THE DAILY BREAD

The Magnificat of the Beloved



The Church

One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic

A FORMATION BOOK BY

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The Everyday Apostle

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Magnificat of the Beloved

The Church

One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, and Yours

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INTRODUCTION

More Than a Building, More Than a Club

Ask many Catholic women what the Church is, and the answer comes back in human terms: a place to go on Sunday, an institution with rules and a hierarchy, a community she belongs to, perhaps one that has formed and sustained her and perhaps one that has at times disappointed or wounded her. All of these contain some truth, and yet all of them fall short of what the Church actually is, for in a culture that treats church membership as optional, interchangeable, or merely a human institution that has sometimes failed, a woman needs an understanding of the Church that can hold up under pressure. She needs to know not just that she belongs to the Church but what the Church is, why she needs it, and what it means that it is the Body of Christ.

This book is about the nature of the Church, the robust understanding a woman needs. It will show that the Church is more than a human institution, that she is the Body of Christ, the continuation of His presence in the world; it will unfold the four marks of the Church, that she is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic, and what each means; it will explain why a woman needs the Church and what it means that there is no salvation apart from her, properly understood; and it will show a woman her own place within the Church, the lay vocation that is not second-tier Christianity but the Church's primary missionary presence in the world. The aim is to give a woman an ecclesiology that holds, so that she understands the Church not as a mere institution but as the Body of Christ to which she belongs.

And he is the head of the body, the church. — Colossians 1:18

The Scripture reveals that Christ is the head of a body, and that body is the Church, so that the Church is not merely a human organization but the Body of Christ Himself. This book will unfold what that means: that the Church is more than an institution; that she is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic; why a woman needs her; and what her own place within the Church is. A woman may think of the Church in merely human terms. This book will show her what the Church truly is, the Body of Christ, so that she understands why she needs the Church and what it means to belong to her.

CHAPTER ONE

The Body of Christ

More Than a Human Institution

The foundational truth about the Church is that she is not merely a human institution that happens to serve God but the Body of Christ, the continuation of His presence in the world, a reality both human and divine. Understanding the Church as the Body of Christ, more than a human organization, transforms how a woman regards her and grounds everything else that can be said about the Church.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. — 1 Corinthians 12:27

Not Merely Human

The Church is not merely a human institution, a religious organization founded and run by people, but a divine reality, established by Christ and animated by His Spirit, so that she is more than any human society. It is easy to see the Church as a human institution, with its buildings, officials, rules, and history, and she does have a human dimension, but the Church is not merely human, for she was founded by Christ, is animated by the Holy Spirit, and carries a divine life and mission, so that she is a reality both human and divine, more than any merely human organization. This means a woman must see past the Church's human appearance to her divine reality, recognizing that she is not just another institution but a divine foundation, established by Christ and alive with His Spirit, so that the Church is more than she appears. The woman who understands the Church as not merely human sees her divine reality beneath her human dimension, more than an institution. Not merely human, the Church is a divine reality established by Christ and animated by His Spirit, so that she is more than a human institution, both human and divine in nature.

The Continuation of Christ's Presence

The Church is the Body of Christ, the continuation of His presence in the world, so that through her Christ remains present and active among people, teaching, sanctifying, and acting through His Body. The Scripture calls the Church the Body of Christ, and this is not a mere metaphor but a profound reality, for the Church is the way Christ remains present in the world after His Ascension, His Body through which He continues to teach, to sanctify, to act, so that the Church is the continuation of Christ's own presence, Christ living and working in the world through His Body. This means the Church is where Christ is found and encountered, for she is His Body, the continuation of His presence, so that a woman meets Christ in and through the Church, which carries His presence and His work in the world. The woman who understands the Church as the continuation of Christ's presence sees her as the Body through which Christ remains present and active in the world. The continuation of Christ's presence is what the Church is, His Body

through which He remains present and active in the world, teaching, sanctifying, and working, so that Christ lives on in the world through the Church.

Members of One Body

Because the Church is the Body of Christ, a woman who belongs to her is a member of that Body, joined to Christ the head and to all the other members, so that belonging to the Church is incorporation into Christ Himself. The Scripture tells believers that they are the Body of Christ and individually members of it, so that a woman who belongs to the Church is not merely enrolled in an organization but incorporated into the Body of Christ, joined to Christ the head and to all the other members, sharing in the one life that flows through the whole Body. This means belonging to the Church is a profound reality, a woman's incorporation into Christ and union with all His members, so that she is not a mere affiliate of an institution but a living member of Christ's own Body, joined to Him and to all who are His. The woman who understands herself as a member of one body sees her belonging to the Church as incorporation into Christ, joined to Him and to all His members. Members of one body is what belonging to the Church makes a woman, incorporated into the Body of Christ and joined to Christ the head and all the other members, so that her belonging is union with Christ Himself.

CHAPTER TWO

One

The Mark of Unity

The first mark of the Church is that she is One, for Christ founded a single Church and willed that she be united in faith, worship, and governance, so that unity is essential to what the Church is. Understanding the mark of unity, that the Church is One and what that oneness means and costs, reveals the first of the four great marks by which the true Church is known.

That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you. — John 17:21

Christ Willed One Church

Christ founded not many churches but one, and prayed that His followers would be one, so that the unity of the Church is not an optional ideal but the will of Christ for His Body. On the night before He died, Jesus prayed that His followers would all be one, as He and the Father are one, revealing that He willed a single, united Church, not a collection of

competing bodies, so that the oneness of the Church is rooted in Christ's own will and prayer, an essential feature of the Church He founded. This means the unity of the Church is not a human aspiration but Christ's will, for He founded one Church and prayed for her oneness, so that a woman understands unity as essential to the Church, willed by Christ Himself for His Body. The woman who understands that Christ willed one Church sees the Church's unity as His will, essential to the Body He founded. Christ willed one Church, founding a single united Body and praying that His followers would be one, so that the unity of the Church is rooted in His own will and essential to what she is.

United in Faith and Worship

The Church's oneness is a unity of faith, worship, and governance, for her members hold one faith, share one sacramental worship, and are united under one visible leadership, so that her unity is real and visible. The oneness of the Church is not merely an invisible or sentimental bond but a real and visible unity, for the members of the Church profess one and the same faith, share in the same sacraments and worship, and are united under the one leadership established by Christ, so that her unity is concrete, a oneness of belief, worship, and governance that visibly binds her members into one Body. This means the Church's unity is a real and visible oneness, not merely a vague feeling of fellowship, for her members are united in one faith, one worship, and one governance, so that a woman belongs to a visibly united Church and not a loose association of differing bodies. The woman who understands the Church united in faith and worship sees her oneness as a real and visible unity of belief, sacrament, and governance. United in faith and worship, the Church's oneness is a real and visible unity of belief, sacramental worship, and governance, so that her members are bound into one Body rather than a loose association.

Unity That Costs

The Church's unity is costly, for it asks her members to hold the common faith, to remain within the one Body rather than going their own way, and to work and suffer for unity, so that oneness is a demand as well as a gift. The unity of the Church does not come without cost, for it asks her members to submit their private preferences to the common faith, to remain within the one Body rather than breaking away when they disagree, to work and sometimes suffer for the healing of divisions, so that unity is not only a gift to be received but a demand to be met, a oneness that costs something to maintain. This means a woman participates in the Church's unity by bearing its cost, holding the common faith, staying within the one Body, and working for unity, so that she contributes to the oneness Christ willed rather than fracturing it by going her own way. The woman who embraces

unity that costs holds the common faith and remains within the one Body, bearing the cost of the oneness Christ willed. Unity that costs asks the Church's members to hold the common faith, remain within the one Body, and work for unity, so that oneness is a demand as well as a gift, a costly participation in the unity Christ willed.

CHAPTER THREE

Holy

A Holy Church of Sinful Members

The second mark of the Church is that she is Holy, not because her members are without sin but because she is made holy by Christ, who sanctifies her and works holiness in her despite the sinfulness of those who belong to her. Understanding the mark of holiness, how the Church is Holy even amid sinful members, reveals the second great mark and answers the scandal of sin within the Church.

Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that she might be holy and without blemish. — Ephesians 5:25-27

Made Holy by Christ

The Church is Holy because Christ has made her holy, giving Himself for her, filling her with His Spirit, and providing in her the means of holiness, so that her holiness comes from Him and not from the merits of her members. The Church is called Holy not because everyone in her is holy but because she is made holy by Christ, who loved her, gave Himself up for her, sanctifies her by His Spirit, and gives her the holy means of grace, the sacraments, the Word, the teaching, through which holiness is produced, so that the Church's holiness is a gift of Christ, rooted in Him and not in the virtue of her members. This means the Church is truly Holy, for her holiness comes from Christ who sanctifies her and fills her with the means of holiness, so that she is holy in her source, her Lord, her teaching, and her sacraments, whatever the failings of individual members. The woman who understands the Church made holy by Christ sees her holiness as His gift, rooted in Him rather than in the merits of her members. Made holy by Christ, the Church is Holy because He gave Himself for her, sanctifies her by His Spirit, and provides in her the means of holiness, so that her holiness comes from Him and not from the merits of her members.

Holy Despite Sinful Members

The Church remains Holy even though her members, including her leaders, are sinners, for their sins do not destroy the holiness Christ gives her, so that the failings of Catholics do not disprove the Church's holiness. It is a scandal to many that the Church, called Holy, is full of sinners, and that even her leaders have sometimes sinned gravely, but this does not destroy her holiness, for the Church is holy by the gift of Christ and the means of grace she bears, not by the perfection of her members, so that she remains Holy even while her members, who are sinners, fail and fall, their sins their own and not the Church's holiness. This means a woman need not be scandalized out of faith in the Church's holiness by the sins of Catholics, for the Church is holy in Christ despite the sinfulness of her members, so that human failings, real as they are, do not undo the holiness Christ gives her. The woman who understands the Church holy despite sinful members is not scandalized out of faith by the sins of Catholics, knowing the Church's holiness rests in Christ. Holy despite sinful members, the Church remains Holy even though her members and leaders are sinners, for their sins do not destroy the holiness Christ gives her, so that human failings do not disprove the Church's holiness.

Holiness Still at Work

The holiness of the Church is not only a gift but a work in progress, for Christ is continually making her members holy, producing saints in every age, so that the Church's holiness is visibly at work in the lives she transforms. The Church's holiness is not merely a doctrine but a living reality at work, for Christ is continually sanctifying her members, and in every age the Church produces saints, men and women transformed by her grace into real holiness, so that the holiness of the Church is visibly at work in the countless lives she has made holy, evidence of the sanctifying power at work within her. This means the Church's holiness is seen not only in her source and her means but in her fruits, the saints and holy lives she produces in every generation, so that a woman can see the Church's holiness at work in the transformation of lives, the ongoing proof that Christ is making her holy. The woman who sees holiness still at work recognizes the Church's holiness in the saints and transformed lives she produces in every age. Holiness still at work shows the Church's holiness as a living reality, Christ continually sanctifying her members and producing saints in every age, so that her holiness is visibly at work in the lives she transforms.

CHAPTER FOUR

Catholic

The Mark of Universality

The third mark of the Church is that she is Catholic, which means universal, for she is sent to all peoples, holds the whole faith, and gathers people of every nation into one Body, so that she is the Church for everyone. Understanding the mark of catholicity, that the Church is universal in her mission and her fullness, reveals the third great mark and the worldwide embrace of the Church.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations. — Matthew 28:19

For All Peoples

The Church is Catholic because she is universal, sent by Christ to all peoples of every nation, race, and culture, so that she is not the Church of one people but of all humanity. The word Catholic means universal, and the Church is Catholic because Christ sent her to all nations, to make disciples of every people, so that she is not confined to one nation or culture but is sent to the whole human race, embracing people of every language, race, and place, the Church for all peoples rather than for some. This means the Church is universal in her reach and her welcome, sent to all and open to all, so that a woman belongs to a worldwide Church that embraces every people, a Catholic Church that is for the whole human family and not for one group alone. The woman who understands the Church for all peoples sees her universality, a Church sent to and embracing every nation. For all peoples, the Church is Catholic because Christ sent her to all nations, embracing people of every race and culture, so that she is the Church for the whole human family and not for one people alone.

Holding the Whole Faith

The Church is also Catholic in that she holds the whole faith, the fullness of the truth and the means of salvation Christ gave, so that her universality is not only geographic but a fullness of what she teaches and offers. Catholicity means not only universal reach but universal fullness, for the Church holds the whole of the faith Christ revealed, the complete deposit of truth, the full range of the sacraments and means of grace, so that she is Catholic in possessing the fullness of what Christ gave, lacking nothing of the truth and the means of salvation entrusted to her. This means the Church is Catholic in her fullness as well as her reach, holding the whole faith and all the means of grace, so that a woman belongs to a Church that offers her the fullness of the truth and the sacraments, not a partial or diminished version of what Christ gave. The woman who understands the Church holding the whole faith sees her catholicity as a fullness of truth and grace, the complete gift of Christ. Holding the whole faith, the Church is Catholic in fullness as well as reach, possessing the complete deposit of truth and the full means of grace, so that her universality is a fullness of what Christ gave.

One Family of Every Nation

The catholicity of the Church gathers people of every nation into one family, so that a woman belongs to a vast and worldwide communion that transcends every division of race, culture, and place. Because she is Catholic, the Church gathers into one Body people of every nation, race, and tongue, so that a woman who belongs to her is joined to a vast worldwide family, united across every human division, part of a communion that spans the globe and includes people utterly unlike her, all one in the Catholic Church. This means a woman's belonging to the Church makes her part of a universal family far larger than her own nation or culture, a worldwide communion that transcends every division, so that catholicity gives her brothers and sisters of every people, one family in Christ. The woman who understands the Church as one family of every nation sees herself joined to a worldwide communion that transcends every division. One family of every nation is what the Catholic Church gathers, people of every race and tongue united into one Body, so that a woman belongs to a vast worldwide communion transcending every human division.

CHAPTER FIVE

Apostolic

Founded on the Apostles, Served by Shepherds

The fourth mark of the Church is that she is Apostolic, for she is built on the foundation of the apostles, holds the faith they handed on, and is governed by their successors, whose authority is a servant leadership for the good of the Body. Understanding the mark of apostolicity, that the Church is founded on the apostles and served by their successors, reveals the fourth great mark and the nature of authority in the Church.

Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone. — Ephesians 2:20

Built on the Apostles

The Church is Apostolic because she is built on the foundation of the apostles, holding the faith they received from Christ and handed on, so that she is continuous with the Church Christ founded through them. The Church is Apostolic because she rests on the foundation of the apostles, the men Christ chose, taught, and sent, so that she holds the faith they received from Christ and handed on, continues their mission, and is the same Church Christ founded through them, unbroken from the apostles to the present, so that

her faith and life are apostolic in origin and continuity. This means the Church a woman belongs to is not a later invention but the Church founded on the apostles, holding the apostolic faith and continuous with the Church of the apostles, so that she is joined to the original Church Christ established through the men He sent. The woman who understands the Church built on the apostles sees her continuity with the Church Christ founded, holding the apostolic faith. Built on the apostles, the Church is Apostolic because she rests on their foundation, holds the faith they handed on from Christ, and continues their mission, so that she is continuous with the Church Christ founded through them.

Apostolic Succession

The apostolic character of the Church is preserved through apostolic succession, the unbroken handing-on of the apostles' authority to the bishops, so that the Church today is governed by the successors of the apostles. The authority Christ gave the apostles did not end with them but was handed on to successors, the bishops, in an unbroken line from the apostles to the present, so that apostolic succession preserves the apostolic character of the Church, her leaders standing in continuity with the apostles and holding the authority Christ gave them, the Church today governed by their successors. This means the Church's leadership is apostolic, her bishops the successors of the apostles in an unbroken line, so that a woman belongs to a Church whose authority traces back to the apostles and to Christ, preserved through apostolic succession. The woman who understands apostolic succession sees the Church's leaders as successors of the apostles, holding the authority Christ gave in unbroken line. Apostolic succession preserves the Church's apostolic character through the unbroken handing-on of the apostles' authority to the bishops, so that the Church today is governed by their successors in continuity with the apostles.

Authority as Service

The authority in the Church is not domination but service, for Christ established leadership as a servant leadership, a shepherding of the Body for its good, so that those who lead are called to serve rather than to lord it over others. The authority Christ gave the Church is not a worldly power to dominate but a servant leadership, for He taught that whoever would be great must be the servant of all, and that those who lead His Church are to shepherd it for its good, to serve the members rather than to lord it over them, so that authority in the Church is a service, an office of care and self-giving. This means a woman can understand the Church's hierarchy rightly as a servant leadership, an authority established for the good of the Body and exercised as service, so that the leadership of the Church, whatever the failings of individuals, is by its nature a

shepherding service and not a domination. The woman who understands authority as service sees the Church's leadership as a shepherding for the good of the Body, not a worldly power. Authority as service is the nature of leadership in the Church, a servant leadership established by Christ to shepherd the Body for its good, so that those who lead are called to serve rather than to dominate.

CHAPTER SIX

Why You Need Her

The Necessity of the Church

A woman living in a culture that treats church membership as optional needs to understand why the Church is necessary, why there is, in a properly understood sense, no salvation apart from her, so that belonging to the Church is not a preference but a need. Understanding the necessity of the Church, properly and carefully, reveals why a woman needs the Church rather than treating her as optional.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. — Acts 2:42

The Church Is Necessary

The Church is not an optional add-on to a private faith but the necessary means Christ established for salvation, the ordinary way His grace, truth, and sacraments reach a woman, so that she genuinely needs the Church. Christ did not merely save individuals privately but founded the Church as the ordinary means of salvation, the Body through which His truth is taught, His sacraments given, His grace dispensed, so that the Church is necessary, not an optional supplement to a do-it-yourself faith but the appointed means through which salvation ordinarily comes, which a woman genuinely needs rather than being able to do without. This means a woman cannot treat the Church as optional, as though she could have Christ without His Body, for the Church is the necessary means Christ established, so that she needs the Church for the truth, the sacraments, and the grace that come through her. The woman who understands that the Church is necessary sees her not as optional but as the appointed means of salvation she genuinely needs. The Church is necessary, the ordinary means Christ established for salvation through which His truth, sacraments, and grace reach a woman, so that she genuinely needs the Church rather than treating her as an optional supplement.

Outside the Church, Rightly Understood

The teaching that outside the Church there is no salvation must be rightly understood, for it affirms that all salvation comes through Christ and His Church while recognizing that God's grace can reach, through means connected to the Church, those who through no fault of their own do not know her. The Church teaches that there is no salvation apart from her, a teaching easily misunderstood, for it does not mean that only card-carrying Catholics can be saved, but that all salvation comes through Christ and the Church that is His Body, even for those who do not visibly belong to her, so that God's grace can reach, through means connected to the Church, those who through no fault of their own have not known or entered her, while salvation remains always through Christ and His Church. This means a woman should understand the necessity of the Church in its true and nuanced sense, that all salvation comes through Christ and His Body, without the distortion that would deny God's grace to the invincibly ignorant, so that she holds the teaching rightly, affirming the Church's necessity without un-Christian narrowness. The woman who understands outside the Church rightly holds the teaching in its true sense, affirming that salvation comes through Christ and His Church while recognizing God's grace beyond the visible boundaries. Outside the Church, rightly understood, affirms that all salvation comes through Christ and His Church while recognizing that God's grace can reach, through means connected to her, those who through no fault of their own do not know her.

What You Receive in Her

A woman needs the Church because in her she receives what she cannot give herself, the fullness of the truth, the sacraments, the communion of the faithful, and the sustaining life of grace, so that the Church supplies what is essential to her life with God. The reason a woman needs the Church becomes concrete in what she receives in her, for in the Church she is given the truth of the faith securely taught, the sacraments through which grace comes, the Eucharist that is Christ Himself, the communion and support of the faithful, the whole sustaining life of grace, none of which she could provide for herself, so that the Church supplies what is essential to her life with God. This means a woman's need for the Church is not abstract but concrete, for in the Church she receives the truth, the sacraments, the communion, and the grace that sustain her life with God, so that she needs the Church for the very things that make the Christian life possible. The woman who understands what she receives in the Church sees her need for her in the truth, sacraments, communion, and grace she could not give herself. What you receive in her is why a woman needs the Church, for in her she is given the truth, the sacraments, the communion of the faithful, and the sustaining life of grace that she cannot provide herself.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Your Place in Her

The Lay Vocation Is Not Second-Tier

Within the Church a woman has a real and vital place, the lay vocation, which is not a second-tier Christianity beneath priests and religious but the primary missionary presence of the Church in the world, a presence women have always carried. Understanding the dignity and mission of the lay vocation reveals a woman's own vital place within the Church and the particular way she is called to carry the Church into the world.

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you. — 1 Peter 2:9

Not Second-Tier Christianity

The lay vocation is not a lesser or second-tier form of Christianity beneath the clergy and religious, for all the baptized share fully in the life and mission of the Church, so that a laywoman is a full member with a real calling. There is a temptation to regard the laity as second-class Christians, the ordinary members beneath the priests and religious who are imagined to have the real vocations, but this is false, for all the baptized share fully in the dignity of God's people, a royal priesthood and a holy nation, so that the lay vocation is not a lesser form of Christianity but a full and genuine calling, a laywoman a full member of the Church with a real vocation of her own. This means a woman should not regard herself as a second-tier Christian for being a laywoman, for the lay state is a full and dignified vocation, a real sharing in the priesthood and mission of God's people, so that she has a genuine calling and not a lesser place. The woman who understands that the lay vocation is not second-tier sees her own calling as a full and dignified sharing in the life of the Church. Not second-tier Christianity, the lay vocation is a full and genuine calling, for all the baptized share fully in the life and mission of the Church, so that a laywoman is a full member with a real vocation of her own.

The Church's Presence in the World

The lay faithful are the Church's primary presence in the world, carrying the faith into the places clergy and religious do not reach, the home, the workplace, the community, so that the laity are the Church's missionary front line. The particular mission of the laity is to bring the Church into the world, into the ordinary places of daily life, the home, the workplace, the neighborhood, the public square, where priests and religious do not

ordinarily go, so that the lay faithful are the Church's primary presence in the world, carrying the Gospel into the midst of ordinary life as the Church's missionary front line. This means a woman's lay vocation places her at the heart of the Church's mission, for she carries the Church into the world where the ordained cannot, so that her presence in her home and work and community is the Church present in those places, a vital missionary role. The woman who understands the Church's presence in the world sees her lay vocation as carrying the Church into the ordinary places of life, the missionary front line. The Church's presence in the world is carried by the lay faithful, who bring the faith into the home, workplace, and community where clergy do not reach, so that the laity are the Church's primary missionary presence in the world.

A Presence Women Have Carried

Women have always carried the Church's presence in the world in a particular way, bearing the faith in their homes and communities, so that a woman stands in a long tradition of women who have been the Church's living presence. Throughout the history of the Church, women have carried her presence into the world in a particular way, bearing and transmitting the faith in their homes, sustaining the life of their communities, witnessing by their lives, holding the faith among their families and neighbors, so that women have always been a vital part of the Church's presence in the world, a tradition in which every woman now stands. This means a woman's lay vocation connects her to a long and honored tradition of women carrying the Church's presence, so that she takes up a role women have always filled, bearing the Church into the world as countless women have before her. The woman who understands the presence women have carried sees her own vocation as part of a long tradition of women who have been the Church's living presence in the world. A presence women have carried is the tradition a woman joins, for women have always borne the Church's presence into the world through their homes and communities, so that she takes up a vital role women have filled throughout the Church's history.

CONCLUSION

Love the Church

The woman who thought of the Church in merely human terms now understands what she truly is. We have seen that the Church is more than a human institution, the Body of Christ and the continuation of His presence; that she is One, united in faith and worship by Christ's will; that she is Holy, made holy by Christ even amid sinful members; that she is Catholic, universal in reach and fullness; that she is Apostolic, built on the apostles and

served by their successors in a servant leadership; that a woman needs her as the necessary means of salvation; and that a woman has a real place in her, the lay vocation that is the Church's primary presence in the world.

Through all of it runs a single invitation: love the Church. The Church is not a mere institution to be used or criticized from a distance but the Body of Christ, your mother in the faith, the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church to which you belong and which you need. To understand what she truly is, is to love her, not with a naive love blind to the failings of her members, but with a real love for the Body of Christ she is.

So love the Church. See her as more than an institution, the Body of Christ and the continuation of His presence. Treasure her unity, and bear its cost. Trust her holiness, which comes from Christ and endures amid sinful members. Embrace her catholicity, your membership in a worldwide family of every nation. Hold to her apostolic faith, continuous with the apostles. Recognize that you need her, the necessary means through which Christ's truth and grace reach you. And take up your own place in her, the lay vocation that carries the Church into the world, as women have always done. The Church is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic, and she is yours. Understand what she is, and love her, the Body of Christ to which you belong.

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