

## LESSON 27: GOD'S FAMILY ON EARTH

Jesus invited Peter to take His place on earth and Peter became the first Pope, the head of the whole church. We call the Pope, the Vicar of Christ because he represents Jesus. The Pope is also the head of bishops all over the world. Our current Pope is Pope Francis, the 266<sup>th</sup> Pope of the Catholic church, Bishop of Rome.

A Bishop is like the Good Shepherd that Jesus spoke of in the Gospel. He watches over his flock, protecting it from danger. They carry on the work of the apostles; they teach, preach and guide. Each bishop has the help of many priests. Priests are important to the Church because they bring us the grace of sacraments. They share in the God given power to forgive sins and offer Holy Mass.

Bishops and priests are joined by religious sisters and brothers; they are called missionaries. We are called the laity of the Church. The laity help the bishops and priest in bringing the Word of God to all people. Sometimes in doing this work, people are asked to offer their lives. We call these individuals martyrs. Members of God's family who have died and now live in Heaven are called saints.

Christ founded the church for everyone. Therefore the Church is Catholic, which means "**Universal**" or "**for all**". We are all part of God's family on earth.

*"I am the vine and you are the branches". (John 15:5)*

*"If you continue in My Word, you are truly My disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free". (John 8:31-32)*

*"And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16:18-19)*

### Words to know:

**The Church:** the group of followers of Jesus who believe the same faith, receive the sacraments, and obey the Pope; another name for the family of God.

**Catholic:** a member of the Catholic Church.

**Religious:** men and women who are dedicated to God in a special way.

**Missionary:** a person who works to spread the Good News of Jesus in every part of the world.

**Martyr:** a person who dies for his faith in Jesus.

### Questions and Answers

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| 1 | <b>By whom was the Church founded?</b><br>The Church was founded by Jesus Christ, who gathered his faithful followers into one society, placed it under the direction of the apostles with St. Peter as its head, and gave it its sacrifice, its sacraments, and the Holy Spirit Who gives it life. |
| 2 | <b>Who are the pastors of the Church?</b><br>The pastors of the Church are the Pope and the Bishops united with him.  |
| 3 | <b>Who is the Pope?</b><br>The Pope is the successor of St. Peter in the See of Rome with Episcopal power. He is the visible head of the entire Roman Catholic Church, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, as Christ is the invisible head of the Church.  |

**Answer the following questions in one word**

**1) Who became the first Pope and the Vicar of Christ?**

**Ans:** Peter

**2) What is the name of our current Pope?**

**Ans:** Pope Francis

**3) What are we called in the Church?**

**Ans:** Laity

**4) When people die for their faith in Jesus we call them?**

**Ans:** Martyrs

**5) The people who work to spread the Good News of Jesus in every part of the world are called?**

**Ans:** Missionaries

**6) What are the members of God's family who have died and now live in Heaven are called?**

**Ans:** Saints

**7) Christ founded the church for everyone therefore, the church is Catholic which means?**

**Ans:** Universal