

Catholic Church

Notes on Chapter 2.1: The Church is Enduring and Developing.

Key Concepts

1. The Church is a mystery that can never be fully expressed from a single viewpoint.
2. The Church is a joining of the human and divine. Although individual members and groups in the Church may act in a way that is contrary to the will of God, the Church itself can never be in opposition to God.
3. It is through the Church that the will of God – the foundation of the Kingdom – may be most reliably known.
4. The Church is the culmination of Salvation History. Since the creation of the world God has intended human beings to share in the divine life. In the Church, this sharing finally becomes a reality. It is primarily through the Church that God chooses to be made known, present and tangible in the world.

5. According to a Catholic understanding of the Church, there are three elements within the Church that cannot and will not change. The Church has a

Permanent body of dogma

Permanent ethic

Permanent constitution

6. The Church is the whole body of Christ: laity, clergy, and religious. The Magisterium is essential in the Church. The Magisterium is the authentic interpreter of Scripture and of the doctrinal and moral teachings which have been passed on from generation to generation. The Magisterium is always the authoritative voice concerning what is genuinely Catholic at any particular point in time.

7. The laity are immersed in the secular world; they have been called to transform that world by their presence. The Magisterium has been called to stand slightly apart from the secular world. It is the task of the Magisterium to remind the laity of their call to shape the world and to help the laity find the spiritual aid which they need to answer that call.