

Models of Church



This Is
My Body

Rate the strength of your faith in
the following (on a scale of 1-
10)

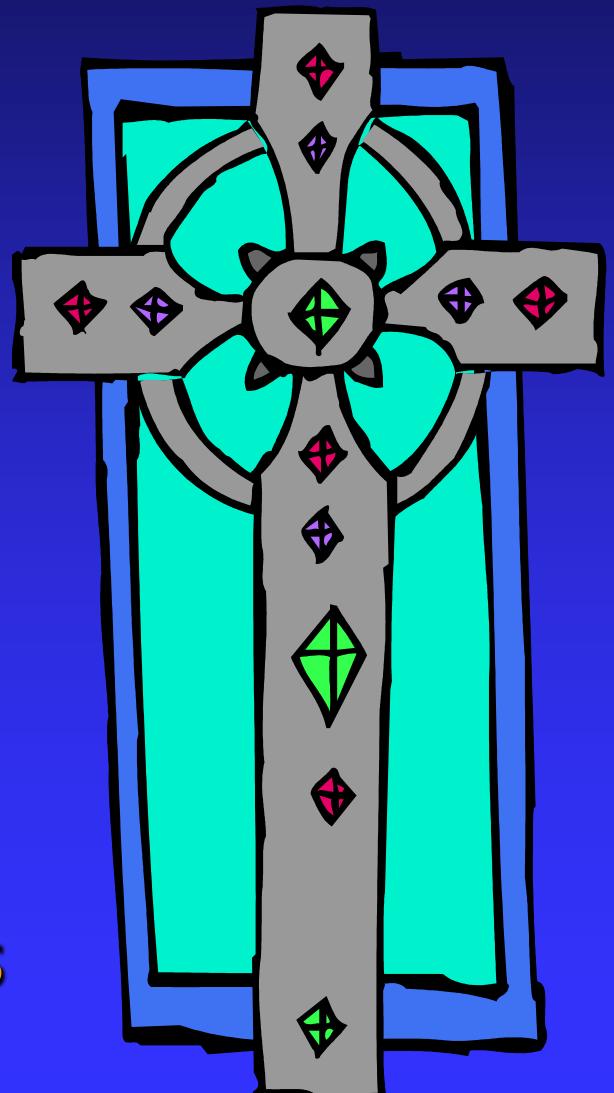
- Faith in God's love.
- Faith in Christ.
- Faith in the Church.

Which comes out lowest on the list? Why do
you think this is so?

Kinds of models

What is a model...?

- ✿ Models are dimensional, analogies. (Selves)
 - ✿ Church is a mystery. (realities of which we cannot speak directly.)
 - ✿ Can also help lead us to new insights on church.
-
- ✿ Our models for Church are rooted in the experience of Jesus, as he lived his life on this earth



Preaching and teaching of the apostles.

Upon
this
rock...



Jesus said in Matthew 16:18 "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hell will not overpower it."

Models of Church

- Book by Cardinal Avery Dulles, SJ
- Written in 1972
- Outlines some of the historical and theological images of Church from the past 2000 years
- Initially, he names five different images of Church in the first edition of the book
- He later added a sixth model in the second edition of the book

Cardinal Avery Dulles, SJ

- Son of John Foster Dulles (Secretary of State)
- Uncle Allen Dulles first head of CIA in WWII
- Self professed agnostic in 1936 (Harvard)
- 1940...converted to Catholicism
- Ordained in 1945 by Cardinal Francis Spellman
- First US theologian to be named a Cardinal

6 Models of Church

Most people think of Church as a building

- Institution
- Mystical Communion (Body of Christ)
- Sacrament (Sign)
- Pilgrim *
- Servant
- Herald



Why we need Models to understand what Church is?

- Lay people minister in various areas in the Church.
- We meet people affected one way or another by a model of Church.
- Many have negative feelings about the Church.
- Many people have one model as their ideal of Church. But the parish they are in, stresses a different model of Church.
- All models are necessary.

Church as MYSTICAL COMMUNION/ COMMUNITY

- Ancient model/apostolic times.
 - ◆ The People of God.
- Image of St. Paul referred to the church as "the Body of Christ." diversity essential.
(1 Corinthians 12-30)
- Re-defined by Pius XII
- Vatican II in Lumen Gentium (8)...
 - ◆ "The visible assembly and the spiritual community are "one interlocked reality."
- Like Christ the church is both human and divine. Social structures/ Spirit of God.

Church as MYSTICAL COMMUNION

- **Mission:** to seek union with God through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **Characteristic:** Focus on people.(were ever people come together in faith)
- **Major Strengths:**
 - ◆ Fellowship / love/ friendship and service.
 - ◆ Inclusive / spiritual bonds.
- **Major Weakness:**
 - ◆ Lack of structure / direction
 - ◆ Can lead to confusion.

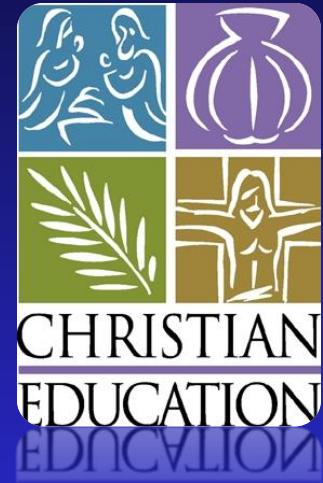
Church as INSTITUTION

- Robert Bellarmine
1588
De Controversiis
- Classic definition
of church.(Visible
& Structural
characteristics.)
- used from about
1600 to 1940
- Like IBM or
General Motors.
Get the job done.

*“The one and true church
is the community of men
and women brought
together by the profession
of the same Christian faith
and participation in the
same sacraments under the
authority of legitimate
pastors and especially the
one Vicar of Christ on earth,
the Roman Pontiff...”*

Characteristics of INSTITUTION

- **Mission:** Teach, to make holy, and to rule
- **Major Strengths:**
 - ◆ structure / Identity / Clarity
- **Characteristics:**
 - ◆ Hierarchy / organizations / rules / doctrines
- **Major Weakness:** Sees the ordained members ONLY as THE CHURCH.
 - ◆ Laity merely followers. (Lack of involvement)
 - ◆ Impersonal



Church as SACRAMENT

- Ancient model
- Used by many Saints.
 - ◆ Cyprian, Augustine and Aquinas.
 - ◆ “If Christ is the sacrament of God, the Church is for us the sacrament of Christ.”
(Makes him present.) Dulles pg. 63
- Vatican II... *“The Church is in Christ as a sacrament or sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of all mankind.”*

Church as SACRAMENT

- **Mission:** To be a sign of Christ to all people, believers and non-believers.
 - ◆ A sacrament is both a sign and an instrument.
- **Characteristics:** Sign/ highly intellectual.
- **Major Strengths:** Reminds the Church to be what it is called to be.
 - ◆ Sacramental Spirituality. The Church is the visible form of the invisible communion in Christ and salvation.
 - ◆ Motivates loyalty in the Church.
- **Major Weakness:** Emphasizes a lot of Theology.
 - ◆ Cut off from practical life.

Church as SERVANT

- Jesus came “not to be served but to serve”
(Matthew 20:28)
- Feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty,
welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, comfort
the sick, visit the imprisoned
- Focuses on basic human needs and pastoral
strategies.
- Main definition comes from the Vatican II
documents “Gadium et Spes” (Pastoral
Constitution on the Church in the Modern World).
- The Church serves and helps solve problems of
human life.

Church is SERVANT?

- ✿ **Mission:** To renew the face of the earth in the vision of Jesus Christ.
- ✿ **Major Strengths:** Emphasizes the social Gospel.
- ✿ **Major Weakness:** Danger of doing good works yet neglecting the spiritual side of the church.

Church as PILGRIM

- Dulles added this model to the second edition of his book.
- This was the dominant model at the Second Vatican council.
- Church was defined as the “Pilgrim People of God”.
- In the vision of Vatican II, the Church is a historic community on pilgrimage.
- The story of Exodus exemplifies this model.

What does it mean the Church is a PILGRIM?

- **Mission:** To be faithful to Christ on a journey through time and eternity.
- **Major strengths:** Chruch needs to be directed to the future.
 - ◆ Church overcomes its limitations through the Spirit of God.
 - ◆ Stresses need for repentance and renewal.
 - ◆ RCIA process is reflected.
- **Major weakness:** might neglect the responsibility of the church to take risks now in living the gospel.



Church as HERALD

"David was sitting between the two gates, and a lookout mounted to the roof of the gate above the city wall, where he looked about and saw a man running alone. The lookout shouted to inform the king, who said. 'If he is alone, he has good news to report.' "

*A HERALD is
someone
who has a
message for
a person or
group.*

- Puts considerable emphasis on the Word of God. (Evangelical brothers)
- Jesus calls people to respond to the word in faith and to proclaim the good news of God's kingdom.

What does it mean the Church is a HERALD?

- **Mission:** To proclaim the good news of salvation to all the ends of the earth.
- **Major Strengths:** Emphasizes the bible and the word of God.
- **Major Weakness:** Danger of thinking that the only task of the church is the proclamation of the Gospel.

- Jesus was talking about the Church as HERALD when he said at the Sermon on the Mount...

... "You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden...Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."

(Matthew 5:14, 16)



- ❖ All Models are necessary to be representatives of Jesus Christ.
- ❖ People of God make up the Body of Christ.

Jesus said, in Matthew 28: 19

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

