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# Church Organizational Terms

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**Acolyte** - an acolyte is a lay person, often a child or a teenager, who performs minor duties during the worship service to assist the ministers, such as lighting candles, carrying books, directing traffic during communion, and so forth.

**Archbishop** - the chief bishop responsible for an archdiocese.

**Bishop** - a senior member of the Christian clergy, typically in charge of a diocese and empowered to confer holy orders

**Canon (person)** - a member of the clergy who is on the staff of a cathedral, esp. one who is a member of the chapter. The position is frequently conferred as an honorary one.

**Cardinal** - a leading dignitary of the Roman Catholic Church. Cardinals are nominated by the Pope and form the Sacred College, which elects succeeding Popes (now invariably from among their own number).

**Catechumen** - a Christian convert under instruction before baptism. A young Christian preparing for confirmation.

**Celebrant** - a priest at the Eucharist.

**Clergy** - the body of all people ordained for religious duties in the Christian Church.

**Congregation** - a group of people assembled for religious worship or a group of people regularly attending a particular place of worship.

**Crucifer** - a person carrying a cross, or crucifix, in a procession.

**Curate** - a member of the clergy engaged as assistant to a vicar, rector, or parish priest.

**Deacon** - an ordained minister of an order ranking below that of priest.

**Dean** - the word dean has many uses throughout Christendom. Most often the term is used for the bishop's assistant who actually runs the cathedral.

**Diocese** - a district under the pastoral care of a bishop in the Christian Church.

**Elder** - an official in the early Christian Church, or of various Protestant Churches and sects.

**Father** - in the Roman Catholic Church a form of address, for the parish priest.

**Incumbent** - the holder of an office or post.

**Lay Reader** - in the Church of England a layperson licensed to preach and to conduct some religious services, but not licensed to celebrate the Eucharist.

**Minister** - a member of the clergy, esp. in Protestant churches.

**Officiant** - a person, typically a priest or minister, who performs a religious service or ceremony.

**Parish** - a small administrative district typically having its own church and a priest.

**Pastor** - a minister in charge of a Christian church or congregation.

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# Church Organizational Terms (Continued)

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**Pope** - the head of the Roman Catholic Church.

**Presbytery** - in the Roman Catholic Church the house of the parish priest. In the Church of England the eastern part of a church chancel beyond the choir; the sanctuary.

**Priest** - in the Roman Catholic Church a priest in charge of a church or of a religious institution. In the Church of England the incumbent of a parish where all tithes formerly passed to the incumbent. Compare with vicar.

**Priesthood** - the office or position of a priest. Priests in general.

**Rector** - in the Roman Catholic Church a priest in charge of a church or of a religious institution. In the Church of England the incumbent of a parish where all tithes formerly passed to the incumbent. Compare with vicar.

**Reverend** - used as a title or form of address to members of the clergy.

**See** - the place in which a cathedral church stands, identified as the seat of authority of a bishop or archbishop.

**Thurifer** - an acolyte carrying a censer (a container in which incense is burned).

**Vicar** - in the Roman Catholic Church a representative or deputy of a bishop. In the Church of England an incumbent of a parish where tithes formerly passed to a chapter or religious house or layman. Compare with Priest and Rector.

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# Church Organizational Terms (Continued)

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