

A Media Guide to the Diocese of Manchester

Updated October 5, 2018

This document is meant to brief members of the media and the on the general structure of the Catholic Church in New Hampshire, as well as identify often-misunderstood Church terms. Words and phrases bolded below are also listed in the glossary. This document will be reviewed and updated periodically.

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STRUCTURE OF THE DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

Who we are

The Diocese of Manchester is the Roman Catholic Church in New Hampshire. Diocese is a term referring to a territorial division of the Church, headed by a **bishop**. Our territory includes the entire state of New Hampshire and includes all Roman Catholics in that area.

A **diocese** is named for a **see city**, the place where the bishop resides and his **cathedral** is located. See is another word for diocese. In New Hampshire, our cathedral is St. Joseph's Cathedral in Manchester.

A chief diocese in a designated region is known as an **archdiocese**. Also known as a **metropolitan see**, an archdiocese is head of what is known as a **province**. The Diocese of Manchester is in a province that includes all of Maine, Vermont, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. The Archdiocese of Boston, which is the only archdiocese in these states, is the chief diocese of our province. The Diocese of Manchester, while connected as a part of the Universal Church with other dioceses, is independently operated by its bishop. As such, its organizational structure may differ from that of other dioceses. This is similar to the variations seen in groups of other large organizations, such as state governments or universities.

The Diocese

The Bishop of Manchester is responsible for carrying on the Church's mission in his diocese. He is the chief executive, legislator and judge. Only the pope can overrule his decisions, as long as they comply with civil and **canon law**. In addition to the diocesan bishop, some dioceses have one or more **auxiliary bishops** who assist in some pastoral duties. The Diocese of Manchester does not have any auxiliary bishops.

The diocesan bishop delegates some responsibility to his staff, which is known by the Church term **curia**. The staff works out of the diocese's central offices; historically called the chancery, this building is known in the Diocese of Manchester as the Diocesan Administration Building.

As a part of his staff, the bishop's leading aides are his **vicars** and his **secretaries**. In Catholic teaching, every bishop, including the pope, is a vicar of Christ. The main use of vicar in the Catholic Church, however, is to refer to someone deputized by a bishop or superior of a religious order to carry out certain functions on his behalf. In New Hampshire, our vicars include two **vicars general** and a **judicial vicar and vicar for canonical affairs**, who is the diocese's authority on Catholic canon law. There are also priests known by the Church term **vicars forane**. Called **deans** in New Hampshire, these priests serve as the Church's equivalent of county officers, supporting their fellow priests in nine different regions of the state.

The Bishop of Manchester has further delegated responsibilities to seven secretariats, which are headed by secretaries:

Catholic Action

Catholic Formation

Catholic Schools and Camps

Development & Communications

Multicultural Ministry

Operations & Administration

Temporalities

These secretariats oversee many day-to-day operations in the diocese, from priest support, to charity work, to Catholic schools. More information about secretariats can be found at www.catholicnh.org/administration.

In addition to these roles are several positions in the diocese required by canon law. They include the **chancellor**, the **finance officer**, and the **tribunal**.

The chancellor is the highest position a non-clergy member can hold in the diocese. This person oversees official records and, in the case of the Diocese of Manchester, serves as legal counsel and an advocate for the bishop's public policy goals.

The finance officer is also the Secretary of Temporalities and oversees all financial concerns within the diocese.

The tribunal is the diocese's court system and takes up issues of canon law. This office is overseen by the judicial vicar. The majority of a tribunal's work concerns marriage annulments.

The parish

The fundamental unit of the diocese is called a **parish**. A parish is a community of Catholics, be it in a small city neighborhood of a few blocks or a large rural area covering many towns. A parish may have multiple church buildings, so the two are not synonymous. A parish has a single administrator, a priest known as a **pastor**. A pastor may have **associate pastors** (also known as parochial vicars) supporting him.

A pastor is responsible for the day-to-day operations of his parish, including maintenance of parish property, conducting of religious celebrations including the **Mass**, oversight of religious education programs, and other concerns. A pastor may oversee more than one parish. In this case, the parishes are **twinned**. If two or more parishes are folded into a single parish, they are merged.

Parish pastors may also oversee **missions**. A mission is a small or recently created congregation that is not erected as a parish, but entrusted to a priest as its pastor. In the Diocese of Manchester, one mission is not within a parish and the others are all within a particular parish. These missions are considered additional worship sites of the parish. The one mission not with a parish is St. Patrick in Hampton Beach and is a mission of the Diocese.

A pastor may have a **deacon(s)** assisting him. A deacon, not to be confused with a dean, is the first of three ranks of ordained ministry. The other two are priest and bishop. There are two kinds of deacons – **transitional deacons** and **permanent deacons**. A transitional deacon is a man studying for the priesthood who is in the last year of his studies. A permanent deacon is not planning to be ordained to the priesthood. Permanent deacons may be married with families. All deacons have some faculties, or authorization to perform official church acts. These include the authority to conduct baptisms, distribute the Eucharist, and in some instances, witness Catholic marriages when a Mass is not celebrated. A deacon does not have all the faculties of a priest, and cannot, for example, celebrate a Mass.

Other Catholic groups

Diocesan priests are those **clergy** who serve the diocesan bishop in parish ministry and other areas assigned by the bishop. In addition to diocesan priests, there are **religious priests**.

“Religious” is a Catholic term referring to individuals – both clergy and non-clergy, or lay persons – who have taken vows of such things as chastity, poverty, and obedience, and are organized in religious orders. It is not required that a person be ordained in order to join a religious order. Both women and unordained men may join religious communities. Men religious are sometimes also known as **brothers**. (N.B. priests in a religious order may call each other “brother” but are clergy and so should be identified as “Father” in news reporting.) Women religious are called **sisters** or **nuns**. (N.B. the term “sister” and “nun” are not synonymous. Nuns have taken solemn vows and are part of orders and live in a cloistered community. Sisters belong to religious communities and have taken simple vows, which are less rigid. The distinction is worth recognizing when interviewing or reporting on women religious.)

Religious priests can also serve as pastors. In New Hampshire, we have several orders of religious men and women. You can learn more by visiting www.catholicnh.org/religious.

A final note on men and women religious: While some priests may prefer to be known by their last name, as in “Father Doe,” a religious priest and other men and women religious often prefer in conversation to be called by their first name, such as “Father John,” “Brother John,” and “Sister Jane.”

In New Hampshire, the Catholic Church is also involved in many activities outside of the parishes that further the ministry of the Church. These include Catholic Charities New Hampshire, which administers the New Hampshire Food Bank, and a number of other social services. The diocese also has relationships with two hospitals and 30 schools and colleges.

Other members of the Catholic faith

In the Catholic Church, there are two distinct bodies: the Roman Catholic churches or the **Latin Rite** and Eastern Catholic churches or the **Eastern Rite**. While both part of the greater Church, Eastern Catholic churches have their origins in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. They have their own traditions and organization. In New Hampshire, there are three Eastern Rite communities: Melkites, Maronites, and Ukrainian. The Diocese of Manchester does not oversee their operations.

GLOSSARY OF SELECTED TERMS – Some of these terms are reprinted here from copyrighted materials and may not be published for any use outside of the Diocese of Manchester Office of Communication.

archdiocese, diocese; province; see; metropolitan see; Holy See: An archdiocese is the chief diocese of an ecclesiastical province. It is governed by an archbishop. Our province's chief diocese is the Archdiocese of Boston. The province includes the dioceses of Burlington in Vermont, Manchester in New Hampshire, Portland in Maine, and the dioceses of Fall River, Springfield, and Worcester in Massachusetts. Another term for diocese is "see." A "metropolitan see" is another term for an archdiocese. The "Holy See" is another name for the Diocese of Rome, the chief diocese of the Catholic Church. In strictest terms, "the Vatican" and "Vatican City" are names for the city state where the Holy See exists. These are legally similar to the distinction between the state of New Hampshire and the Diocese of Manchester. Both occupy the same territory, but one is a state and the other an ecclesiastic body.

associate pastor: A diocesan priest serving in parish ministry who is not the pastor.

auxiliary bishop: A bishop assigned to a Catholic diocese or archdiocese to assist its diocesan bishop. Whether in a diocese or archdiocese, his title is always bishop. A diocese may have more than one auxiliary bishop, or it may have none.

basilica: A title of honor church given to a church by a pope. It is not synonymous with a cathedral. St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, for example, is not the pope's cathedral. That is the lesser known basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome.

bishop: The highest order of ordained ministry in Catholic teaching. Most bishops are diocesan bishops, the chief priest in their respected dioceses. Diocesan bishops and their auxiliaries are responsible for the pastoral care of their diocese.

brother: A man who has taken vows in a religious order but is not ordained or studying the priesthood. Religious priests may refer to each other as “Brother” but are, in fact, clergy and should be called “Father” in writing.

canon law: A code of ecclesiastical laws governing the Catholic Church.

cardinal: A position of authority given to a bishop, second only to the pope in authority. It should be noted that cardinals are still bishops. “Cardinal” is a position of honor, while “bishop” is a rank or order of ordained ministry. In the Archdiocese of Boston, the archbishop has traditionally been appointed a cardinal, though not all archbishops are named cardinals.

cathedral: The major church in an archdiocese or diocese, typically in the city where the diocese takes its name. The term comes from the Latin word for the bishop’s chair in the church – the cathedra. There is only one cathedral per diocese. Our cathedral is St. Joseph’s Cathedral in Manchester

Catholic, catholic: The word “catholic” means universal, and comes originally from Greek. It has been adopted by our faith as an identifying term. When Catholics refer to the “Universal Church” this is synonymous with the “Catholic Church.” Several other faith groups around the world use the word “catholic” in their name, but they may not be affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church.

chancellor: The chief archivist of a diocese’s official records. Also a notary and secretary for the diocesan curia, or central administration; he or she may have a variety of other duties as well.

clergy: A collective term for all those ordained who administer the rites of the church (bishops, priests, and deacons).

coadjutor bishop: A bishop assisting the diocesan bishop of a diocese. The most notable difference between a coadjutor bishop and an auxiliary bishop is that a coadjutor has a right of succession to become diocesan bishop if there is a vacancy. The most recent coadjutor bishop in the Diocese of New Hampshire was Bishop Leo O’Neil, who succeeded Bishop Odore Gendron in 1990.

curia: The offices through which a bishop administers the affairs of a diocese.

deacons/diaconate: 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. The Permanent Diaconate is for men who do not plan to become ordained priests. The Permanent Deacon program is open to both married and unmarried men. Deacons serve a number of ministerial roles, but are not priests, and therefore cannot celebrate a full Mass or carry out some other sacraments reserved to priests and bishops.

dean: A priest charged with oversight of a deanery. He is the Church equivalent of a county official. Deans serve as advisors to a bishop on concerns within their deanery. A dean is also known as a “**vicar forane.**”

diocesan bishop: The bishop who heads the diocese, he may be assisted by auxiliary bishop. In most cases, the term “diocesan bishop” is unnecessary and “bishop” is clear.

diocese: See the entry archdiocese, diocese; province; see; metropolitan see; Holy See

Eastern Catholic church; Eastern rite: Catholic churches with origins in Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa that have their own liturgy and organizational systems. While in communion with the Universal Church, those Eastern rite churches in New Hampshire are not administered by the Diocese of Manchester.

episcopal: an adjective referring to a bishop or group of bishops.

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, a person still is responsible for fulfillment of the normal obligations of a Catholic.

faculties: The authorization to perform official Church acts, such as conducting baptisms, hearing confession, and celebrating a Mass. A clergy member who is penalized by having his faculties removed is not permitted to carry out priestly actions in public.

finance office: An office required by canon law, the finance officer, who heads this office, oversees all financial issues for the diocese. In the Diocese of Manchester, this person is also a secretary.

homily: The homily is a reflection by a priest celebrating a Mass on the Scripture readings of the day.

Latin rite: Another term for the Roman Catholic Church. See entry **Eastern Catholic church; Eastern Rite**

lay persons; laity: The second Vatican Council defines the laity as those who are neither ordained (deacon, priest, bishop) nor members of a religious order (sisters and brothers).

liturgy: The public prayer of the Church.

Liturgy of the Word: That section of the Mass where 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

Liturgy of the Eucharist: The section of the Mass when the gifts are prepared and the Eucharistic Prayer is proclaimed by the celebrant.

Mass: The common name for the Eucharistic liturgy of the Catholic Church. Catholics do not call a Mass a “service.”

men religious; women religious: Any clergy or non-clergy person who has taken religious vows. See entries **brother, nun, religious priest/diocesan priest, sister.**

merged; twinned: When more than one parish is consolidated into a single parish and given a new name, it is called a “merged parish.” When a priest is made pastor of more than one independent parish, these parishes are “twinned.” Twinned parishes mean there is more than one parish. In the case of a merger, there is only one parish remaining.

metropolitan see: See entry archdiocese, diocese; province; see; metropolitan see; Holy See

mission: A congregation of Catholics too small to have formed their own parish. Missions are typically overseen by a parish pastor.

Moderator of the Curia: The official who handles day-to-day operations of the diocesan central administration.

monsignor: An honorary title granted by the Pope to some diocesan priests. A monsignor is not a rank of ordained ministry. All monsignors are priests. Though some will refer to themselves as “Monsignor Doe” others will be known as “Father Doe” to their parishioners.

nun: Strictly, a member of a religious order of women with solemn vows. In general, all women religious, even those in simple vows who are more properly called **sisters.**

parish: A specific community of the Christian faithful within a diocese, having its own church building or buildings under the authority of a pastor who is responsible for providing ministerial service.

pastor: A priest in charge of a Catholic parish.

pope: The bishop of Rome and head of the Roman Catholic Church. He is also the head of state of Vatican City.

province: See entry archdiocese, diocese; province; see; metropolitan see; Holy See

religious orders: A community of men religious, women religious, or religious priests who have taken vows, typically of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

religious priest/diocesan priest: Religious priests are members of a religious order or institution. Religious priests live according to the rule of their respective orders. In pastoral ministry they are under the rule of their local bishop, as well as superiors from their order. Diocesan priests are under the direction of their local bishop. Most serve in the parishes of the diocese, but they may also be assigned to other diocesan posts and ministries or be released for service outside the diocese.

sacraments: Catholics believe in seven sacraments that are usually administered at different stages in a person's life. The seven sacraments are: baptism, Eucharist, penance, confirmation, holy orders, matrimony, and anointing of the sick.

secretariat; secretary: A secretariat is the diocesan equivalent of a department in federal or state government. A secretary oversees a secretariat, which handles daily operations of specific offices in the diocese.

see: See entry **archdiocese, diocese; province; see; metropolitan see; Holy See**

sister: In popular speech, any woman religious. Strictly, the title applies to women religious of those institutes, mostly formed during or since the 19th century, whose members do not profess solemn vows.

tribunal: The name given to the person or persons who exercise the church's judicial powers. Each diocese has a diocesan tribunal, used mainly to hear marriage cases. Each archdiocese has an archdiocesan tribunal—a court of first trial—and a metropolitan tribunal, an appeals court that reviews decisions of diocesan courts in the ecclesiastical province when necessary.

twinned: See entry merged; twinned

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB): The national organization of the Catholic bishops of the United States, through which they act collegially on matters affecting the Catholic Church in the United States.

vicar; vicar general; judicial vicar; vicar forane: A priest or bishop who assists the diocesan bishop in the governance of the entire diocese. A vicar general is typically an auxiliary bishop. A judicial vicar oversees the diocesan tribunal. A vicar forane is another name for a dean. See that entry.