



"I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you, praying always with joy in my every prayer for all of you, because of your partnership for the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 1:3-6)

Glossary

Bishop / Archbishop

A successor of the Apostles who has received the fullness of Christ's priesthood. The bishop is the proper shepherd of the diocese entrusted to him under the authority of the Holy Father. An archbishop is the bishop of an archdiocese. "The diocesan bishop governs the particular Church entrusted to him with legislative, executive and judicial power, in accordance with the law." (Code of Canon Law, c. 391 §1) The Archbishop is focused on pastoral care as the shepherd of the local flock.

Canon Law

The laws ("canons") that provide the norms for good order in the visible society of the Catholic Church. In addition to the laws contained in the Code of Canon Law, other laws issued by the Apostolic See and the laws particular to each diocese make up the entirety of the Church's canon law.

Church / church

In these documents, "Church," when capitalized, refers to the Catholic Church, the faithful of the world united under the authority of the pope, the successor of St. Peter. A "church" (lowercase) is a sacred building set aside for public worship.

Deacon

A deacon is a man ordained for service in the Church's ministry of charity. Deacons receive the sacrament of Holy Orders, as do priests and bishops. Deacons assist priests with various parish ministries. They may administer the sacrament of baptism, witness marriages and assist with both the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Deacons also often assist with parish administration, catechesis and other duties. A permanent deacon may be married or single and is not a candidate for the priesthood. A transitional deacon is a man in formation for the priesthood, for whom the diaconate is a final stage before priestly ordination.

Diocese / Archdiocese

Also known as a "particular Church" or "local Church," a diocese is a portion of the people of God, a specific community within the Catholic Church, which is defined by geographical boundaries and typically entrusted to a bishop who serves as shepherd of this portion of Christ's flock. An archdiocese is the major diocese within a province (which is a grouping of dioceses) and is led by an archbishop.

Discernment

The process of praying to the Holy Spirit and reflecting when searching for a solution or making a decision that is in accord with God's will. Prayerful discernment frees the mind and spirit from vested interests and distractions.

Evangelization

Fulfilling Christ's instruction to share the Good News and make disciples through our words and actions. It is focused on living the joy of the Gospel and bringing it to others. "The evangelizing efforts of the baptized are not simply focused on those who have not heard of Christ. They are also directed toward our brothers and sisters who no longer join us around the Lord's table. Furthermore, the baptized disciple of Christ is also continually evangelized through ongoing renewal of faith and living out that same faith." ("Living as Missionary Disciples," p. 6)

Infrastructure

The collective physical structures and property — church buildings, school buildings, office buildings, rectories and real estate, including parking lots, grounds, etc.

Liturgy

In its original meaning, a "public work" or service done in the name of or on behalf of the people. The liturgy unfolds through the official public prayer of the Church (e.g., the Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours, the celebration of the sacraments).

Missionary disciples

Individuals who follow Jesus Christ in and through his Church, striving to share the Gospel message and draw others into a more intimate relationship with Jesus. Missionary discipleship is understood as a "going out" beyond our comfort zone to encounter Christ on the peripheries to reach those most in need, while transforming practitioners into more loving, more sacrificial people. It is not proselytization intended to convert people to Catholicism.

Parish

A parish is defined as a certain community of the faithful stably constituted within the archdiocese, whose pastoral care is entrusted to a priest as its proper pastor under the authority of the Archbishop of Seattle. (c. 515§1)

Note that the term parish refers to the community of people and not the sacred building designated for divine worship — the church (with a lowercase "c").

Parish family

A parish family is two or more parishes under the leadership of a pastor. Over time, the parish family will determine its own consultative leadership team(s) and how each parish may share resources such as staff, ministries and outreach.

Parish leaders

Those members of the parish faithful who collaborate with the pastor to help inform and guide the parish to best fulfill the evangelizing mission of the Church. These leaders could include parochial vicars, deacons and members of the laity (employees or volunteers), each according to their proper roles and charisms.

Parochial vicar

A parochial vicar is a priest assigned by his (arch)bishop to a parish or parish family to assist a pastor in the care of the faithful. Parochial vicars are priests who render their services in pastoral ministry as co-workers with the pastor in common counsel and endeavor with him and also under his authority." (Code of Canon Law, c. 545 §1)

Pastor

The pastor is the proper shepherd of the parish or parishes entrusted to him under the authority of his (arch)bishop. He is an ordained priest responsible for the ministry of teaching, sanctifying and governing, with the cooperation of other priests or deacons in the parish and the assistance of lay members of the faithful.

Solidarity

Solidarity is a principle of Catholic social teaching, which reflects the concept of the common good and holds that it is essential to act in favor of the well-being of all, particularly those who are most poor and marginalized.

Subsidiarity

A foundational principle of the Church's social doctrine affirming that decisions should be made at the level most proximate or local to those whom they affect. "The teaching of the Church has elaborated the principle of subsidiarity, according to which 'a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to coordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good.'" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1883)

Universal church

The universal church is the community of the Christian faithful incorporated into the life of Jesus Christ through baptism and sent out to continue his mission to the whole human race. "'The Church' is the People that God gathers in the whole world. She exists in local communities and is made real as a liturgical, above all a Eucharistic, assembly. She draws her life from the word and the Body of Christ and so herself becomes Christ's Body." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 752)