One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church

References:

Catechism of the Catholic Church
This is Our Faith
The Bible
The Creed – B. L. Marthaler
New American Bible
Nicene Creed

• I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

• I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

• I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

• I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

• Amen.
What Are The 4 “marks” of the Church

One
Holy
Catholic
Apostolic

Unity
Holiness
Universal
Hierarchal

Not only endowments given to the church by the Holy Spirit, but also tasks that challenge the church on every level – from the Church Universal to St. Joan of Arc to each of us.
So if those four adjectives are the “Marks of the Church”, then what exactly is the noun, “Church”?

• The Church is all of us, everyone that believes, the faithful. There are three categories of the faithful
  o The Hierarchy – The pope, the College of Bishops, The Priests, etc.
  o The Laity – You and I. We are called to engage in the affairs of the world and to direct our affairs according to God’s Will.
  o The Consecrated – Those that have entered into religious orders (Franciscans, Jesuits, Poor Claire's, etc.)
ONE

• Unity
• There is a unity in the Trinity.
• Unity implies both oneness and diversity. We make up one body of Christ, or stated another way, one Church. Christ preached to all and sent his apostles to preach to the Jew and Gentile and “all the nations of the earth”. Thus pointing to acceptance and necessity of diversity.

• John 17:20-23
• The Creed professes One Faith – This singular Faith is traceable to the Apostles.
ONE

• We humans have throughout history wounded the Unity of our Faith. Specifically we have wounded it through:
  o Heresy – Denial of essential truths.
  o Apostasy – Abandonment of Faith – Rejection of Christian belief, or stated more bluntly a rejection of belief in Christ himself.
  o Schism – Rifts in Unity. Schism is distinguished from that of heresy, since the offence of schism concerns not differences of belief or doctrine but promotion of, or the state of, division.

• CCC 817
ONE

• The “...Holy objective – the reconciliation of all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ – transcends human powers and gifts. That is why we place all our hope in the prayer of Christ for the Church, in the love of the Father for us, and in the power of the Holy Spirit.” CCC 822

• “The importance of...ecumenical efforts cannot be overemphasized, for the unity of the church grounds the other marks, and in the concrete the four marks of the church cannot be isolated from one another.”
Holy

• Definition of Holy (Dictionary.com)
  1. specially recognized as or declared sacred by religious use or authority; consecrated: holy ground.
  2. dedicated or devoted to the service of God, the church, or religion: a holy man.
  3. saintly; godly; pious; devout: a holy life.
  4. having a spiritually pure quality: a holy love.
  5. entitled to worship or veneration as or as if sacred: a holy relic

• Definition of Holy from CCC 823
  “The Church ...is held, as a matter of faith, to be unfailingly holy. This is because Christ, the Son of God who with the Father and Spirit is hailed as ‘alone holy,’ loved the Church as his Bride, giving himself as his body and endowed her with the gift of the Holy Spirit for the glory of God.” The Church, then is “the holy People of God,” and her members are called “saints.”
“We do not claim that the church is HOLY because it’s members, collectively and individually, are holy, sinless people. The church’s holiness is the expression of divine love that will not allow itself to be defeated by human willfulness and weakness. God’s covenant is not a contractual arrangement that ceases when humans sin; God’s grace abides despite everything.” – Joseph Ratzinger
catholic

• Greek = *kath’ holou* = “on the whole”
  – Also, “universal” - catholic

• It extends over all the world...teaches universally...one and all the doctrines which ought to come to man’s knowledge....brings into subjection to godliness the whole race of mankind...universally treats and heals the whole class of sins...in in every kind of spiritual gifts.” – St. Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 350)
catholic

• “Where the bishop appears, there let the people be, just as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.” St. Ignatius of Antioch (martyred ~ 108 AD)

• I am writing to all the Churches and I enjoin all, that I am dying willingly for God's sake, if only you do not prevent it. I beg you, do not do me an untimely kindness. Allow me to be eaten by the beasts, which are my way of reaching to God. I am God's wheat, and I am to be ground by the teeth of wild beasts, so that I may become the pure bread of Christ. — Letter to the Romans
Another way we the Church express the universality of the Church is by continually celebrating the Eucharist. Similar to the old expression that the Sun never set on the British Empire... Somewhere in the world, Mass is being celebrated every moment of every day. All different races, all different languages, all different countries there is a Mass being celebrated.

—universally catholic
“Love to Christ is to love Christ’s members everywhere”
Apostolic

- Ephesians 2:19-22 “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone”
- Acts 1:8 – Matthew 28:18-20 witnesses to the ends of the earth
- Continuity in Church’s teachings from the Apostles throughout the remainder of History.
- Continuity in Apostolic Succession from Christ to Peter, the Rock, through all the Popes.
- Implies “Indefectibility” – God’s providence is stronger than our will to sinfulness and outside influences
Apostolic

As witnesses -

• “The apostolic witness parallels and mediates the witness of the Paraclete (Holy Spirit)” CCC 692

• Apostolic witness always directed forward in time – testifying to the origins of Christianity, yes, but also an eschatological character of apostolicity.

• Eschatology – relating to last things, time; the end of the world; the recapitulation of all in God.

• What was, what is, what is to come – Genesis through Revelation
Apostolic

• Peter and the Petrine Office
  – St. Ambrose (4th century) “Ubi Petrus, ibi ecclesia” “where Peter is, there is the church”
  – St. Augustine “Roma locuta, causa finita” “Rome has spoken, the matter is decided”

• The Holy Spirit is present to the church so that when the Christian community is called on to confess, affirm, and explain the faith that has come down from the apostles, “it can do so in a confident, and we have to say ‘infallible’ way” – Yves Congar – French Dominican Cardinal – Ecumenism – Influenced John Paul II
Apostolic

– Infallibility of the Pope - Much controversy!! But in truth, very restricted and very rare.

– “Infallibility” – affirmed to be a prerogative of the office of the bishop of Rome, successor of Peter, since the First Vatican Council (1870)

– The Pope can only speak infallibly when he teaches ex cathedra, or, “from the chair of Peter”. This only happens on matters pertaining to faith or morals and on which much (years) study and prayer has occurred first.
• “The church is indeed an object of faith, but not in the same way that God is the object of faith. In commenting on this phrase, medieval theologians carefully explained that we believe in the Holy Spirit, not only *in se*, but as the one who makes the church one, holy, catholic and apostolic. The existence of the church in itself is not a matter of faith...the church [is] a social group set up of people who profess to be Christians. But the church as mystery eludes reason and is beyond empirical study; because of its origins, nature, and destiny the church demands faith.”
• Finally ...

“Unity, ...cannot be isolated from catholicity, and catholicity implies apostolicity. Apostolicity, in turn, includes holiness in that it represents the continuity of a mission and a communion that begins in God.”

Closing Prayer: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3a, 14-17