Monk and Nuns



Monks and nuns inhabit the lowest rung of the hierarchy in the Catholic Church. Religious brothers and sisters aren't members of the clergy, but they aren't members of the lay faithful, either. They're called *consecrated religious,* which means that they've taken sacred vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

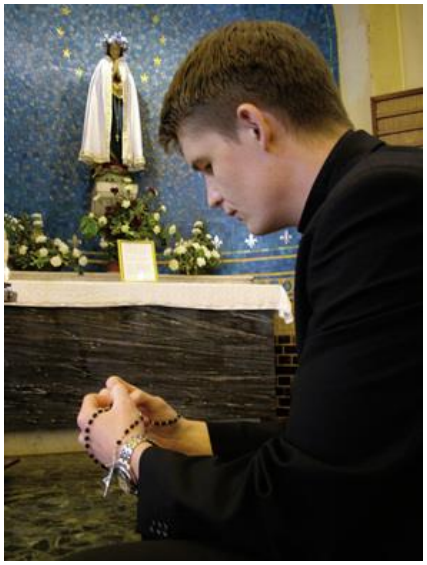
Consecrated religious live in community with other members of their order. They share all meals together and try to work together, pray together, and recreate together.

Because they take a vow of poverty, they don't own their own car, house or other personal items. The religious order they belong to provides all this, and they must ask their superiors when they need or want something.

- **Monastery:** Technically speaking, monks and nuns live in monasteries with restricted access to the outside world. Monasteries are places where only women as nuns reside or where only men as monks live.

- **Convent:** Religious sisters live in convents which offer more open access to the secular world. Residents typically live and pray in the convent but work outside in schools, hospitals, and so on.

- **Friary:** A friary is the male version of a convent. It's a place where religious men called *brothers* live, work, and pray together, although they may work outside the friary.



Priests

Priests do far more than celebrate Mass and pray all day. The life of a priest is busy, demanding, challenging—and incredibly rewarding.

The vast majority of priests live happy, fulfilling lives. They love the people they serve, and in turn, are loved by their parishioners.

Priests are traditionally seen as fulfilling the biblical role of priest, prophet, and king.

Men train to become priest at a seminary where they study faith through theology.

Teach: Priests instruct others about the faith.
Shepherd: Priests guide, unite, and encourage their parishioners.
Sanctify: Priests administer the sacraments and encourage holiness.

Individual priests have a very wide variety of tasks within the Church. There are many specialized ministries such as being a chaplain, working at the diocesan offices, or teaching in a seminary.

But the majority of priests serve in parishes. Their duties include:

- Celebrate Mass and preach the Gospel
- Lead a parish of Catholic Christians
- Bring new members into the Church through Baptism
- Hear Confessions and provide spiritual direction
- Help teens and young adults come to know Christ
- Prepare couples for marriage and counsel married couples
- Teach people how to pray
- Feed the poor, visit prisons, and advocate for justice
- Counsel people going through difficult times
- Visit the sick in hospitals and anoint them for healing
- Perform funerals and bury the dead
- Manage the temporal affairs of the parish
- Pray daily for the People of God