

## Catholic Glossary

### **Absolution**

Act by which a priest, acting as the agent of Christ, grants forgiveness of sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

### **Acolytes**

Ones who assist in the celebration (i.e., carrying candles, holding the Pope's staff, miter, etc.).

### **Adoration**

Refers to the external acts of reverent admiration or honor given to a thing or person.

### **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament**

Prayer to Christ, who is recognized as being truly present in the Sacrament. During Adoration, the Blessed Sacrament is displayed for the people.

### **Alb**

The white garment covering one's street clothes.

### **Alleluia Acclamation**

This acclamation of praise to God follows the second reading and prepares the assembly for the Gospel.

### **Altar**

A table on which the sacrifice of the Mass is offered to God. It is the center of importance in the place where the Mass is celebrated. Also called: "The Table of the Lord."

### **Amen**

Hebrew word meaning truly, it is true. As concluding word of prayers it expresses assent to and acceptance of God's will.

### **Apostle - Apostolic - Disciple**

Literally "one sent." Normally this refers to the 12 men chosen by Jesus to be the bearers of his teachings to the world. The term "apostolic" generally refers back to the 12 apostles. In the Church it characterizes certain documents, appointments or structures initiated by the Pope or the Holy See. The term "disciple" refers to one who follows the teachings of Jesus.

### **Apostolate**

The ministry or work of an apostle. In Catholic usage, a term covering all kinds and areas of work and endeavor for the service of God and the Church and the good of people.

### **Apostolic Nunciature**

The offices of the Holy Father's representative to a country or to the Church in that country.

### **Archbishop**

Title given automatically to bishops who govern archdioceses.

### **Archdiocese**

The chief diocese of an ecclesiastical province.

### **Aspergillum**

A vessel or device used for sprinkling holy water during special blessings. The ordinary type is a metallic rod with a bulbous tip which absorbs the holy water and discharges it at the motion of the user's hand.

### **Assembly**

Those present to celebrate the liturgy. Other terms: to use: "The Community," "The Church (as people not building)," "The Worshippers," "The Faithful," or "the congregation." Avoid: Spectators, Crowd, Audience—all passive words which do not reflect what those present at Mass do. NOTE: It is the entire assembly (ordained and nonordained) that celebrates the liturgy of the Mass, therefore avoid: The Pope's Mass, The Bishop's Mass, His Mass, etc.—all terms which would give the impression that it is only the Pope or clergy who celebrate Mass.

### **Auxiliary Bishop**

A bishop assigned to a Catholic diocese or archdiocese, to assist a residential bishop.

### **Basilica**

A church to which special privileges are attached. It is a title of honor given to various kinds of churches.

### **Beatification**

Final step toward canonization of a saint.

### **Bishop**

The chief priest of a diocese. Bishops are responsible for the pastoral care of their dioceses. In addition, bishops have a responsibility to act in council with other bishops to guide the Church.

**Blessed Sacrament**

The Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ, whether at the Mass or reserved in a special place in the Church.

**Book of Gospels**

The book which contains the Gospel texts, from which the priest or deacon proclaims the Gospel of the day.

**Bread and Wine**

The elements used in the celebration of Eucharist (unleavened bread and natural pure wine). NOTE: After the Eucharistic Prayer the bread and wine is referred to as: "the consecrated bread and wine" or "the Body and Blood of Christ." Catholics do not believe that the bread and wine are mere symbols; they believe the bread and wine actually become the Body and Blood of Christ.

**Breaking of the Bread**

The celebrant recreates gestures of Christ at the Last Supper when He broke the bread to give to His disciples. The action signifies that in communion the many are made one in the one Bread of Life which is Christ.

**Brother**

A man who is a member of a religious order, but is not ordained or studying for the priesthood.

**Cana Conference**

A Catholic family movement, originally designed to aid married couples and families in their spiritual and interpersonal relationships. The program is now divided into Pre-Cana, for couples engaged to be married, and Cana Conferences, programs for married people.

**Canon**

Greek for rule, norm, standard, measure. Designates the Canon of Sacred Scripture, the list of books recognized by the Church as inspired by the Holy Spirit.

**Canon Law**

Canon Law, Code of - The collection of laws (canons) governing administration of the Roman Catholic Church. All aspects of Church life are addressed in the Code, including its administrative structure, the sacraments, and the teaching office of the Church, among others.

**Canonization**

A declaration by the Pope that a person who died a martyr or practiced Christian virtue to a heroic degree is in heaven and is worthy of honor and imitation by the faithful. Verification of miracles is required for canonization (except for martyrs).

**Cantor**

One who leads the singing during the liturgy (i.e., the responsorial psalm).

**Cardinal**

Cardinals are appointed by the Pope and constitute the senate of the Church. They aid the Pope as his chief counselors.

**Cassock**

A non-liturgical, full-length, close-fitting robe for use by priests and other clerics under liturgical vestments; usually black for priests, purple for bishops and other prelates, red for cardinals, and white for the Pope.

**Catechesis**

Religious instruction and formation for persons preparing for baptism (catechumens) and for the faithful in various stages of spiritual development.

**Catechetical**

Referring to catechesis.

**Catechetics**

From the Greek meaning "to sound forth," it is the procedure for teaching religion.

**Cathedral**

The major church in an archdiocese or diocese. It is the seat of the local Ordinary (diocesan bishop, religious superior or other authority).

**Catholic**

Greek word for universal. First used in the title Catholic Church in a letter written by St. Ignatius of Antioch to the Christians of Smyrna about 107 A.D.

**Catholic Campaign for Human Development**

The US Catholic bishops' domestic anti-poverty program. Started in 1970, it is funded through an annual collection in Catholic parishes.

**Catholic Relief Services**

Overseas aid agency established by Catholics in the United States.

**Celebrant**

The one who presides at the celebration of the Eucharist.

**Celebrant's Chair**

The place where the celebrant sits during the Liturgy. It expresses his office of presiding over the assembly and of leading the prayer of those present.

**Celebrator**

Used only to describe a participant in a nonreligious celebration.

**Chalice**

The cup used to hold the wine that is consecrated to become the Blood of Christ.

**Chancellor**

The chief archivist of the official records of a diocese. Also a notary and secretary of the diocesan curia.

**Charism**

A spiritual gift given for the good of the Church to an individual or a group of people, especially in a religious community. Men and women religious reflect a specific aspect of the life of Jesus Christ and contribute to the building up of the Church through their charism. Examples: Christ the Preacher (Dominicans), Christ the Healer (brothers and sisters who serve in health care).

**Charisms**

Gifts or graces given by God to persons for the good of others and the Church.

**Chasuble**

The vestment worn over the alb by priests, bishops and Pope when celebrating the Mass.

**Chor bishop**

In the Maronite rite and the Greek Orthodox Church an auxiliary bishop may be called a chor bishop. When used in other Eastern Catholic rites it is an honorary term for a close assistant of a bishop, usually the equivalent of a vicar general.

**Christ**

The title of Jesus, derived from Greek translation Kyrios of the Hebrew term Messiah, meaning the Anointed of God.

**Church**

The universal Church that is spread throughout the world; the local Church is that of a particular locality, such as a diocese. The Church embraces all its members—on earth, in heaven and in purgatory.

**Ciborium**

A vessel used to hold the consecrated bread for the distribution of the Body of Christ during communion.

**Clergy**

Collective term referring to male persons who administer the rites of the Church through Holy Orders.

**Cloister**

Part of a convent or monastery reserved for use by members of the order that live in that facility.

**CMSWR**

Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious. Organization of major superiors approved by the Holy See for the purpose of assisting the individual institutes of the members, transacting common business, and fostering suitable coordination and cooperation with the conferences of bishops and also with individual bishops.

**College of Cardinals**

The College of Cardinals is made up of the cardinals of the Church, who advise the Pope, assist in the central administration of the Church, head the various curial offices and congregations, administer the Holy See during a vacancy, and elect a new Pope.

**College of Consultors**

A consultative group of priests, appointed to five-year terms by the Archbishop from among members of the Presbyteral Council, which fulfills various functions specified in the Code of Canon Law and assists the Archbishop as needed.

**Collegiality**

The shared responsibility and authority that the whole college of bishops, headed by the Pope, has for the teaching, sanctification and government of the Church.

**Communion Song**

The music that is used as the consecrated bread and wine – the Body and Blood of Christ – is distributed to the faithful.

**Concelebrants**

Those priests and bishops who join the Celebrant in celebrating the Mass.

**Concluding Rite**

The brief rite which consists of the celebrant's greeting to all present, final blessing and dismissal; followed by a concluding song and concluding procession.

**Conference of Major Superiors of Men**

(CMSM) Organization of major superiors representing communities of men religious in the United States.

**Confession**

Part of the sacrament of penance or reconciliation, not a term for the sacrament.

**Confirmation**

One of the three sacraments of initiation, along with Baptism and Eucharist.

**Consecration**

The prayer and blessing during which the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

**Contemplative**

A religious man or woman who devotes his/her entire life in the cloister to prayer and reflection.

**Convent**

In common usage, the term refers to a house of women religious.

**Crosier (pastoral staff)**

The staff which a bishop carries when he presides at the liturgy.

**Cross bearer**

The one who carries the cross in the procession (entrance and recessional).

**Cross/Crucifix**

An object is a crucifix only if it depicts Christ on a cross, otherwise it is a cross.

**Curia**

The people who assist the bishop in the administration of his diocese; sometimes called the cabinet.

**Dalmatic**

The vestment the deacon wears over the alb on solemn occasions.

**Deacon**

An ordained minister who assists the Celebrant during the Liturgy of the Word and at the altar for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

**Deacons/Diaconate**

The diaconate is the first order or grade in ordained ministry. Any man who is to be ordained to the priesthood must first be ordained as a transitional deacon. Deacons serve in the ministry of liturgy, of the word, and of charity. The Permanent Diaconate is for men who do not plan to become ordained priests. The program is open to both married and unmarried men.

**Dean/Vicar**

The title of a priest appointed by the bishop to aid him in administering the parishes in a certain vicinity, called a "deanery." The function of a dean involves promotion, coordination, and supervision of the common pastoral activity within the deanery or vicariate.

**Deaneries**

Deanery - A regional subdivision of the Archdiocese. The Archdiocese of St. Louis comprises 10 deaneries: North City and South City (comprising the City of St. Louis); Northeast County, Northwest County, Southeast County, and Southwest County (comprising St. Louis County); Ste. Genevieve (comprising Ste. Genevieve, St. Francois, and Perry counties); Festus (comprising Jefferson and Washington counties); Washington (comprising Franklin and Warren Counties); and St. Charles (comprising St. Charles and Lincoln counties).

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**Diaconate**

See Deacon/Diaconate definition above.

**Diocesan Curia**

The personnel and offices assisting the bishop in directing the pastoral activity, administration and exercise of judicial power of the diocese.

**Diocese**

A particular church; a fully organized ecclesiastical jurisdiction under the pastoral direction of a bishop as local Ordinary.

**Dispensation**

An exemption from Church law.

**Doxology**

The response of the people acclaiming the sovereignty of God.

**Eastern-Rite (Oriental) Church**

Term used to describe the Catholic churches which developed in Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa. They have their own distinctive liturgical and organizational systems. Each is considered equal to the Latin rite within the Church.

Ecclesial

Having to do with the Church in general or the life of the Church.

**Ecclesiastical**

Refers to official structures or legal and organizational aspects of the Church.

**Ecumenical**

A movement for spiritual understanding and unity among Christians and their churches. The term also is extended to apply to efforts toward greater understanding and cooperation between Christians and members of other faiths.

**Encyclical**

A pastoral letter addressed by the Pope to the whole Church.

**Entrance Procession**

Priest, deacon, altar servers, lectors, enter the church or designated place for celebration of the liturgy.

**Entrance Song/Music**

The song/music which takes place during the entrance procession.

**Episcopal**

Refers to a bishop or groups of bishops as a form of Church government, in which bishops have authority.

**Eschatology**

Doctrine concerning the last things: death, judgment, heaven and hell, and the final state of perfection of the people and the kingdom of God at the end of the world.

**Eucharistic Prayer**

The prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification. It is the center and high point of the celebration. During the Eucharistic Prayer, the Church believes that the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

**Evangelical**

Refers to Christians who emphasize the need for a definite commitment to faith in Christ and a duty by believers to persuade others to accept Christ.

**Evangelist**

A preacher or revivalist who seeks conversions by preaching to groups.

**Evening Prayer**

Evening Prayer, most commonly known as Vespers, is the official prayer that marks the end of the day. It consists primarily of sung psalms and other readings from Scripture.

**Exarch/Exarchy**

A church jurisdiction, similar to a diocese, established for Eastern-rite Catholics living outside their native land. The head of an exarchy, usually a bishop, is an exarch.

**Excommunication**

A penalty of censure by which a baptized person is excluded from the communion of the faithful for committing and remaining obstinate in certain serious offenses specified in canon law. Even though excommunicated, that person still is responsible for fulfillment of the normal obligations of a Catholic.

**Focolare**

A lay movement started in Trent, Italy by Chiara Lubich in 1943, now claiming more than a million followers. Its aim is world unity through the living witness of Christian love and holiness in the family and in small communities.

**Free Will**

The faculty or capability of making a reasonable choice from among several alternatives.

**General Intercessions**

Prayer of intercession for all of humankind; for the Church, civil authorities, those with various needs, for all peoples, and for the salvation of the world. The celebrant invites all to pray, another minister proclaims the prayers of petition and the assembly responds by asking God to hear and to grant their requests.

**Gloria**

Ancient hymn of praise in which the Church glorifies God. It is used on all Sundays (outside of Advent and Lent), and at solemn celebrations. The text originates from the Christmas narrative in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 2:14).

**God**

The infinitely perfect Supreme Being, uncaused and absolutely self-sufficient, eternal, the Creator and final end of all things. The one God subsists in three equal Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**Grace**

A free gift from God to human beings, grace is a created sharing in the life of God. It is given through the merits of Christ and is communicated by the Holy Spirit. Grace is necessary for salvation.

**Greeting**

The celebrant greets all pre-sent at the liturgy, expressing the presence of the Lord to the assembled community.

**Hermits**

Persons who live alone, devoting themselves to Christ and the Church through prayer and meditation.

**Hierarchy**

In general, the term refers to the ordered body of clergy, divided into bishops, priests, and deacons. In Catholic practice, the term refers to the bishops of the world or of a particular region.

**Holy Communion**

After saying a preparatory prayer, the celebrant (or other designated ministers) gives communion (the consecrated bread and wine) to himself and the other ministers at the altar, and then communion is distributed to the congregation.

**Holy See**

1) The diocese of the Pope, Rome. 2) The Pope himself or the various officials and bodies of the Church's central administration— the Roman Curia — which act in the name and by authority of the Pope.

**Homily**

The homily (sermon) is a reflection by the celebrant or other minister on the Scripture readings and on the application of the texts in the daily lives of the assembled community.

**Host, The Sacred**

The bread under whose appearance Christ is and remains present in a unique manner after the consecration of the Mass.

**IHS**

In Greek, the first three letters of the name of Jesus.

**Immaculate Conception**

Catholic dogma concerning Mary and the name of a feast in her honor celebrated Dec. 8. It refers to the belief that Mary was without sin from the moment she was conceived.

**Incense**

Incense (material used to produce a fragrant odor when burned) is used as a symbol of the Church's offering; the rising smoke represents the prayers of the assembly rising to God.

**Indulgence**

The remission before God of the temporal punishment due for sins already forgiven.

**Intercessions**

A series of prayers for the Church, the world, the Pope, clergy and laity, and the dead. Final Doxology A final prayer of praise of God.

**Intercommunion**

The agreement or practice of two Ecclesial communities by which each admits members of the other communion to its sacraments.

**Jesus**

The name of Jesus, meaning Savior in Christian usage, derived from the Aramaic and Hebrew Yeshua and Joshua, meaning Yahweh is salvation.

**Keys, Power of the**

Spiritual authority and jurisdiction in the Church, symbolized by the “keys” to the kingdom of heaven. Christ promised the keys to St. Peter and future heads of the Church.

**Knights of Columbus**

Fraternal organization for Catholic men. Knights of Columbus engage in religious and charitable projects in the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, Mexico, and the Philippines.

**Lamb of God (“Agnus Dei”)**

An invocation during the breaking of the bread in which the assembly petitions God for mercy and peace.

**Lay Ministries**

These are ministries within the Church that are carried out by laypersons. Included are altar servers, Eucharistic ministers and lectors.

**Layman, Woman, Person**

Any Church member who is neither ordained nor a member of a religious order. When the Second Vatican Council spoke of the laity, it used the term in this more common meaning.

**LCWR**

Leadership Conference of Women Religious. Organization of major superiors, who represent more than 90 percent of the active women religious in the United States.

**Lectern**

The place from which the Scriptures are proclaimed. Avoid: “pulpit.”

**Lectionary**

The book that contains all of the readings from the Scriptures that are used in the celebration of the liturgy.

**Liturgical Colors**

Colors used in vestments and altar coverings to denote special times in the Church year. Green is used in ordinary time, red denotes solemn feast days, purple denotes penitential times and white is used for joyful occasions including Christmas, Easter and some saints’ feast days.

**Liturgy**

The public prayer of the Church.

**Liturgy of the Eucharist**

The section of the celebration when the gifts of bread and wine are prepared and the Eucharistic Prayer is proclaimed by the celebrant, and the Blessed Sacrament is distributed to the assembly.

**Liturgy of the Hours**

This is the preferred term in the Latin rite for the official liturgical prayers sanctifying the parts of each day.

**Liturgy of the Word**

That section of the celebration where readings from the Scriptures are proclaimed and reflected upon. On Sundays and major feasts, there are three readings:

Old Testament selection

New Testament selection (from the Epistles)

The Gospel reading

**Lord’s Prayer (“Our Father...”)**

The prayer of petition for both daily food (which for Christians means also the Eucharistic bread) and the forgiveness of sins.

**Mary**

The central point of the theology of Mary is that she is the Mother of God. In traditions since apostolic times, the Church and the faithful have accorded to Mary the highest forms of veneration. She is celebrated in feasts throughout the year, and in devotions such as the rosary and litany and is hailed the patroness of many countries, including the United States.

**Mass**

The common name for the Eucharistic liturgy of the Catholic Church. Also referred to as Eucharist, Celebration of the Liturgy, Eucharistic celebration, Sacrifice of the Mass or Lord’s Supper. NOTE: Do not use: “Saying Mass” or “Performing Mass.” Instead use: “Celebrating Mass,” “Concelebrating Mass,” “Celebrating the Liturgy,” or “Celebrating the Eucharist” Note: The following terms are listed in their sequence of the Mass.

Entrance

Procession

Entrance Song/Music

Veneration of the Altar  
Greeting  
Penitential Rite  
Gloria  
Opening Prayer  
Liturgy of the Word  
Responsorial Psalm  
Alleluia Acclamation  
Homily  
Profession of Faith  
General Intercessions  
Liturgy of the Eucharist  
Blessed Sacrament  
Preparation of the Gifts  
Offertory Song  
Incense  
Washing of Hands  
Prayer Over the Gifts  
Eucharistic Prayer  
Preface Dialogue  
Consecration  
Intercessions  
Amen  
Lord 's Prayer ("Our Father...")  
Doxology  
Sign of Peace  
Breaking of the Bread  
Lamb of God ("Agnus Dei ")  
Holy Communion  
Communion Song  
Prayer After Communion  
Concluding Rite

**Master of Ceremonies**

One who assists in the preparation of the liturgy and is present to facilitate the movement of the entire celebration.

**Matrimony**

The Roman, Orthodox and Old Catholic churches consider matrimony a sacrament and refer to it as the Sacrament of Matrimony. This is a marriage contract between baptized persons.

**Metropolitan**

The archbishop of an archdiocese in a province. He has limited supervisory powers and influence over the other dioceses and bishops in the province.

**Military Ordinariate**

(Archdiocese for the Military Services, U.S.A.) Nonterritorial diocese for U.S. Catholics and their dependents who are in the military or affiliated with the armed forces.

**Minister**

From the Latin word for "servant," in the ecclesiastical sense a minister is (1) an ordained cleric or (2) one who has the authority to minister to others.

**Ministers of Communion**

Those who assist in the distribution of Communion; also called Eucharistic Ministers.

**Miracles, Apparitions**

Generally "miracle" is used to refer to physical phenomena that defy natural explanation, such as medically unexplainable cures. An apparition is a supernatural manifestation of God, an angel or a saint to an individual or a group of individuals.

**Mitre**

A headdress worn at some liturgical functions by bishops, abbots and, in certain cases, other clerics.

**Monastery**

An autonomous community house of a religious order, which may or may not be a monastic order. The term is used more specifically to refer to a community house of men or women religious in which they lead a contemplative life separate from the world.

**Monk - Friar**

A man who belongs to one of the monastic orders in the Church, such as Basilians, Benedictines, Cistercians and Carthusians.

**Monsignor**

An honorary ecclesiastical title granted by the Pope to some diocesan priests. In the United States, the title is given to the vicar general of a diocese. In Europe, the title also is given to bishops.

**National Conference of Catholic Bishops**

(NCCB) Episcopal conference of U.S. bishops. The membership is comprised of diocesan bishops and their auxiliary bishops. The conference decides matters of ecclesiastical law and issues policy statements on political and social issues. Newman Apostolate An apostolate to the Catholic college and university community, now commonly known as "campus ministry."

**Nun**

1) Strictly, a member of a religious order of women with solemn vows; 2) in general, all women religious, even those in simple vows who are more properly called sisters.

**Offertory Song**

Music used during the presentation of gifts to the celebrant and as the altar is prepared for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

**Opening Prayer**

This prayer by the celebrant expresses the general theme of the celebration.

**Opus Dei**

Literal translation: the work of the Lord. A personal prelature dedicated to spreading through society an awareness of the call to Christian virtue, awareness, and witness in one's life and work. Members are not of a religious order, do not take vows, but sometimes live in community.

**Ordain - Ordination**

The proper terms in Catholic usage for references to the conferral of the sacrament of Holy Orders on a deacon, priest or bishop.

**Order, Congregation, Society**

A religious order is the title loosely applied to all religious groups of men and women. A society is a body of clerics, regular or secular, organized for the purpose of performing an apostolic work. A congregation is any group bound together by common rules.

**Ordinary**

Diocesan bishops, religious superiors, and certain other diocesan authorities with jurisdiction over the clergy in a specific geographical area, or the members of a religious order.

**Pallium**

Special stole made of lamb's wool worn over the chasuble by the Pope and archbishops; it signifies communion of archbishops with the Holy See.

**Papal Infallibility**

The end result of divine assistance given to the Pope through which he is prevented from the possibility and liability of error in teachings involving Church dogma and articles of faith.

**Papal Representatives**

The three types of representatives of the Roman Pontiff are:

1) Legate - An individual appointed by the Pope to be his personal representative to a nation, international conference, or local church. The legate may be chosen from the local clergy of a country.

2) Apostolic Nuncio - In the United States, the papal representative is sent by the Pope to both the local church and the government. His title is Nuncio. Although he holds the title of ambassador, under U.S. law he is not accorded the special privilege of being the dean of the diplomatic corps. In countries where he is dean of the diplomatic corps, his title is Apostolic Nuncio.

3) Permanent Observer to the United Nations - The Apostolic See maintains permanent legates below the ambassadorial

level to several world organizations. Since the Papal Legate does not enjoy the right to vote within the organization, his title at the United Nations is that of Observer.

**Parish**

A specific community of the Christian Faithful within a diocese, which has its own church building and is under the authority of a pastor who is responsible for providing the faithful with ministerial service. Most parishes are formed on a geographic basis, but they may be formed along national or ethnic lines.

**Parish Coordinator**

A deacon, religious, or lay person who is responsible for the pastoral care of a parish. The parish coordinator is in charge of the day-to-day life of the parish in the areas of worship, education, pastoral service and administration.

**Pastor**

A priest in charge of a parish or congregation. He is responsible for administering the sacraments, instructing the congregation in the doctrine of the Church and other services to the people of the parish.

**Pastoral Associate**

A member of the laity who is part of a parish ministry team.

**Pastoral Council**

A group of members of the parish who advise the pastor on parish matters; also called a Parish Council.

**Pastoral Council, Archdiocesan**

A consultative group appointed by the Archbishop from members of the clergy, religious orders and laity. Under the direction of the Archbishop, members investigate, consider and propose practical conclusions for the pastoral work of the Archdiocese. The council's lay members are chosen to represent the various regions and social conditions of the entire Archdiocese.

**Paten**

The plate used to hold the bread.

**Pectoral Cross**

A cross worn on a chain about the neck of bishops and abbots as a sign of office.

**Penitential Rite**

A general acknowledgment of sinfulness by the entire assembly, accompanied by requests for God's mercy and forgiveness.

**Pontiff/Pontifical**

Pontiff is used as an alternative form of reference to the Pope. Pontifical has to do with the Pope.

**Prayer**

The raising of the mind and heart to God in adoration, thanksgiving, reparation and petition. The official prayer of the Church as a worshipping community is called liturgy.

**Prayer After Communion**

The final prayer by the celebrant in which he petitions that the Sacrament be beneficial for all.

**Prayer Over the Gifts**

The prayer by the celebrant asking that the gifts to be offered be made holy and acceptable in the eyes of the Lord.

**Preface Dialogue**

The introductory dialogue between the celebrant and assembly in which all are invited to join in prayer and thanksgiving to God. The Holy, Holy, Holy The response of the community to the preface and a continuation of the general theme of praise and thanks. Also called the Sanctus.

**Preparation of the Gifts**

The time in the Mass when the bread and wine to be used in the celebration are brought to the celebrant, usually by representatives of the faithful.

**Presbyteral Council**

A consultative group of priests that assists the Archbishop in his governing of the Archdiocese. Council members are representative of all priests in the Archdiocese and include priests elected by fellow priests, priests included by virtue of the offices they hold (ex officio) and priests appointed by the Archbishop.

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**Presbyterial Council**

Also known as the priests' council, this is the principal consultative body mandated by the Code of Canon Law to advise the diocesan bishop in matters of pastoral governance. It consists of bishops and priests serving the diocese.

**Primacy**

Papal primacy refers to the Pope's authority over the whole Church.

**ProceSSIONAL Cross**

The cross carried in the processions.

**Profession of Faith**

The assembly together recalls and proclaims the fundamental teachings of the Roman Catholic faith. The Profession of Faith, also referred to as the Creed, is used on all Sundays and Holy Days.

**Proselytize**

To bring one to another's viewpoint whether in religion or other areas.

**Province**

- 1) A territory comprising one archdiocese called the metropolitan see and one or more dioceses called suffragan sees. The head of an archdiocese, an archbishop, has metropolitan rights and responsibilities over the province.
- 2) A division of a religious order under the jurisdiction of a provincial superior.

**Purgatory**

The state or condition in which those who have died in the state of grace, but with some attachment to sin, suffer for a time before they are admitted to the glory and happiness of heaven.

**Reader**

One who proclaims the scriptures during the Liturgy of the Word. Known formerly as "Lector."

**Relics**

The physical remains and effects of saints, which are considered worthy of veneration inasmuch as they represent people who are with God.

**Religion**

The adoration and service of God as expressed through divine worship and acts of faith in daily life.

**Religious Movements**

Groups of people, both lay and clerical, who band together to promote a certain belief or activity.

**Religious Priest/Diocesan Priest**

Religious priests are professed members of a religious order or institute. Religious clergy live according to the rule of their respective orders. In pastoral ministry, they are under the jurisdiction of their local bishop, as well as the superiors of their order. Diocesan, or secular, priests are under the direction of their local bishop. They commit to serving their congregations and other institutions.

**Responsorial Psalm**

Between the first and second readings, a psalm is spoken or sung by the entire assembly. The response is repeated after each verse. If sung, a cantor or choir sings the verses of the psalm.

**Retreat**

A period of time spent in meditation and religious exercise. Retreats may take various forms, from traditional closed forms, to open retreats which do not disengage the participants from day-to-day life. Both clergy and lay people of all ages participate in retreats. Houses and centers providing facilities for retreats are called retreat houses.

**Rite of Christi an Initiation of Adults**

The norms and rituals of the Catholic Church for people who wish to join the Church. Part of the process is intended for baptized Christians who wish to become Catholics. The term is used in a general sense to refer to the process of entering the Catholic Church.

**Roman Curia**

The official collective name for the administrative agencies and courts, and their officials, who assist the Pope in governing the Church. Members are appointed and granted authority by the Pope.

**Rome - Diocese of**

The City of Rome is the diocese of the Pope, who also serves as the Bishop of Rome.

**Rosary**

A prayer of meditation primarily on events in the lives of Mary and Jesus, repeating the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Glory Be. Generally, the rosary is said on a physical circlet of beads.

**Sacramentary**

The book used by the celebrant, containing all the prayers for the liturgy of the Mass.

**Sanctuary**

The part of the church where the altar is located.

**Second Vatican Council**

A major meeting of the Bishops of the world convened by Pope John XXIII to bring about a renewal of the Church for the second half of the 20th century. It ran from 1962 to 1965 and produced important documents involving liturgy, ecumenism, communications and other areas.

**Secular Institutes**

Societies of men and women living in the world who dedicate themselves to observe the evangelical counsels and to carry on apostolic works suitable to their talents and opportunities in everyday life.

**See**

Another name for diocese or archdiocese.

**Seminary**

An educational institution for men preparing for the priesthood or diaconate.

**Shrine**

Erected to encourage private devotions to a saint. It usually contains a picture, statue or other religious feature capable of inspiring devotional prayer.

**Sign of Peace**

Before sharing the Body of Christ the members of the assembly are invited to express their love and peace with one another.

**Sign of the Cross**

A sign, ceremonial gesture or movement in the form of a cross by which a person professes faith in the Holy Trinity, and intercedes for the blessing of himself, as well as other persons or things.

**Sister**

Any woman religious, in popular speech. Strictly, the title applies to those women religious belonging to institutes whose members have not professed solemn vows, most of which were established during and since the 19th century.

**Sodality**

A group of laity, established for the promotion of Christian life and worship, or some other religious purpose.

**St. Vincent de Paul Society**

An organization of lay people who serve the poor through spiritual and material works of mercy. The society operates stores, rehabilitation workshops, food centers, shelters, criminal justice and other programs. Its national headquarters are in St. Louis.

**Stations of the Cross**

Also known as The Way of the Cross, this devotion to the suffering of Christ consists of prayers and meditations on fourteen occurrences experienced by Jesus on His way to His crucifixion and death. Each of these events is represented by a cross. Stations can be done individually, or in groups with one person leading the prayers and moving from cross to cross.

**Stole**

The vestment worn around the neck by all ordained ministers. For priests, bishops and Pope, it hangs down in front (under the chasuble); deacons wear it over their left shoulder crossed and fastened at the right side.

**Superior**

The head of a religious order or congregation. He or she may be the head of a province or of an individual house.

**Surplice**

A loose, flowing vestment of white fabric with wide sleeves. For some functions it is inter-changeable with an alb.

**Synod**

A gathering of designated officials and representatives of a church, with legislative and policymaking powers.

**Tabernacle**

Place in the Church where the Eucharist or sacred species are stored.

**Theologate**

An institution which provides the last four years of study for candidates for the priesthood.

**Theology**

The study of God and religion, deriving from and based on the data of divine Revelation, organized and systematized according to an academic method.

**Titular Sees**

Dioceses where the Church once flourished but which later died out. Bishops without a territorial or residential diocese of their own, e.g., auxiliary bishops, are given titular sees.

**Tribunal**

A tribunal (court) is the name given to the person or persons who exercise the Church's judicial powers.

**Ultreya**

Ultreya is a Spanish word for "Keep on going!" or "Onward!" It is a weekly or monthly gathering of all Cursillo Group Reunions in an area to share prayers and songs and snacks. At each gathering, one member gives a witness talk about how our Lord is currently present in his or her life. Attendees on Cursillo weekends are sponsored by other members of the movement. If you live within the Archdiocese of St. Louis, and you think Cursillo might be for you, please feel welcome at a monthly Ultreya meeting near you.

**United States Catholic Conference (USCC)**

Civil corporation and executive agency of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

**Vatican Congregation**

A Vatican body that is responsible for an important area in the life of the Church, such as worship and sacraments, the clergy, and of saints causes.

**Vatican Councils**

Councils of all bishops of the Church called by the Pope. These councils usually are called to discuss specific matters of interest to the Church.

**Veneration of the Altar**

The revering of the altar with a kiss and the optional use of incense.

**Vespers**

A portion of the Church's divine office recited each day by priests. (see Evening Prayer)

**Vestment**

The vesture ministers wear.

**Vow**

A promise made to God with sufficient knowledge and freedom, which has as its object a moral good that is possible and better than its voluntary omission.

**Washing of Hands**

An expression of the desire for inward purification. The celebrant washes his hands in symbolic cleansing to prepare himself just as the gifts have been prepared as an offering to the Lord.

**Witness, Christian**

Practical testimony or evidence given by Christians regarding their faith. They may witness their faith in all circumstances of life—by prayer and general conduct, through good example and good works, etc. – and by being and acting in accordance with Christian belief, while actually practicing the Christian faith.

**Zucchetto**

The skullcap of Roman Catholic clerics. The Pope wears a white zucchetto, Cardinals wear red zucchetos, Bishops wear purple zucchetos and priests wear black zucchetos.