

Models for Cheon Il Guk: Catholicism

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The Vatican governs a global institution comprising 1.2 billion people. What is its model of governance?

At the center of church life and governance is the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit guides each member's path of life to God through the sacramental system that imparts grace upon birth (baptism), growth (confirmation), correction (penance), reconciliation and reunion (communion), marriage, becoming a parent (ordination) and the end of life (final unction).

God's government thus does not depend upon human righteousness, but on God working through faithful practice of this simple system.

The sacrament of marriage does not release Satan's grip on sexual love. Priestly exorcism is necessary to release each baby from original sin in preparation for baptism, by which babies are reborn, adopted into God's family. For this reason, "citizenship in the City of God is determined at the individual and not the institutional level." God's ownership is of individuals alone, not of the institutions of marriage and family, nor of the larger institutions that these create. The Church embodies sibling love and symbolizes the other three family loves.

In terms of structure, the family participates in a local community (parish) headed by a priest. Parishes unite into diocese headed by a bishop, and diocese unite into larger assemblages up to the world level. The "charism," the God's grace in the Holy Spirit, passes through the filial connection from believer to priest, priest to bishop, and bishop to a hierarchy, finally to the Pope, the Vicar of Christ.

Celibate priests and nuns -- brothers and sisters -- assume the position of parents in the church family. Entry into the priesthood is voluntary but demanding of study, service, self-discipline and approval by superiors, who stand in the position of parent. All priestly positions are granted by appointment.

The Church possesses the image of the four family loves, but in substance, all are siblings.

And no one is sure who is really saved. But Catholics assume at least some are, so the true Church is invisible.

We can ask, in terms of governance, what difference would the Holy Marriage Blessing make? As we see this to be an immediate and practical question, we may learn from the Holy See's stewardship of God's vision, so sacrificially sustained.

(Citations: Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, www.iep.utm.edu/aug-poso/ – SH2a.)