

How did the Catholic Church get started?

The word "catholic" means universal. Jesus created one universal church for all of mankind. The Catholic Church was established by Jesus with his words spoken in [Matthew 16](#). Jesus asked his disciples "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" The disciples then offered various answers - "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." But the question that Jesus then asked was crucial: "But who do you say that I am?"

The answer provided by Simon Peter set in motion the formation of the Catholic Church by Jesus. "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." With this answer, Jesus established the Catholic Church with Simon Peter designated the first Pope.

"Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Many try to imply that it was Peter's faith on which Jesus established the Church. But closer examination of the words of Jesus reveal that the selection was of divine nature.

"For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father." His knowledge of Jesus was not the reason for Peter's confession to the true identity but it was the fact that it had been revealed to him by God. In the words of Jesus gives Peter his new name - "The Rock". A foundation on which his Church will be built.

Many separated from the Catholic Church cling to the notion that the Church was built on the faith of Peter and not him as a man as justification for their position. Unfortunately, their understanding is incorrect.

The bible is full of references to the need for respect of authority. It is also full of references for the need for unity. In one parable Jesus is explaining how he could not be of Satanic origin (Mark 3:22), "How can Satan drive out Satan?" In this parable he points out the importance of leadership. "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand." Throughout the scripture we always see - One God, One Son, One Holy Spirit, One Church.

The Church today has become a free enterprise operation. If you can access the Internet you can be ordained in some church. The reformation began a splintering of the Church - in so many words, a kingdom divided.

It is much easier to understand Peter's role of leadership by reading Acts. He is clearly the leader of the Church. One such example, there are others, is [Acts 15:6](#) where Peter addressing the other Apostles clearly states his leadership role: "My brothers, you are well aware that from early days God made his choice among you that through my mouth..."

Around or about 45 AD, Peter went to Rome and from there lead the Catholic Church. As of today, there have been 265 Popes in direct succession to Peter. The position of Pope was established by Christ and the office has been maintained in an apostolic manner since the time of Christ. Although the Church has fragmented since the time of Christ with various leadership centers emerging, the apostolic line of succession in the Church is seated in Rome until this very day. Many throughout time have tried to rationalize away and deny the authority and structure of the Church as established by Jesus. In my heart I know that Catholic Church is the Church established by Jesus and has maintained a clear line of apostolic leadership to this very day. The Church has celebrated the sacraments and worshiped the Lord in essentially the same way since the time of Christ. Every Church suffers occasionally because of the weaknesses of human nature. But I believe that regardless of temporary problems experienced by the Church, abandoning the Catholic Faith is not an option. Jesus was more forgiving and understanding of human nature. When Jesus was arrested Judas had betrayed Him, Peter denied him three times, and the remaining apostles ran away. If Jesus supported and anointed their apostolic role after some of their human failings, I can't imagine abandoning my faith for human shortcomings. After all, your faith is in the Church established by Jesus, not in any person involved in the Church. Of course problems in the Church must be addressed and corrected, but the faith and Church established by Jesus can never be denied.

Note: I found this on the internet. I did not write it, but if I had I wouldn't change a single word... I believe every word as if I wrote it.
Ma. Irma Salinas Saldana