

# All Grown Up

## *What Would the Church Look Like Today?*

### **The Acts of the Apostles is like a baby photo of the early Church.**

We witness the growth of a beautiful family of faith, formed by Jesus and guided by the Holy Spirit. Through this family, known as the Church, Jesus continues his ministry and cares for his people. Nearly two thousand years have passed since this portrait was taken.

### **As adults, we don't look exactly like our baby pictures.**

Our faces have lost their chubby cuteness, and our arms and legs have gotten longer. But many important attributes remain unchanged, such as our eye color or our number of limbs. Similarly, if the Church described in Acts continued to this day, we would expect it to have grown and matured, while retaining the essential characteristics seen in its infancy.

### **The Church would look a lot different today.**

Just as a child grows and learns over time, we would expect the Church to develop over the years. As Christians reflect on the teachings of Jesus, the truths of the faith would gradually become clarified and more clearly understood. As the faithful seek to grow in their relationship with Jesus, new spiritual customs and manners of prayer would gradually develop. External characteristics may have changed, but it would still be the same Church found in Acts.



### **In its essentials, the Church would still be the same.**

As we explored in previous messages, there are many aspects of the early Church that are essential to its identity and mission, and thus we would still expect to find them in the Church today. The Church would be one Church, visibly united in teaching and worship. It would not be limited to one area, language, or cultural group, but rather would unite the human race as one spiritual family. Its leaders would have authority that has been passed down from the apostles. Its faithful will all struggle with sin, but for those who seek to know and love Jesus, they will find all they need to become holy.

### **We should still expect to find this Church today.**

Jesus intended to continue his ministry through his family of faith, the Church. People will always need to hear his teachings, to be fed with the Bread of Life, to be healed and forgiven. Since these needs of the human heart will never disappear, the Church is meant to continue until the end of time. This is why Jesus promised the apostles: "I will be with you always, until the end of the world." (Matthew 28:20)

### **We believe that the Catholic Church is this same Church.**

We are not just Catholic Christians because our parents raised us this way, or because of the spiritual comfort we receive from our faith. We are Christians because we believe that Jesus is truly God. We are Catholic Christians because we believe that the Catholic Church is the same Church found in the Acts of the Apostles, but grown up. It is the Church started by Jesus, and through it he still ministers to us today. In our next message series, we will explore reasons for this belief.