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GLOSSARY OF CATHOLIC TERMS

new 2003, rev. 2006

The glossary defines church officials, organizations, and institutions according to Library of Congress subject headings and other sources noted below. Notes regarding archival records pertaining to native peoples are also included.

Abbey (and Abbot)

In some men's religious institutes, e.g. Benedictines, monasteries are known as an abbeys and the head of such residences are abbots. Notable records about native peoples from these leaders include correspondence with local missionaries and high-ranking church and government officials regarding evangelization and schools. Abbots noted in the entries are alphabetized independently in the Master Index with the title "Abbot" and the initials of their religious institute.

Apostolic (or Papal) Nuncio

A diplomatic representative or ambassador of the Holy See. Apostolic nuncios noted in the entries are alphabetized independently in the Master Index with their title, .e.g. "Cardinal" and position, "Apostolic Nuncio to the United States."

Apostolic Prefecture (or Prefecture Apostolic) and Apostolic Vicariate (or Vicariate Apostolic)

Designations for mission territories in the first and second stages of organization toward becoming a diocese. Before 1962, these designations applied to a number of areas in the United States. "Prefecture Apostolate of (Name)" and "Vicariate Apostolate of (Name)" are the corresponding subject terms used in the Master Index, where they are listed alphabetically under "Catholic Church." The leaders of these mission territories were named bishops. If notable, they are alphabetized independently in the Master Index with the title "Bishop" and the initials of their religious institute, if applicable. Notable records from them include correspondence with local missionaries and high-ranking church and government officials regarding evangelization and schools for native peoples.

Archdiocese (or Metropolitan See) and Archbishop

An archdiocese which is the chief diocese of an ecclesiastical province, such as the Archdioceses of Baltimore (United States), Mexico City (Mexico), and Quebec (Canada). An archbishop is the head of an archdiocese or the principal diocese of an ecclesiastical province. Archbishops may have one or more auxiliary bishops as associates. In the Master Index archdioceses are listed alphabetically under "Catholic Church" in this form: "Archdiocese of (Name) (State)." Notable records about native peoples from these offices include correspondence with local missionaries and high-ranking church and government

officials regarding evangelization and schools for native peoples. Archbishops noted in the Marquette guides are alphabetized independently in the Master Index with the title "Archbishop" and the initials of their religious institute, if applicable.

Bishop

The head of a diocese or an auxiliary bishop in an archdiocese. Notable records about native peoples from these offices include correspondence with local missionaries and high-ranking church and government officials regarding evangelization and schools for native peoples. Bishops noted in the Marquette guides are alphabetized independently in the Master Index with the title "Bishop" and the initials of their religious institute, if applicable.

Brother

A man who is a member of a religious institute, but not ordained or studying for the priesthood. While few brothers created notable records, some are noted in the Marquette guides and alphabetized independently in the Master Index with the title "Brother" and the initials of their religious institute.

Cardinal

Bishops who are advisors to the Pope. Cardinals noted in the Marquette guides are alphabetized independently in the Master Index with the title "Cardinal."

Chancellor

The principal official of a diocese or archdiocese who signs and maintains letters and official documents of the bishop and the diocese, including responsibility for the diocesan archives. This official may be a priest, religious, or lay person.

Confraternities

Native American confraternities (sodalities and congresses) noted in the Marquette guides are listed alphabetically in both the Master List of Catholic Organizations and the Master Index. In the Master Index, confraternities are listed independent of the heading "Catholic Church."

Congregatio Pro Gentium Evangelizatione

Founded in 1622, the "Congregatio Pro Gentium Evangelizatione (Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, formerly "Congregatio de Propaganda Fide"), is an agency of the Holy See charged with organizing the missionary activity of the Church and spreading Christianity where the Christian message had still not arrived. It is noted in the Marquette guides and listed alphabetically in both the Master List of Catholic Organizations and the Master Index. In the latter, it is listed under the heading "Catholic Church."

Convent

A residence for a community or congregation of women religious. Convents noted in the Marquette guides are listed alphabetically in the Master Index independent of the heading "Catholic Church." Notable records about native peoples from these institutions may include correspondence and publications with local missionaries and high-ranking church and government officials regarding evangelization and schools for native peoples.

Deacon

The first order in ordained ministry. The permanent diaconate was reinstated in 1967 for men who do not plan to become priests. The permanent diaconate is open to both married and unmarried men and has attracted a number of Native American Catholics. Few deacons created notable records.

Diocese (or Suffragan See) and Bishop

The standard division for organized territories of the Church under the leadership of a bishop. Within an ecclesiastical province, several dioceses (suffragan sees) are organized under the leadership of a metropolitan see (archdiocese) headed by an archbishop. Mission territories under development toward becoming dioceses are known as Apostolic Prefectures (or Prefecture Apostolates) and Apostolic Vicariates (or Vicariate Apostolates). "Diocese of (Name) (State)" are the corresponding subject terms used. In the indices, they are listed alphabetically under "Catholic Church."

Diocesan Archives

Under the direction of the chancellor, the diocesan archives maintains the past official documents of the diocese's bishops, departments, parishes, and personnel plus files on church organizations and other church activities within the diocese. Included are bishops' papers, ethnic ministry files, parish files, sacramental (plus death and burial) records, personnel files of priests and deacons, files on religious communities and other church organizations, and official diocesan newspapers.

Bishops' Papers include correspondence, diaries, photographs, publications, and recordings.

Parish Files include correspondence between bishops and pastors, legal and financial records, and parish histories and anniversary books with photographs of notable individuals, groups, and events. Records of attended missions and stations are often included. See Parish (and/or School) for further information.

Sacramental Records are compiled by parishes and include records for attended missions, chapels, and stations. Oftentimes originals and/or copies may be accessible through the the diocesan archives as well as active parishes. Records of closed parishes are held by either the diocesan archives or successor parishes. When it is not possible to identify the parish from where a sacrament was recorded diocesan archives and parishes do collaborate with record searches. Some early sacramental records are available on microfilm or as publications at state, local, and major research libraries as well as the diocesan archives. See Parish (and/or School) and Pastor and Sacramental Records for further information.

Personnel Files are kept on the diocesan priests (and oftentimes the religious priests) and permanent deacons who have served within the diocese. Typically the files include photographs and a complete record of service within the diocese.

Diocesan Newspapers have been published by many dioceses, past and present. Most are available on microfilm at state and/or local libraries as well as the diocesan archives.

Diocesan Priests

Priests who serve under the direction of the local bishop and do not belong to a religious community. Before the 1970s, diocesan priests were less likely than religious priests to serve as pastors of congregations comprised of mostly Native American Catholics. Also, fewer diocesan priests than religious priests have created notable writings about Native Americans. Diocesan priests noted in the Marquette guides are alphabetized independently in the Master Index with the title "Reverend." The terms "Fray" (Spanish) and "Père" (French) are not used.

Evangelistic Work (and Evangelization)

Spreading the Gospel. Organizations (religious institutes, friendly societies) involved in Native American evangelization in the United States are noted alphabetically in both the Master List of Catholic Organizations and the Master Index. In the latter, these organizations are listed independent of the heading "Catholic Church."

Fray

A Spanish-language clerical title used by Franciscan priests in New Spain and Mexico.

Friendly Societies

Friendly societies (fraternal or mutual aid societies) provided some financial aid to Catholic evangelization among Native Americans. Organizations noted in the Marquette guides are listed alphabetically in the Master List of Catholic Organizations and the Master Index. In the latter, confraternities are listed independent of the heading "Catholic Church."

Generalate, Motherhouse

Terms for general headquarters used by many religious institutes.

Holy See

The governance of the Catholic Church under the Pope, Roman Curia, and other administrative agencies (e.g. Congregatio Pro Gentium Evangelizatione) in Vatican City and Rome, Italy. The agencies noted in the Marquette guides are listed alphabetically in both the Master List of Catholic Organizations and the Master Index. In the latter, agencies of the Holy See are listed under the heading "Catholic Church" using names in Latin.

Language, Handwriting

Language difficulties come into play for both the researcher trying to read the record and the priest or sister who obtained the information to create the record. In early days, church records were almost always kept in Latin, the official world-wide language of the Church. However, the native language of the priest was sometimes used. This can complicate matters since the priest could have been French, Spanish, German, etc. Many genealogical how-to books deal with handwriting and document translation which should give some general help to researchers. In extreme cases, it may be necessary to hire a professional translator. Sometimes language problems also occurred when records were recorded.

Mission, Chapel, and Station (and Pastor or Superior)

1. A quasi-parish, which lacks a resident pastor and financial resources for self-sufficiency. Such missions, chapels, and stations are attached to established parishes or missions and attended by the pastor of that church or

a designated assistant, usually on a part-time basis. "Mission" and "chapel" denote establishment of a facility for church purposes whereas "station" means that no special facility exists.

Mission and Superior

2. Among men's religious institutes, a church and residence serving as a headquarters for evangelization. Typically the operations of these missions include self-sufficient enterprises (e.g. farm, ranch, school, radio station, museum) on nearby lands. The heads of these missions are known as superiors. Mission superiors noted in the Marquette guides are alphabetized independently in the Master Index with the title "Reverend" and the initials of their religious institute.

Monastery (and Prior or Superior)

An autonomous and secluded community and residence (or house) in a men's or women's religious institute (e.g., Benedictines, Benedictine Sisters), which may be known as an abbey in some religious institutes. Monastery operations typically include self-sufficient enterprises (e.g. farm, ranch, school, radio station, museum) on nearby lands. The head of a monastery is known as a prior, prioress, or superior. Notable records about native peoples from these leaders include correspondence with local missionaries and high-ranking church and government officials regarding evangelization and schools for native peoples. Heads of monasteries noted in the Marquette guides are alphabetized independently in the Master Index with the title "Reverend" or "Sister" and the initials of their religious institute.

Monsignor

An honorary title for exemplary service granted to diocesan priests by the Pope. Notable monsignors are alphabetized independently in the Master Index with the title "Monsignor."

Mother, Reverend Mother

The head of a local community, convent, or house of women religious. By 1970 many religious institutes no longer used this title. In the Marquette guides notable sisters who led communities (as well as schools serving native children) are alphabetized independently in the Master Index with the title "Mother" and the initials of their religious institute.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is a civil corporation through which the U.S. bishops collectively exercise their mission as church leaders.

Parish (and/or School) and Pastor

An established congregation of the local church with its own church building that is administered by a pastor who is responsible for keeping the parish's past and present sacramental records, including those of any attended missions, chapels, and stations. Before the 1970s, all pastors were diocesan or religious priests. Since then some have been deacons or lay administrators. In the Master Index, local parishes, missions, and schools are listed independent of the term "Catholic Church," arranged alphabetically by name and there under by place if more than one institution is listed with the same name. Parishes are presented as "(Name) Church, Mission, and/or School (Community, State/ Province)."

Besides sacramental records, parish histories and anniversary books, parish censuses, records of contributors, and church society membership lists can be valuable sources for genealogical and historical researchers. While contents vary greatly, most dioceses and parishes have published books to commemorate anniversaries (fiftieth, one hundredth, etc.) of their founding. The books may include membership lists, group photographs, histories of the parish, school, and attached missions and stations, and highlights on bishops and notable priests, religious, and laity. Local churches, libraries, and historical societies and the diocesan archives may have copies. Also Marquette University maintains copies of such publications when Native Americans comprise a significant portion of the population.

Identifying appropriate parishes for genealogical research can be accomplished through death notices, obituaries, cemetery records, and marriage notices. Other useful aids include city directories, diocesan websites, the Official Catholic Directory, and U.S. census records. Priests and nuns were enumerated by census takers like everyone else and their presence will indicate a parish and location. See Diocesan Archives and Sacramental Records for further information.

Padre

A Spanish-language clerical title meaning "Father" that except for the Franciscans, was used by diocesan and religious priests in New Spain and Mexico. Priests noted in the Marquette guides are alphabetized independently in the Master Index with the title "Padre (Spanish)" and the initials of their religious institute, if applicable.

Père

A French-language clerical title meaning "Father" that was used by diocesan and religious priests in New France. Religious priests noted in the Marquette guides are alphabetized independently in the Master Index with the title "Père (French)" and the initials of their religious institute, if applicable.

Province (Ecclesiastical)

1. An administrative region comprised of "suffragan sees" (dioceses) under the leadership of a "metropolitan see" (archdiocese) headed by an archbishop.

Province (Religious Institute) and Provincial

2. An administrative region of local communities, houses, and missions under the leadership of a provincial that is used by some larger religious institutes (.e.g. Franciscans, Jesuits).

Religious Institutes (or Orders)

Organizations (communities) of men or women living in consecrated life. Members involved in evangelization and the ministry of local parishes, missions, and schools served under the direction of the local bishop as well as their religious superior. Religious institutes noted in the Marquette Native Catholic guides are listed alphabetically in both the Master List of Catholic Organizations and the Master Index. In the latter, the organizations are listed independent of the heading "Catholic Church." In the Master List of Catholic Organizations, religious institutes are presented by Library of Congress subject terms followed by alternative names and institute initials used by individuals to denote membership.

Each religious archives (of the province, community, and/or institute) keeps records on the service of its members. The files often include photographs and a complete summary of the person's service.

Religious Priests

Priests who are members of a religious institute. If involved in pastoral ministry (e.g. pastor or assistant pastor of a mission or parish), they also served under the direction of the local bishop. Before the 1970s, religious priests were more likely than diocesan priests to serve as pastors of congregations largely comprised of Native American Catholics. Also, more religious priests than diocesan priests have created notable writings about Native Americans. Religious priests noted in the Marquette guides are alphabetized independently in the Master Index with the titles "Fray (Spanish; used by Franciscans)," "Padre (Spanish; not used by Franciscans)," "Père (French)," or "Reverend" and the initials of their religious institute, if applicable.

Reverend

A clerical title used by diocesan and religious priests and non-Catholic clergy within the British Empire and the United States. Clergy noted in the Marquette guides are alphabetized independently in the Master Index with the title "Reverend" and the initials of their religious institute, if applicable.

Sacramental Records

Bound volumes or registers of sacramental records are of great value for genealogical and historical research because many of the sacraments that they document coincide with the vital events of birth, marriage, and death and may include additional ethnographic and family information not available elsewhere. Following a decree of the Church Council of Trent, from ca. 1550s to ca. 1850s, ethnic and/or racial designations accompanied all sacramental records, which were written in Latin to ca. 1850s-1940s and local vernacular languages thereafter, including French and Spanish as well as English. Ethnographic designations may be as general, e.g. "Indian," "sauvage" [French], or denote specific tribal names are common up to the 19th century.

When baptized, Native Americans usually took biblical names as forenames, some of which have been expressed in native language variations, e.g. "Kateri," the Mohawk version of Catherine. During the 19th and 20th centuries, many Native Americans adopted surnames derived from their respective indigenous heritage and expressed either in their native or a European language, whereas others acquired names directly from European languages, such as women married to Euro-Americans or persons of mixed race who inherited a European surname from a European ancestor.

Usually baptismal records are most complete whereas burial records are least complete. In populations with few surnames, record indices may be alphabetized by forenames rather than surnames. Latin terms used frequently in the records include "in coemet." for "in cemetery," which notes that the person buried was interred in that cemetery. Sacramental records, however, must be studied with care as occasional clerical errors, cross-cultural misunderstandings, and omissions were made.

Established parishes are required to maintain records for baptisms (a sacrament of initiation, usually given near birth), first communions (Eucharist), confirmations, marriages, and deaths and burials administered

within the parish, which includes attended missions, chapels, and stations (e.g. government Indian schools). Copies of sacramental records and original sacramental registers more than 70 years old are often kept by the diocesan archives. By 1900, families, parishes, and missionaries began photographing the reception of sacraments, which has provided some additional documentation. See Diocesan Archives and Parish (and/or School) and Pastor for further information.

Baptismal entries typically include the date of the sacrament, the person's date of birth and full name, the parents' names (including the mother's maiden name), and the sponsors' names (godfather and godmother). When adults were baptized, the entries usually included the Latin phrase "neo conversa," meaning "new convert." The notation "illegitimus," meant that the child was born out of wedlock. Also, notations regarding a person's eventual marriage might be added later.

First communion and confirmation registers are usually of limited value to genealogists. Most often these sacraments are given to children and teenagers, which typically place the person and their family in a certain location at a certain time unless the person was enrolled in a boarding school away from home. Sponsors for confirmation are sometimes listed, who may be family friends or relatives.

Marriages are recorded both in church and civil archives. However, sometimes only the church records have survived. While formats vary, the essential information of bride's name, groom's name, and date of marriage are always recorded. Typically, names of witnesses, parents of the bride and groom, and the parish (or place of residency) of non-parishioner spouses are also given.

Death and burial records are associated records, which strictly speaking, are not sacramental records. When a Catholic dies, a Mass of Christian Burial is almost always celebrated in the parish church. Records of these events rarely contain more than the name of the deceased, age at death, and date of death and burial. Occasionally other details such as cause of death, spouse's name, number of children, parents' names, and even place of birth are recorded. Oftentimes Catholics were not only buried from their respective church but were laid to rest in church-run cemeteries. Typically in rural areas, these were adjacent to the church whereas in urban areas, several parishes or the diocese established and administered them. In the latter case, the records were usually maintained separate from the parish by a diocesan cemetery association.

Saint

In the proper names of institutions and places and as titles, "Saint" is abbreviated "St." when singular and "Ss." when plural. The French "Sainte" is not abbreviated.

Secularization

In frontier New Spain (now Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas), the missions were farms and ranches as well as churches, which were dependant on local labor and government subsidies. When the Spanish and Mexican governments decreed that local communities were capable of supporting these churches without government aid, ownership of the mission lands, with the exception of the church buildings and immediate grounds, were transferred from the missionaries (e.g. Jesuits, Franciscans) to the local people and

church staffing was transferred from the missionaries (religious priests) to diocesan priests, if available.

Sister

A woman who is a member of a religious institute. "Soeur" (French) and the French language is used for the names of religious institutes based in French Canada (e.g. Soeurs grises" [Grey Nuns]). In the Marquette guides notable sisters are alphabetized independently in the Master Index with the title "Sister" and the initials of their religious institute. In the Marquette guides notable sisters are alphabetized independently in the Master Index with the title "Sister" and the initials of their religious institute.

More Information on Roman Catholic Terms

Stylebook on Religion 2000, A Reference Guide and Usage Manual, Catholic News Service, 2000; *Thesaurus of Catholic Diocesan Terms*, Association of Catholic Diocesan Archivists, 2000; and the Catholic Encyclopedia.