

Convergence Ecclesiology
Addendum 4: Apostolic Succession
ICCEC U.S. Theological Commission
Spring 2018

What is Apostolic Succession?

The *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* states that apostolic succession is: “The method whereby the ministry of the Christian Church is held to be derived from the apostles by a continuous succession. It has usually been associated with an assertion that the succession has been maintained by a series of bishops. These bishops have been regarded as succeeding the apostles because: 1) they perform the functions of the apostles; 2) their commission goes back to the apostles; 3) they succeed one another in the same sees, the derivation of which may be traced back to the communion of the apostles; and 4) by some writers because through their consecration to the episcopal office they inherit from the apostles the transmission of the Holy Spirit which empowers them for the performance of their work.”¹

“The historic episcopate in Apostolic Succession [is] the gift of Christ’s authority to the Church and the trustee of the Church’s fidelity to apostolic teaching.”²

“The church, as conceived in Catholic and Orthodox and Anglican traditions, consists in churches shepherded by bishops whose consecration goes back in linear succession to the apostles and whose task is the transmission of apostolic testimony.”³

The ICCEC both affirms and embraces this historic understanding of the Church.

As a convergence communion the ICCEC also understands the Apostolic *nature* of the Church to include at least the following: Apostolic authority, faith/doctrine and anointing.⁴ 1) Apostolic Authority is delegated authority from the chief apostle, Jesus Christ, to his Church. This Apostolic authority was given first to the original apostles and through them to their successors, representing the Church Catholic.⁵ 2) Apostolic Faith/Doctrine is the teaching and witness of the apostles, embodied in the sacred scriptures once and for all delivered to the saints.⁶ 3) Apostolic Anointing is the gift of the empowerment of the Holy Spirit promised to the Apostles.⁷ This Apostolic Anointing is imparted to the Church Catholic to fulfill the mission and ministry to which it has been called and sent.⁸

The Witness of the New Testament

Jesus “Sent” by the Father:

Who was truly the first Apostle? The writer to the Hebrews says, “Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession,” (Heb 3:1). Jesus of Nazareth is the Apostle sent from God, *par excellence*, the Son of God, the promised Messiah, the Christ; all apostolic authority flows from him.

The “Sent Ones” by Jesus:

¹ *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Edited by F. L. Cross, 3rd Edition edited by E. A. Livingstone. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p 91.

² *ICCEC Constitution and Canons*, 2014, p 7.

³ Oden, *Life in the Spirit: Systematic Theology*, Vol 3, p 358.

⁴ Cf. *Convergence Ecclesiology: ICCEC U.S. Theological Commission* position paper, p 7.

⁵ John 20:21; Matt 16:18-19

⁶ Acts 2:42; Jude 3, 20. We understand doctrine and faith to be synonymous for this paper.

⁷ Acts 1:4, 8

⁸ Acts 8:14-17

In Scripture, we clearly see Jesus the Christ (Messiah) extending his own authority to those men whom he designated as apostles: “And He [Jesus] went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons...” (Mk 3:13-15)⁹ Even as the Father has “sent” the Son, so the Son will “send” his men to preach the Gospel.

Again, in Mt 10:1 we read, “And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction.” (Mt 10:1) The twelve are then named and are reminded of the apostolic message, Jesus’ message of the Kingdom of Heaven (God) in Mt 4:17, “From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’” In Mt 10:1, 5a and 7-8 Jesus sends them to proclaim and to do what he has given them authority in word and deed to do, “These twelve Jesus sent out... And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons.” (Mt 10:5a, 7-8). Note that both Jesus’ message and his works are to be demonstrated in the content of the Apostle’s preaching and mission.

The Authority of the “Sent Ones:”

The Apostles’ authority is predicated on their presenting a faithful representation of the message given by Jesus himself. “The [sent ones] (*shaliachim*) had the duty of carrying out a mission precisely, as emissaries on behalf of another. The Greek verb *apostello* translates the Hebrew *shalach* (to send). The Hebrew (*shaliach*) is the directly authorized agent of another, assigned to a specific task, authorized to engage in a special service or mission (Mark 3:14; 6:7; 11:11; Matt. 10:1–5; 11:1).”¹⁰

They have been authorized to say what Jesus said and to do what Jesus did. This pattern is extended beyond the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ through the explicit words of commissioning given prior to the Ascension:

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” (Mt 28:18-20)

The general commissioning found in Mt 28 is anticipated by Jesus’ commissioning of St. Peter in Mt 16.

“I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Mt 16:18-19)

The full implications of this text have been much debated but for our purposes we primarily want to note that Jesus extends to St Peter an apostolic authority to make binding decisions in his name. From this text we might make at least three preliminary observations:

1) Jesus obviously is establishing a new community of the people of God, the Church. In whatever way we understand the details and founding of this Church, Jesus is creating a new community. While the Christian faith is very *personal* it is not *private*, Jesus is creating a new people of God, the Church.

⁹ In St Luke’s account he notes that Jesus “named apostles,” “Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles...” (Lk 6:12-13)

¹⁰ Oden, *Life in the Spirit: Systematic Theology*, vol 3. p 351.

2) Jesus declares that “*Simon bar Jona*” (Σίμων Βαριωνᾶ, Mt 16:17) is to be the “*Rock*.” “*Peter, and on this rock I will build My church,*” (Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν). Jesus says that St Peter is to be the “rock” upon which the Church will be built, he will be the first apostolic foundation stone upon which the Church will be built. St Paul says that the Church has been “*built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,*” (Eph 2:20). Using this analogy, of the “first foundation stone” St Peter is given a preeminent role, as confessor of Jesus as Messiah, Son of God and as the “rock” upon which the Church is founded. In Matthew St Peter is given the “*keys of the kingdom of heaven,*” with the authority to bind on earth what has been bound in heaven. This authority is later given to the other Apostles as well in John 20:20-23, but it is given to St Peter first. Further, in the resurrection appearance to the disciples on the beach in Jn 20:15-23, St Peter is re-instated as the one who is to “feed my sheep” after his three denials. To be the shepherd of the flock (cf. 1 Pet 5:1-2).

The Roman Church uses this text to assert that Mt 16:16-19 establishes the primacy of the Roman See. Yet, other Sacramental Churches, (e.g. Anglican, Orthodox), while not denying that St Peter is a “first among equals” in status among the disciples and his successors, will insist that all the apostles received the power of “keys.” St Cyprian,¹¹ makes it clear that the early consensus was that the ministry of the “keys of the kingdom” is held not only by Rome but by the bishops in every locale. Saint Gregory of Nyssa affirms that Christ “through Peter gave to the bishops the keys of the heavenly honors.”¹²

3) Finally, the “rock” upon which the Church would be built was the faith & the confession of St Peter that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Christ Himself, who is the Truth, is the One upon whom the Church is built.

It is crucial to see all three of these dimensions as complementary to understanding the nature of the “rock” upon which Jesus is building his Church. It would be hoped that these three facets of interpretation would not be understood as in conflict with one another, in spite of the differing interpretive arguments. We think they might actually be complementary because we do not set faith in opposition to a person who is maintaining the faith.

- In this passage the Spirit of God reveals the truth to St Peter. “*Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.*”
- St Peter is, in turn, given the authority by Christ to establish a community, the Church. “*And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*” (Mt 16:19)
- St Peter is instructed to maintain and live in that truth through exercising his power to bind and loose. “*And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*” (Mt 16:19)

It is through this community the Church—consisting of persons filled with the Spirit of God—that Christ will be known in His fullness. Thus, both St Peter’s confession and Peter himself as the first confessor are the “rock” upon which the Church is built. As John Meyendorff writes, “it belongs to the essence of early Christian ecclesiology to consider any local bishop to be the teacher of his flock and therefore to fulfil sacramentally, through the apostolic succession, the office of the first true believer, Peter.”¹³

¹¹ See especially his treatise, *On the Unity of the Catholic Church in Ancient Christian Writers*, no. 25. Paulist Press, 1957.

¹² *De Castigatione*, MPG. J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca*, XLVII, 312, cited in Meyendorff, ed. *The Primacy of Peter*. Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1992, p 71.

¹³ Meyendorff, *The Primacy of Peter*, p 71.

The ICCEC affirms the above description of both the collegiality and consensual understanding of Apostolic Succession.

The Collegiality of the Apostles: ¹⁴

The role of an apostle, following the Ascension will include the command and responsibility to govern the Church as a representative of Christ. The historic episcopate is founded on the assumption that this office of leading/governing is to be extended throughout the life and history of the Church.

It is significant that even within the experience of the New Testament Church, a person called to be an Apostle, in this case, St Paul, “as by one born out of due time” (1 Cor 15:8) was willing to submit his message to the authority of the other Apostles to ensure that it was faithful to the teaching of Christ.

“Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain....On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles), and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.” (Gal 2:1-2, 7-10)

In his role as a missionary to the Gentiles,¹⁵ St Paul would, himself, commission his co-workers to ordain presbyters and bishops (the two roles were not yet fully distinguished in the NT) who could themselves act as representatives of Christ.

“You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.” (2 Tim 2:12)

“For this reason, I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking and appoint elders [πρεσβύτερος] in every city as I commanded you.” (Tit 1:5).

While the term “apostle” is not reserved exclusively to the Twelve, they along with the Apostle Paul (in spite of many challenges to the contrary) are held in a unique place in the NT. For example, others referred to as “apostles” are: Barnabas (1 Cor 9:5, 6), Junias and Andronicus (Rom 16:7) and Apollos (1 Cor 4:6, 9).

The Setting Apart the “Sent Ones:”

From the beginning the “laying on of hands” is the means by which those in the episcopate were ordained (1 Tim 4:14) and could even serve as a short-hand description of a person who was part of the succession of the apostles. So, for example, St Paul warns Timothy to not be hasty in extending this authority. “Do

¹⁴ E.g. At the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 St James is obviously the leader of the council (not St Peter), but St Peter is appealing for the inclusion of the Gentiles into the early Church, he appeals to the Council based on collegiality and consensus of St James and the Elders not on the basis of a supreme leadership role among the Apostles. Then, according to the leading of the Holy Spirit, the council comes to a resolution. The decision is made under the guidance of the Holy Spirit at work in St James, the Elders and St Peter for the common good of the whole Church, not based on a unique role of St Peter. This is “collegiality and consensus” demonstrated.

¹⁵ Rom 15:15-16.

not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others; keep yourself pure.” (1 Tim 5:22) “The received means of passing on or devolution of intergenerational ministry is by the laying on of hands with prayer by the power of the Spirit. The *episkopoi*, by which the grace of this succession is ordinarily maintained, ordered, directed, and symbolized, is not independent of or external to the body of Christ, but an expression of the body of Christ.”¹⁶

The Witness of the Church Fathers:

“The fact of the succession of the ministry from apostles, and of the apostles from Christ, was strongly emphasized by Clement of Rome before the end of the 1st cent.; and the necessity of it has been very widely taught within the historic Church....”¹⁷

St Clement (ca. AD 35-99); is one of the earliest examples of the importance for Apostolic Succession:

“Our Apostles likewise knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that there would be strife over the bishop’s office (ἐπισκοπή). For this reason, therefore, having received complete foreknowledge, they appointed the officials mentioned earlier and afterwards they gave the offices a permanent character; that is, if they should die, other approved men should succeed to their ministry. Those, therefore, who were appointed by them or, later on, by other reputable men with the consent of the whole church, and who have ministered to the flock of Christ blamelessly, humbly, peaceably, and unselfishly, and for a long time have been well spoken of by all—these men we consider to be unjustly removed from their ministry. For it will be no small sin for us, if we depose from the bishop’s office those who have offered the gifts blamelessly and in holiness. Blessed are those presbyters (πρεσβύτεροι) who have gone on ahead, who took their departure at a mature and fruitful age, for they need no longer fear that someone might remove them from their established place. For we see that you have removed certain people, their good conduct notwithstanding, from the ministry which had been held in honor by them blamelessly.” ca. AD 96, *1 Clement* 44:1-6¹⁸

St Ignatius of Antioch (ca. AD 35-110); is the first primary witness to the three-fold ministry of Bishop, Priest and Deacon and a major voice for apostolic succession. He sets forth the importance of the Bishop and the Episcopate generally as a fundamental source of unity for the Church.

“Flee from divisions, as the beginning of evils. You must all follow the bishop (ἐπίσκοπος), as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and follow the presbytery (πρεσβυτερίῳ) as you would the apostles; respect the deacons (διακόνους) as the commandment of God. Let no one do anything that has to do with the church without the bishop. Only that Eucharist which is under the authority of the bishop (or whomever he himself designates) is to be considered valid. Wherever ever the bishop appears, there let the congregation be; just as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic church. It is not permissible either to baptize or to hold a love feast without the bishop. But whatever he approves is also pleasing to God, in order that everything you do may be trustworthy and valid.” ca. AD 110, *Smyrnaeans* 8:1-2

St Irenaeus (ca. AD 130-200/2) informs us that the succession of presbyters and bishops comes from the Apostles and that we should be wary of anyone who departs from that succession. “He concluded that *episkopos* is so intrinsic to *ekklēsia*, and *ekklēsia* to *episkopos*, that if anyone should disjoin from apostolic oversight, he or she thereby would elect to disavow the *ekklēsia*”¹⁹

“It is necessary to obey the presbyters who are in the church—those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the apostles. For those presbyters, together with the succession of the bishops,

¹⁶ Oden, *Life in the Spirit: Systematic Theology*. Vol 3, p 359.

¹⁷ *Oxford Dictionary*, p 91.

¹⁸ Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, pp 77-79

¹⁹ Oden, *Systematic Theology*, Vol 3, p 358.

have received the certain gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father. But we should hold in suspicion others who depart from the primitive succession and assemble themselves together in any place whatsoever.” *ca.* 180, *Against Heresies*, Bk 4, Ch 26.2

St Hippolytus (*ca.* AD 170 martyred 235), a disciple of St Irenaeus, emphasizes that those in Apostolic Succession are guardians of the Church’s faith.

“No one will refute these [heretics] except the Holy Spirit bequeathed unto the church, which the Apostles—having received in the first instance—have transmitted to those who have rightly believed. But we, as being their successors and as participators in this grace, high priesthood, and office of teaching—as well as being reputed guardians of the church—must not be found deficient in vigilance. Nor should we be disposed to suppress correct teaching.” *ca.* 225, *Refutation of All Heresies*, 5.10.

St. Cyprian (*ca.* 200-258) declares that a Bishop cannot spring up from himself but must be part of a line of succession.

"He cannot be reckoned as a bishop who succeeds no one. For he has despised the evangelical and Apostolic traditions, springing from himself. For he who has not been ordained in the Church can neither have nor hold to the Church in any way.... How can he be esteemed a pastor, who succeeds to no one, but begins from himself? For the true shepherd remains and presides over the church of God by successive ordination. Therefore, the other one becomes a stranger and a profane person, an enemy of the Lord's peace." *ca.* AD 250, *Letter to Magnus* (Epistle 75, paragraph 3) *To Magnus, on Baptizing the Novatians, and Those Who Obtain Grace on a sick Bed.*

St. Augustine (*ca.* AD 354-430) finally, testifies that the certainty of Apostolic Succession is one of the truths that keeps him in the Catholic Church.

“The succession of priests keeps me [in the Catholic Church], beginning from the very seat of the Apostle Peter, to whom the Lord, after His resurrection, gave it in charge to feed His sheep, down to the present episcopate.” *ca.* 398, *Against the Epistle of Manichaeus Called Fundamental* Ch 4.

Summary Statement: The Important Implications of Apostolic Succession:

A summary of Apostolic Succession may be described as Three Streams coming together to make one river including: Apostolic Faith/Doctrine (the Evangelical Stream); Apostolic Authority (the Liturgical/Sacramental Stream) and Apostolic Anointing (the Charismatic Stream). Using these categories, we note that the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey summarized the essential elements of Apostolic Succession as including:²⁰

1) “First of all, the succession of Bishop to Bishop in office secured a continuity of Christian teaching and tradition in every See. Each followed the teachings of his predecessor, and so the succession of Bishops was a guarantee that everywhere the Christians were taught the true Gospel of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Having no such succession, the Gnostics had no claim to be the authorized teachers of the faith....

²⁰ Archbishop Ramsey’s summation of Apostolic Succession reflects an attempt to understand this doctrine in an Anglican context that is expressed in the Lambeth Resolution of 1888, often referred to as the Lambeth Quadrilateral. The ICCEC recognized the importance of the Quadrilateral as professing the necessary tenets of the Faith in our founding document, the *Declaration of the First Synod of the Charismatic Episcopal Church of North America* (June 26, 1992). A modified version of the Quadrilateral served as the basis of The San Clemente Declaration of 1999. Cf. *ICCEC Constitution and Canons* pp 7 and 9.

Thus the succession of Bishops is a safeguard of continuous teaching....”²¹ This coincides with *Apostolic Faith/Doctrine: the Evangelical Stream of the ICCEC*.

2) “The Bishops also succeeded the Apostles in the sense that they performed those functions, of preaching and ruling and ordaining, which the Apostles had performed. It is in this sense that the actual word ‘successors’ (*diadochoi*) was first applied to the Bishops²² and we have seen that they plainly succeed the Apostles in relation to the Gospel and the Body. The Bishops’ comment, “place as celebrant in the Eucharist, interceding for his flock and family, sums up this whole relationship.”²³ This coincides with *Apostolic Authority: the Sacramental/Liturgical Stream of the ICCEC*.

3) “The phrase ‘Apostolic succession’ is also used to signify that grace is handed down from the Apostles through each generation of Bishops by the laying on of hands.”²⁴ This coincides with *Apostolic Anointing: the Charismatic Stream of the ICCEC*.

Historically, these three elements have sometimes been separated or one emphasized over the others. As a convergence movement the ICCEC understands all three elements as vital to Apostolic Succession: Apostolic Faith/Doctrine, Apostolic Authority and Apostolic Anointing. Therefore, in the context of the ICCEC these three essentials of the historic episcopate can be understood as follows.

Bishops Teach and Defend the Apostolic Faith, Authority, and Anointing: The Apostolic Faith which our Bishops and their representatives are called to embody and defend is expressed in the following ICCEC statement of belief: “The ICCEC stands squarely on the historic, undisputed teachings of orthodox Christianity as taught by Jesus, spread by the Apostles, defended by the Patriarchs of the Early Church, expressed in the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds, and exemplified by the undivided Catholic Church during the first millennium of its existence.”²⁵

Bishops “speak the truth to the children of God. They are fathers who guide, guard and govern the people of God to bring the Gospel to them and to help them walk out their gifting and release them into the destiny God has provided for them.”²⁶

Bishops Exercise Apostolic Authority: The Bishops of the ICCEC:

- Govern – “He along with his brother Bishops, and with the assistance of the priests (presbyters) governs the Church.”²⁷
- Ordain – “The outward sign of Holy Orders in the case of deacons and priests is the laying on of hands by a Bishop.”²⁸
- Guard – He “is given the grace to make visible the shepherd’s heart of Christ. He does this in the care, protection and safety of the flock.”²⁹
- Preach and Teach – “They speak the truth to the children of God.”³⁰

²¹ Arthur Michael Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*. 2nd Ed. Longmans, London, 1955. p 81. Now re-published by Hendrickson Publishers; Reissue edition, 2009. The page references are from the original 1955 edition.

²² Here Ramsey refers to Hippolytus, unfortunately without a specific reference.

²³ Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*. p 81.

²⁴ Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*. p 82.

²⁵ CEC North America website, “Our Beliefs,” <https://www.cec-na.org/about-us/our-beliefs/#1485881660696-f5099dc4-a190>

²⁶ *ICCEC Constitution and Canons* (2014) pp 5-6.

²⁷ *ICCEC Catechism*, Q-201.

²⁸ *ICCEC Catechism*, Q-196.

²⁹ *ICCEC Catechism*, Q-201.

³⁰ *ICCEC Constitution and Canons*, p 6.

- Celebrate the Eucharist – The Bishop makes visible the reality that “[w]e live a Eucharistic life. Our life together is founded upon celebrating the Eucharist, where we are made one body in Christ, who gave Himself sacrificially for the life of the world.”³¹

In all these things, the Bishops do for our churches what the Apostles did for the New Testament churches.

Bishops Impart Apostolic Anointing: In the ICCEC we believe that the consecration of a Bishop through “the laying on of hands by at least three Bishops in historic and Apostolic succession”³² confers sacramental grace to empower the Bishop to fulfill the calling God has given him. This grace extends to each area of responsibility as noted in the ICCEC Catechism.

Q-201. What is the inward grace given to a bishop?

A. A bishop is a man who is called and chosen by God and his Church and is given the grace to make visible the shepherd’s heart of Christ. He does this in the care, protection and safety of the flock. He receives the grace to father the church and his men in Holy Orders. He is empowered to defend the faith from all heresy, error and schism. He along with his brother bishops, and with the assistance of the priests (presbyters) governs the Church. A Bishop stands in Apostolic succession to the first Apostles who were called and chosen by Christ for the mission of the Kingdom. I Timothy 3:1-7. Acts 20:28. Hebrews 12:15. I Peter 5:2.

Conclusion:

The ICCEC affirms, embraces and believes that it participates in the Apostolic Succession of the Historic Church.³³ The ICCEC Catechism asks the question, “What does it mean that the Church is “Apostolic”?” The answer: “The Church is Apostolic because Christ deposited the truth of the Gospel to the Apostles who throughout history have passed that truth to men who are in Apostolic Succession to those same Apostles both in faith and order. Christ sends the Church into the world to preach the good news of Christ.”³⁴ Thus, both St Peter’s confession and Peter himself as the first confessor are the “rock” upon which the Church is built.³⁵ It is also the firm conviction of the ICCEC, along with other historic Churches, that when Jesus affirmed St Peter’s confession and gave him the “keys of the Kingdom” Jesus was also giving the “keys of the Kingdom” to all the Apostles.³⁶

Finally, as a convergence communion the ICCEC would summarize the Apostolic Succession to include: Apostolic Authority, Apostolic Doctrine/Faith and Apostolic Anointing. 1) The Apostolic Faith/Doctrine is to continue the faithful teaching and witness of the first Apostles, in all its fulness, as embodied in Sacred Scriptures and as it is later faithfully witnessed to the tradition of the Church. 2) The Apostolic Authority is the delegated authority of Jesus Christ to the Church, as the Chief Apostle, to faithfully proclaim the Gospel, to administer his Holy Sacraments and to govern, give order to the flock of God.³⁷ 3) The Apostolic Anointing is the gift of the Holy Spirit and his empowerment promised to the Apostles and the Church, as St Peter said, “the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off....”³⁸ This Apostolic Anointing is imparted to the ICCEC as a part of the Church Catholic to fulfill the mission and ministry to which it has been called and sent.

³¹ ICCEC Constitution and Canons, p 6.

³² ICCEC Catechism, Q-196.

³³ See further Appendix 1: ICCEC Apostolic Heritage.

³⁴ ICCEC Catechism, Q-165.

³⁵ Mt 16:16-19.

³⁶ Jn 20:20-23.

³⁷ I Pet 5:1-4.

³⁸ Act 2:39.

