness and injury prevent us, but the Bible and the early church urge us to be part of the faith community and to not withhold our presence.

The Church—the mystical Body of Christ—is an incomplete body when we are absent. And we are incomplete when we stay away. Christ makes his grace available in specific ways through the Church and its sacraments, and in particular offers us His Body and Blood through the Church.

The Church is also called to be an active body, vibrant and alive. When the Holy Spirit came down upon the Apostles on the First Pentecost, they immediately went out proclaiming the good news and continuing the work and ministry of Jesus.

The early church also had Mary, the Mother of Jesus. As she had raised and taught Jesus, she taught and encouraged the early church with a mother's love and wisdom. On the cross, Jesus entrusted Mary to John the Apostle's care and also declared that he and all disciples were Mary's sons and daughters. Through the intercession of St. Mary, may the Church continue to sustain what was started 2,000 years ago on that First Pentecost.