

The Structure of the Church

Chapter 23 Summary

Chapter Learning Objectives

- The participants will examine ways Jesus' followers carry out his mission in the world.
- The participants will explore how the roles of the ordained, consecrated, and laity contribute to the life and mission of the Church.
- The participants will identify ways baptized believers participate in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly mission of Christ today.

Content Summary

1. Jesus entrusted the Church, and the mission of baptizing and teaching, to the Apostles.
2. Jesus entrusted the leadership of the Church to Saint Peter, the first bishop of Rome. The Pope is the successor of Saint Peter. He is head of the College of Bishops and pastor, or shepherd, of the entire world.
3. Bishops are the successors of the Apostles. A bishop takes care of a particular area of the Church called a *diocese*. Each bishop is also responsible to work with other bishops to maintain the unity of the Church as a whole.
4. Priests and deacons are ordained coworkers of the bishops.
5. Consecrated religious and laypeople also share in responsibility for the Church's mission.
6. Consecrated religious make public vows or promises of poverty, chastity, and obedience. These are called the *evangelical counsels*. In this way they dedicate their entire lives to bringing Christ to the world.
7. Laypeople, also called the laity or the lay faithful, also bring Christ to the world by sharing in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly work of Christ.
8. Laypeople participate in the priestly work of Christ through prayer and worship, especially by participating in the Mass, by striving for holiness, and by being open to the Holy Spirit in all we do.
9. Laypeople participate in the prophetic work of Christ by pointing others to Christ through both word and action.
10. Laypeople participate in the kingly work of Christ by following our model, Jesus, who is our servant-king. Like Jesus, we lead by serving others, especially those most in need of help.

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