

TREASURES of OUR FAITH
by: Deacon Ryan Adams

Greetings brothers and sisters. As we go through this 'Year of Faith', each week we will take a journey together to deepen and rediscover our faith as Catholic Christians. We will take time to look at the rich traditions of our Church, we'll look at what certain things signify and their symbolism, take time to answer some frequently asked questions and look at why we do certain things as Catholics. This week we'll look at how the Church is Catholic.

What does 'Catholic' mean? The word Catholic means – Universal. In the sense of totality or keeping with the whole, we are Universal. It is derived from the Greek word, *Katholikos*, meaning universal. In the early days of the Church, many Roman citizens referred to this new upstart religion that followed the "Ways" of Jesus Christ as being Catholic, it was universal throughout the empire, meaning that followers of Jesus could be found almost anywhere throughout the empire. As time went on, this particular word began to be recognized and used in describing this new 'Way'. Among the early Christians and of course among us today, the word has a much bigger, more significant and deeper meaning than just geographical consideration. It was, and is understood to describe the very nature of our Church, in that it is universally for everyone. There is no exclusion according to nationality, race, economic or social status. It is for all the people of God.

The Church is Catholic in a double sense:

First, the Church is Catholic because Christ is present in her. Where there is Christ our Lord, there is the Catholic Church.

Secondly, the Church is Catholic because she has been sent out by Christ on a mission to the whole of the human race, to all of God's children. All people are called to this Catholic unity of the People of God. All are called by God's grace to salvation.

This is why the Catholic Church is a missionary Church. By the Church's own essential universality, she strives to preach the Gospel to all men and women throughout the world. Jesus our Lord instructed His Apostles to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.