

The Pillars of the Church

Baptism and the Eucharist

Reflections Covenant and Doctrine 18 May 2020

The Church is the people of God, called out to freedom — from sin to Salvation, from despair to hope, from darkness to light, from death to eternal life. It is a body of people travelling together, in which we may envisage women, men, and children of every age, race, and society, supporting one another upon their long and often wearisome journey to their final home. The key word here is "supporting." Quite often, certain people within a church are described as its "pillars." Yet the Church that Jesus created does not require the pillars of mere people; to say so is mistaken, and, I would go so far as to say, verges upon the blasphemous. Those who volunteer to serve the Church are, in truth, Servants of the Church — just as Jesus Himself assumed the role of a Servant King during His earthly ministry, though He is King of kings and God of gods.

The true pillars of the Church are spiritual: they are its two great sacraments, Baptism and the Eucharist. These are not merely two instruments by which the Church carries out its ministry, nor merely the means by which we become, and remain, members of the Church; they are the very essence of the Church. The Church exists because of these two pillars. When people are baptised in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and when they gather at the Table of Christ to receive His Body and His Blood, they become the people of God, and are called the Church.

Amen.