

Why do people join the Church?

Every year men, women, and children join our Catholic Church. This year at St. Benedict we had (and still have) fifteen people desiring to be baptized and/or received into the Catholic Church. Of course, with the health crisis their reception has been postponed until later. But, why do people want to join our Catholic Church? Especially when we have many “bored” Catholics, and fallen away Catholics.

There are various reasons. Some really desire the Holy Eucharist, that is, celebrating Mass and receiving Holy Communion. Others have come to appreciate the consistency of Catholic teaching, and apostolic authority. Still others sense a real stability in the Catholic Church, and a sense of family.

The Catholic Church began with the Lord’s twelve apostles (minus one—the betrayer). At the first Easter Jesus appeared to his apostles, and when the Holy Spirit gave birth to the Church, the Bible tells us “*great numbers of men and women were added to them.*” People joined the Church. Why?

The early church was identified as ***the place of miracles and the place of relevancy***. It was the place of miracles because “*Many signs and wonders were done among the people at the hands of the apostles.*” It was relevant because it made a difference in people’s lives.

When the word got out about the apostles and what they were doing, crowds of people gathered around them. The people came hoping the apostles could do for them what they did for others—namely, heal them and bring them wholeness. And the apostles did, but not only were they healing the people, they were also teaching and preaching the resurrection of Jesus.

The apostles claimed no power of their own. They always gave credit to the power of Jesus and His resurrection from the dead. The early Church never let people leave their presence without first sharing their faith on how Jesus and His Resurrection had changed their lives. Thus, the Church was the place of relevancy. It affects lives. The Church is where people met the Risen Lord Jesus—and a personal relationship with Him changed their life.

The Church still is the place of miracles and the place of relevancy. It still is the place of miracles because signs and wonders still very much happen in the everyday life of the Church. All one has to do is to visit a shrine like Lourdes in France or St. Joseph’s Oratory in Montreal to see evidence of the many miracles that have taken place there.

To become a canonized saint in the Church, miracles must be authenticated and attributed to the prayerful intercession of those being considered for sainthood. The Church has many named saints. Therefore, many miracles have happened, and still happen. A real miracle happens every time the Eucharist is celebrated and bread and wine are transformed into the real Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Church is the place of relevancy because peoples’ lives are still changed. People still meet the Risen Lord in His Church. And their relationship with the Risen Lord inspires them to reach out to others in service, sharing what they have with one another.

Let us pray for the fifteen individuals waiting to join the Catholic Church at St. Benedict. Let’s hope it won’t be long before they are fully a part of us.