

Journey OF Faith

Who Shepherds the Church?

"Why'd we have two priests at Mass today?" asked Tanya.

"I think one was a deacon, not a priest," answered Tomás. "Mrs. Evans said we might even have a bishop for our confirmation."

"But how will we know who's who?"





Do you know all the people who work in your church?

When you are baptized, you become a member of a family. Like any family, the Catholic Church has a lot of members. Every one of us has an important role and unique work to do. Jesus' work is to watch over the Church and to lead and guide all the members toward God.

Here are some members of the Church and the work they are called to do.

The Pope

Jesus chose twelve apostles to help him bring people to God. To one he said, "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). Peter worked with the other apostles to build the Christian Church around the world.

Peter's job is now done by his successor, the pope. The **pope** watches over and guides the Church in the world. Just like Peter worked with the apostles, the pope works with the bishops. The bishops are the successors of the other apostles.



Who is the pope now?



Q12

Bishops

A **bishop** is in charge of all the parishes in a city or area. This area is called a **diocese**. A large diocese is called an **archdiocese**.

If you live in an archdiocese, your bishop is called an **archbishop**. For really large dioceses, the bishop may have an **auxiliary bishop**. Auxiliary means "helper."



Sometimes the pope chooses a bishop to become a **cardinal**. It's the job of the cardinals to vote for a new pope.



What diocese or archdiocese are you in?

Who is the bishop of your diocese or archdiocese?

Priests

The bishops can't take care of many parishes and people alone. **Priests** help bishops at individual parishes. A priest who is in charge of his own parish is called a **pastor**. That word comes from the Latin word for "shepherd." So a pastor is like your shepherd in faith. Large parishes might have an **associate pastor** who helps the pastor.

Not all priests are in charge of a parish. Some travel to faraway lands to spread the word of God. Others teach in schools. Some priests work with the poor, and some priests care for the sick.





Who is the pastor of your parish?

Are there other priests who work in your parish? Who are they?



Do you know any sisters or brothers? Who are they?

Do you know the names of any religious orders?

Deacons

A **deacon** helps priests by reading the Gospel or giving the homily at Mass, helping with the poor and sick in the parish, and a lot of other things. Although a deacon's ministry is more limited than a priest's, some of the things a deacon can do are: preach at Mass, baptize, and preside at weddings.

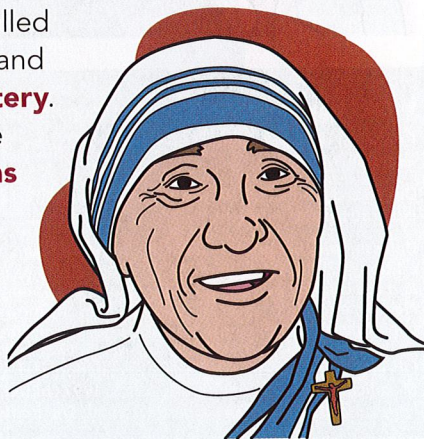


Who are the deacons in your parish?

Sisters and Brothers

Some people devote their lives to God in a special way by becoming part of a religious order. A **religious order** is a group of men or women who share a common mission (like preaching, teaching, praying, or serving the needy). They promise to always obey God and their community and to live simply without a lot of stuff.

Religious men are called **brothers** or **monks** and may live in a **monastery**. Religious women are called **sisters** or **nuns** and may live in a **convent**. Whether they live together or alone, they promise never to marry.



Laity

The largest part of the body of Christ is called the **laity**. The primary purpose of the laity is to bring Christ into their homes and workplaces. Ultimately, it is the job of the laity to work in transforming the world for Christ.

- **Lectors** proclaim the Bible readings from the *Lectionary* aloud at Mass.
- **Altar servers** assist the priest during Mass and other celebrations. They may carry a cross or a candle, hold the book of prayers, and even help prepare for Communion.
- **Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion:** They are named to administer the Eucharist after it has been "made sacred" by a priest or the person celebrating the Mass.
- **Music ministers** lead the singing and play instruments at Mass and other celebrations. A **cantor** is the lead singer.
- **Ushers** greet people before and after Mass, help them find a seat, and collect the offertory gifts. They might also assist with the Communion lines.



WHO'S WHO IN MY PARISH?

Draw a line to connect each person to the job the person does.

Person

Lector

Priest

Altar server

Deacon

Cantor

Usher

Eucharistic minister

Brother or Sister

Job

Helps people find a seat in church

The lead singer

Proclaims the readings

The shepherd of a parish

Helps the poor, teaches, or travels

Gives out Communion

Helps the priest at the altar

Reads the Gospel but doesn't offer Mass

In Short

- The Church was founded by Jesus Christ.
- The Church has official leaders.
- The pope shepherds the Church on earth.



Journey of Faith for Children, Inquiry, Q12 (826351)

The process by which adults are initiated into the Catholic faith throughout the United States is now called the OCIA—the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults. "Order" is a clearer translation of the Latin term for the process formerly known as the RCIA—the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. People preparing for baptism and reception into the Church celebrate several rites as part of the order to which those rites belong—an order whose mission is to journey in the faith. The US Conference of Catholic Bishops adopted the name change in 2021, with American dioceses introducing the name thereafter. For more information, please contact your local diocese.

Imprimi Potest: Stephen T. Rehauer, CSsR, Provincial, Denver Province, the Redemptorists.

Imprimatur: "In accordance with CIC 827, permission to publish has been granted on May 3, 2017, by Bishop Mark S. Rivituso, Vicar General, Archdiocese of St. Louis. Permission to publish is an indication that nothing contrary to Church teaching is contained in this work. It does not imply any endorsement of the opinions expressed in the publication, nor is any liability assumed by this permission."

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Printed in the United States of America. Third Edition.

