



What's What

A weekly communication that provides an opportunity for our faith community to grow together in faith.

The Papacy

The papacy is an important part of the Catholic tradition. It serves many roles in the life of the Church. The most obvious is that of governance. As the Bishop of Rome, the pope is the leader of the Catholic Church. The Bishop of Rome holds primacy (or is first) among bishops because he is the successor to St. Peter. Recall that Jesus gave authority to Peter stating, "You are Peter, and on this Rock I will build my Church" (Matthew 16:18). Jesus gave Peter the power to bind and loosen not only on earth, but in heaven as well (Matt 16:19). This power of binding and loosening has been passed down to the successors of St. Peter as well. As such, the Church turned to the Bishop of Rome for leadership.

However, governance is not the only role of the papacy. One of the main functions of the papacy is to preserve authentic doctrine. That is, the pope is responsible for

preserving the faith held by the Apostles. Often, people think that the pope can do whatever he wants. However, due to his position, the pope is more bound than anyone else in the Church. This is because as the pope, he is responsible for safeguarding the faith of the Apostles. Therefore, the pope is not free to do whatever he pleases. He is not free to devise a new faith, or even to change the faith handed down by the Apostles. Instead, he is bound more so than other Catholics to understand the tradition that has been handed down for nearly 2,000 years and to preserve and defend the content of that teaching, no matter how popular or unpopular it may make him. Therefore, not only is he not free to change the faith, but he must study, live, and protect the faith to a higher degree than most other people. It may be interesting to note, that part of the reason the

Catholic Church insists not only on Scripture but Tradition as well, is that the entirety of what the Apostles taught was not written down in textbook fashion. Much of what they taught was done through actions (such as the rituals for celebrating the Eucharist). It is the job of the pope to ensure that these actions do not get lost over the course of time. *Donum Veritas* states that by preserving the faith of the Apostles, the papacy is able "to protect God's people from the danger of deviations and confusion, guaranteeing them the objective possibility of professing the authentic faith." Thus, by preserving the faith of the Apostles, we are able to be sure that the faith we proclaim is the same in content as that proclaimed by the Apostles who were taught by Jesus directly. We can be sure that our understanding of Jesus, his life and his teachings are not simply a modern interpretation based on ideologies that go in and out of vogue. Rather, they are the same understandings and interpretations that were held by the Apostles, who lived and worked alongside Jesus, and to whom Jesus sent the Holy Spirit as a guide.

Another important aspect of the papacy is that it serves as a visible sign of unity for all Catholics. By definition, a

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Things to talk about:

- Why is having a pope important to you?
- Have you ever seen a pope in person?
- What do you know about Pope Benedict XVI?

Catholic is in union with the pope. Since all Catholics are in union with this one person, the one person becomes a sign of that unity. It can be likened to the way in which the constitution is a sign of unity for Americans. However, the importance of this unity is greater than that of national unity. Ultimately, unity for Christians is about being united with Christ and each other in such a way that we can answer Jesus' prayer to be one just as He and the Father are one (John 17:21). By being united with the Pope, Catholics become visibly one in professing the same faith that was taught by the Apostles. This is the first step toward answering that prayer of Jesus.

- Deacon Brian Carpenter

Papal Prayer Intentions for August 2008

General:

That the human family may learn to respect God's plan for the world and become ever more aware that Creation is God's great gift.

Mission:

That the answer of the entire people of God to the common calling to holiness and mission may be promoted and fostered by means of careful discernment of charisms and constant commitment to spiritual and cultural formation.



Saint of the Day: St. Monica (322?-387)

On Wednesday, August 27, the Church remembers St Monica.

The circumstances of St. Monica’s life could have made her a nagging wife, a bitter daughter-in-law and a despairing parent, yet she did not give way to any of these temptations. Although she was a Christian, her parents gave her in marriage to a pagan, Patricius, who lived in her hometown of Tagaste in North Africa. Patricius had some redeeming features, but he had a violent temper and was licentious. Monica also had to bear with a cantankerous mother-in-law who lived in her home. Patricius criticized his wife because of her charity and piety, but always respected her. Monica’s prayers and example finally won her husband and mother-in-law to Christianity. Her husband died in 371, one year after his Baptism.

Monica had at least three children who survived infancy. The oldest, Augustine, is the most famous. At the time of his father’s death, Augustine was 17 and a

rhetoric student in Carthage. Monica was distressed to learn that her son had accepted the Manichean heresy and was living an immoral life. For a while, she refused to let him eat or sleep in her house. Then one night she had a vision that assured her Augustine would return to the faith. From that time on she stayed close to her son, praying and fasting for him. In fact, she often stayed much closer than Augustine wanted.

When he was 29, Augustine decided to go to Rome to teach rhetoric. Monica was determined to go along. One night he told his mother that he was going to the dock to say goodbye to a friend. Instead, he set sail for Rome. Monica was heartbroken when she learned of Augustine’s trick, but she still followed him. She arrived in Rome only to find that he had left for Milan. Although travel was difficult, Monica pursued him to Milan.

In Milan Augustine came under the influence of the bishop, St. Ambrose, who

also became Monica’s spiritual director. She accepted his advice in everything and had the humility to give up some practices that had become second nature to her. Monica became a leader of the devout women in Milan as she had been in Tagaste.

She continued her prayers for Augustine during his years of instruction. At Easter, 387, St. Ambrose baptized Augustine and several of his friends. Soon after, his party left for Africa. Although no one else was aware of it, Monica knew her life was near the end. She told Augustine, “Son, nothing in this world now affords me delight. I do not know what there is now left for me to do or why I am still here, all my hopes in this world being now fulfilled.” She became ill shortly after and suffered severely for nine days before her death.

Almost all we know about St. Monica is in the writings of St. Augustine, especially his Confessions.

From www.americancatholic.org



A Prayer for the Pope

Lord, source of eternal life and truth, give to Your shepherd, the Pope, a spirit of courage and right judgement, a spirit of knowledge and love.

By governing with fidelity those entrusted to his care may he, as successor to the apostle Peter and vicar of Christ, build Your church into a sacrament of unity, love, and peace for all the world.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Some of the Titles for the Pope

The titles of the Pope, in the order they are used in the *Annuario Pontificio*:

- Bishop of Rome
- Vicar of Christ
- Successor of the Prince of the Apostles
- Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church
- Primate of Italy
- Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province
- Sovereign of the State of the Vatican City
- Servant of the Servants of God

“What’s What” is a publication of the Youth Ministry Department of St Mary, Canandaigua, and St Bridget, Bloomfield.

Our Youth Ministry Mission Statement:

Building on the mission of our parishes to follow the way of Christ in our thoughts, words, and deeds, and to make Christ more fully present in all who live within our community, the Youth Ministry mission is to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world today; to affirm the gifts of our youth and provide opportunities for young people to share their gifts with the larger community; and to meet the religious, spiritual and social needs of all youth with the committed leadership, guidance and support of our parish family, providing an opportunity for our entire faith community to grow together in Christian faith.