

THE DIOCESES IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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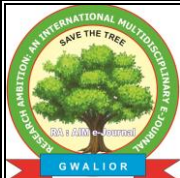
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The diocese is the territory or Churches subject to the jurisdiction of a Bishop. The term diocese (GK-Diokesis) was used to designate management of a household or administration of a government in general. In Roman law it was used to designate the territory dependent for its administration upon a city. As the Bishop usually used to reside in a city, the territory administered by him came to be known as a diocese

The original terms for the local group of Christians subject to a Bishop were called ekklesia (Church) and at a later date Paroikia, that is, the neighbourhood. The Council of Nicea in 325(canon XVI) used this term to designate the territory subject to a Bishop. The Council of Constantinople 381 reserved the word to a territory subject to a Patriarch (canon II) and Paroikia for the territory of a Bishop.

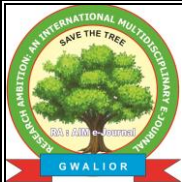
The Apostles enjoyed a worldwide ecclesiastical jurisdiction but for their successors the Bishops, jurisdiction extended only to a certain limited territory.

From the beginning of the creation (Gen1) God has always wanted to dwell with humanity That is why he created man and women in his own image and in his own likeness(Gen 1:27)Breathing his Spirit into human beings(Gen 2:7) he made them capable of being God indwelling Man has always wanted to be by himself independent of God, So God chose a portion of humanity and began to dwell with them and through them he has tried to reach out to the rest of humanity to accept him to be with them. That's why once again Circa B.C 2000 God called Abraham to be with him and his posterity to be a divine blessing and salvation to all humanity and he said to Abraham "Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father's house to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you All the communities of the earth shall find blessings in you."(Gen 12:1-3).



At last, Jesus Christ, Son of God, himself became man (Lk 1:26-38; Mt 1:18-24; Jn 1:1-14) to dwell with humanity. "to those who accepted him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice, nor by man's decision but of God" (Jn 1:12-13) and made them capable of becoming God's dwelling. In this way Jesus began to create a New Humanity, the Church, to be the instrument of God's salvation/redemption and a divine blessing for all humanity. To do this he gathered a group to possess a magnificent promise "fear not little folk for it is your father's (God the Father's) good pleasure to give you the kingdom (Lk 12:32). Thus he laid the foundation for an extensive Organization, the Roman Catholic Church. The clearest sign that Jesus wanted a community to develop is that he deliberately gathered disciples around Him. Every rabbi had disciples. The disciples chose their rabbis. They graduated in Torah (Law) and its interpretations and they themselves became masters, rabbis. But with Jesus it was the other way around. It was not the disciples who chose Jesus but Jesus chose them and called them to follow him (Mk 3:13) with sovereign authority. As a prophet and rabbi, Jesus sought man's heart and thus there stemmed from him a New People, the Church to which the whole of mankind is called, a mankind which makes no distinction of Nationality, color, language or race, caste or culture. The purpose of the New People is Salvation/Redemption of the whole humanity.

Therefore Jesus paid special attention to the formation of the twelve (Jn 4:2). He made the Twelve not mere disciples but Apostles, heralds of an event, the coming of the kingdom of God and the will of God. The mission of the Twelve was one of the great authority as Mathew writes: "he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every infirmity" (Mt 10:1). The very name 'Apostle' indicates great authority. '*Apostolos*' in Greek means 'he who is sent' – an 'envoy'. It is a translation of the Hebrew word "*shaliach*". At the time of Jesus "envoy" was invested with full powers, He was not a mere spokesperson or messenger. Thus the Apostles are more than the ordinary disciples of the rabbis. The disciples of rabbis could graduate into rabbis and be masters themselves. But the Apostles could never become what Jesus is. Jesus and he alone is the Lord. The apostles receive their authority by delegation from Jesus to whom all power and authority and sovereignty in heaven and earth belongs (Mt 28:18-20).



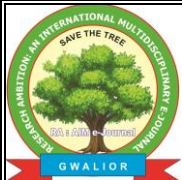
To delegate his power and authority Jesus carefully prepared the twelve Apostles. When power and authority is delegated they should be able to receive and possess and use them for the benefit of people they were God's powers and authority given by God himself. So to receive them to benefit the people they should develop in themselves Godly attitudes and in the people who benefit from it.. So Jesus taught the instilled in the twelve Apostles Godly attitudes (Sermon on the Mount Mt5:7). He taught them to pray the universal prayer the "**Our Father**". He instructed them in Apostolic Missionary Discourse (Mt 10) and Ecclesiastical Discourse (Mt 18). He called them to live with him and learn the Godly ways from him corrected them when they were not childlike, simply and humble, and when they wanted to lord over others instead of being servant- like (Jn13:13-15) you call me 'teacher' and 'master' and rightly so, far indeed I am. If I therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, You ought to wash one another's feet I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do,. He taught them and instilled in them kindness and compassion and invited them to be perfect as God is perfect himself. He taught them to forgive others numberless times and above all to love their enemies and to do good to them.

Having prepared for the mission them a commissioned he the twelve (Mt 10:2-4) (later the 70) to go and proclaim the Kingdom of God and heal the sick which included the casting out of unclear spirits. He demanded that on their mission they should depend completely on God and pay no attention or be anxious even for basic necessities of life "take nothing for the journey, no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic" Before sending them on the Mission he asked them to pray to the Lord of harvest to send laborers for the harvest and give glory to God for their success in the Mission.

Having prepared and formed them for three years Jesus at the Last Supper ordained them to Ministerial Priesthood and after his resurrection breathed the Holy Spirit into them and gave the power and authority to forgive sins.

The office of the Apostles

Jesus was "as one who served" among his Apostles and at the same time he was the authority at the centre of the little flock. In the same way he gave the Apostles the charge of being servants of God's people and at the same time be his own authoritative representatives. The task which he



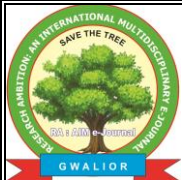
conferred is described in such words as these: “truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Mt18:18) Loosing and binding signifies authority, both to govern a community and to decide questions. During the Last Supper, he also gave his Apostles the mandate, “Do this in memory of me” (Lk 22 :19) .and after the resurrection, the gospel shows him breathing upon his apostles the Holy Spirit and saying, “if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven ; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained”(Jn 20:22). To govern, to teach, to administer the sacraments of the Lord- it was with such authority that the Apostles were equipped.

The Transmission of the office

The New Testament also gives us a glimpse of the care which the Apostles had to transmit their pastoral office after their death Paul, who was also an Apostle, through the explicit mandate of the Lord, said to the leaders of the communities of Asia Minor: “ And now, behold, I know that all youwill see my face no more... take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians, to feed the Church of God”(Acts 20:25-28). He wrote to Titus: “This is why I left you in Crete, that you might amend what was defective (in the organization), and appoint elders in every town as I directed you” (Tit 1:5). There is also another way to trace the existence of the Episcopal office in the ancient Church.

When an appeal was made towards the end of the second century to the tradition of the Apostles, it was a tradition or succession of Bishops, whose names are listed Thus St Irenaeus in his “Against the Heretics”, a work written about 180, names the Bishops of Smyrna and the Rome from the times of the Apostles down to his own time. Similar lists exist for Alexandria, Jerusalem and Antioch. The occasion for mentioning the lists –the preservation of the purity of the message against heretics –also reveals perhaps something of the circumstances in which the office took precisely the form it did. The one supreme (monarchical) ruler was the guarantee of the unity of the Church in each place.

The last instruction of Jesus to the Apostles at his ascension into heaven was:
(Mt28:18-20) “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age”. And in Acts of Apostles (Acts1:8) But you will receive power when the



Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witness in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth". Accordingly they waited in Jerusalem to receive the Holy Spirit to fulfill the mission entrusted to them by Christ. (Acts 1:13) At Pentecost they were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4)": Then Peter spoke. His was the first speech made by an apostle (Acts 2:14) Then Peter stood up with the eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them, (Acts 2:38, 2:41) Peter (said) to them," Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:41) Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added that day". And there was the First Christian community in the world.

The Way of Life of Christians was exemplary. (Acts 2:42-47), (Acts 4:32)

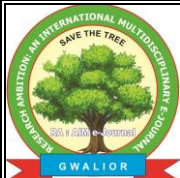
Many were attracted by their way of life and became Christians. The Christian Community began to grow. Due to the growing number of Christians and the spread of Christianity worldwide it became necessary to divide and sub divide the Church (Communities of Christians) into many different communities. But each unit of the Christian community had and has all the elements of One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church the Universal Church is the communion of local Churches.

History

The earliest organization of the Church in Jerusalem was, according to most scholars, similar to that of Jewish synagogues, but it had a council or college of ordained presbyters (Greek: *ἐπρεσβύτεροι* elders). In (Acts 11:30 and Acts 15:22), we see a collegiate system of government in Jerusalem chaired by James the Just, according to tradition the first bishop of the city. In Acts 14:23, the Apostle Paul ordains presbyters in Churches in Anatolia.

In Timothy and Titus in the New Testament a more clearly defined episcopate can be seen. We are told that Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus and Titus in Crete to oversee the local Church (1Tim 1:3 and Titus 1:5). Paul commands Titus to ordain presbyters and to exercise general oversight, telling him to "rebuke with all authority" (Titus 2:15).

Eventually, as Christendom grew, bishops no longer directly served individual congregations. Instead, the Metropolitan Bishop (the bishop in a large city) appointed Priests to minister each congregation, acting as the Bishop's delegate.



The Apostolic Fathers:

Around the end of the 1st century, the Church's organization became clearer in historical documents. In the works of the Apostolic Fathers, and Ignatius of Antioch in particular, the role of the episkopos, or Bishop, became more important or, rather, already was very important and being clearly defined. Ignatius of Antioch offers the earliest clear description of monarchical Bishops (a single Bishop over all house Churches in a city). To the Bishops and house Churches to which he writes, he offers strategies on how to pressure house churches who don't recognize the Bishop into compliance.

Ignatius, disciple of John the Apostle appointed by St. Peter Bishop of Antioch.

"Plainly therefore we ought to regard the Bishop as the Lord Himself"

— ¹*Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians 6:1.*

"Your godly Bishop" — ²

Ignatius of Antioch

- ¹. "Now, therefore, it has been my privilege to see you in the person of your God-Inspired bishop, Damas; and in the persons of your worthy presbyters, delight in his company! For he is subject to the Bishop as to the grace of God, and to the presbytery as to the law of Jesus Christ" ³ (*Letter to the Magnesians 2 [A.D. 110]*)

"The Bishop presiding after the likeness of God and the presbyters after the likeness of the council of the Apostles, with the Deacons also who are most dear to me, having been entrusted with the diaconate of Jesus Christ"⁴

"Therefore as the Lord did nothing without the Father, [being united with Him], either by Himself or by the Apostles, so neither do ye anything without the bishop and the presbyters."⁵

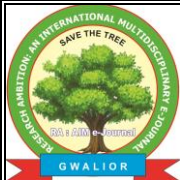
¹ Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians 6:1

² Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians 6:1

³ Letter to the Magnesians 2:1 [A.D. 110]

⁴ Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians 7:1

⁵ Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians 13:2.



"Be obedient to the Bishop and to one another, as Jesus Christ was to the Father [according to the flesh], and as the Apostles were to Christ and to the Father, that there may be union both of flesh and of Spirit."⁶

"In like manner let all men respect the Deacons as Jesus Christ, even as they should respect the Bishop as being a type of the Father and the presbyters as the council of God and as the college of Apostles. Apart from these there is not even the name of a Church."⁷

"Follow your Bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father and the presbytery as the Apostles; and to the Deacons pay respect, as to God's commandment" ⁸

"He that honoureth the Bishop is honoured of God; he that doeth aught without the knowledge of the Bishop rendered service to the devil" — ⁹

"He that is within the sanctuary is pure; but he that is outside the sanctuary is not pure. In other words, anyone who acts without the Bishop and the presbytery and the Deacons does not have a clear conscience" (ibid. 7:2).

"I cried out while I was in your midst, I spoke with a loud voice, the voice of God: 'Give heed to the Bishop and the presbytery and the Deacons.' some suspect me of saying this because I had previous knowledge of the division certain persons had caused; but he for whom I am in chains is my witness that I had no knowledge of this from any man. it was the spirit who kept preaching these words,' do nothing without the Bishop, keep your body as the temple of god, love unity , flee from divisions, be imitators of Jesus Christ, as he was imitator of the father"¹⁰(letter to the Philadelphians 7:1-2[A.D.110]).

As the Church continued to expand, new Churches in important cities gained their own Bishop. Churches in the regions outside an important city were served by Chorbishop, an official rank of Bishops. However, soon, presbyters and Deacons were sent from Bishop of a city Church. Gradually priests replaced the chorbishops. Thus, in time, the Bishop changed from being the leader of a single Church confined to an urban area to being the leader of the Churches of a given geographical area.

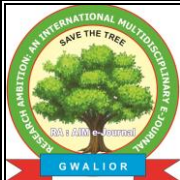
⁶ Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallesians 3:1.

⁷ Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnans 8:1

⁸ Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnans 9:1.

⁹ Letter to the Magnesians 2 [A.D. 110]

¹⁰ letter to the Philadelphians 7:1-2 [A.D.110]



Clement of Alexandria (end of the 2nd century)

Writes about the ordination of a certain Zachæus as Bishop by the imposition of Simon Peter Bar-Jonah's hands. The words Bishop and ordination are used in their technical meaning by the same Clement of Alexandria.¹¹ “DidascalivaSiy” IV, III, 10, 11, 20, Cornelius, “Adfambionum, in Eusebius, Hsitoria Ecclesiastics, VI, X list. 5:9:1 The Bishops in the 2nd century are defined also as the only clergy to whom the ordination to Priesthood (presbyterate) and diaconate is entrusted: "a Priest (presbyter) lies on hands, but does not ordain." (cheirotheteioucheirotonei)Bishops (episcopoi) have the care of multiple congregations and appoint, ordain, and discipline Priests and Deacons. They sometimes appear to be called "evangelists" in the New Testament. Examples of first-century Bishops include Timothy and Titus (1 Tim. 5:19–22; 2 Tim. 4:5; Titus 1:5).

Although the terms "Bishop," "Priest," and "Deacon" were somewhat fluid in the apostolic age, by the beginning of the second century they had achieved the fixed form in which they are used today to designate the three offices whose functions are clearly distinct in the New Testament.

Ignatius of Antioch:

“Now, therefore, it has been my privilege to see you in the person of your God-inspired Bishop, Damas; and in the persons of your worthy presbyters, Bassus and Apollonius; and my fellow-servant, the deacon, Zotion. What a delight is his company! For he is subject to the Bishop as to the grace of God, and to the presbytery as to the law of Jesus Christ”¹²

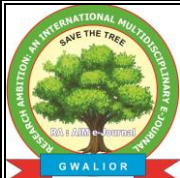
“Take care to do all things in harmony with God, with the Bishop presiding in the place of God, and with the presbyters in the place of the council of the Apostles, and with the Deacons, who are most dear to me, entrusted with the business of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father from the beginning and is at last made manifest”¹³

“Take care, therefore, to be confirmed in the decrees of the Lord and of the apostles, in order that in everything you do, you may prosper in body and in soul, in faith and in love, in Son and in Father and in Spirit, in beginning and in end, together with your most reverend Bishop; and with

¹¹ (ibid., 6:1)

¹² (ibid., 13:1-2)

¹³ Letter to the Trallians 2:1-3[AD.110]



that fittingly woven spiritual crown, the presbytery; and with the deacons, men of God. Be subject to the Bishop and to one another as Jesus Christ was subject to the Father, and the Apostles were subject to Christ and to the Father; so that there may be unity in both body and Spirit”¹⁴

“Indeed, when you submit to the Bishop as you would to Jesus Christ, it is clear to me that you are living not in the manner of men but as Jesus Christ, who died for us, that through faith in his death you might escape dying. It is necessary, therefore—and such is your practice that you do nothing without the Bishop, and that you be subject also to the presbytery, as to the apostles of Jesus Christ our hope, in whom we shall be found, if we live in him. It is necessary also that the Deacons, the dispensers of the mysteries [sacraments] of Jesus Christ, be in every way pleasing to all men. For they are not the Deacons of food and drink, but servants of the Church of God. They must therefore guard against blame as against fire”¹⁵

“In like manner let everyone respect the Deacons as they would respect Jesus Christ, and just as they respect the Bishop as a type of the Father, and the presbyters as the council of God and college of the Apostles. Without these, it cannot be called a Church. I am confident that you accept this, for I have received the exemplar of your love and have it with me in the person of your Bishop. His very demeanor is a great lesson and his meekness is his strength. I believe that even the Godless do respect him”¹⁶

Clement of Alexandria: "A multitude of other pieces of advice to particular persons is written in the holy books: some for presbyters, some for Bishops and Deacons; and others for widows, of whom we shall have opportunity to speak elsewhere"¹⁷(The Instructor of the Children 3:12:97:2[AD208])

Hippolytus says that presbyter does not ordain the clergy; for at the ordaining of a presbyter, he but seals while the Bishop ordains ^{(The Apostolic Tradition 9 [A.D. 215]).}

Patrick of Ireland:

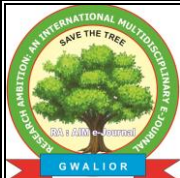
"I, Patrick, the sinner, am the most rustic and the least of all the faithful . . . had for my father Calpornius, a Deacon, a son of Potitus, a priest, who belonged to the village of BannavemTaberniae. .

¹⁴ (ibid., 3:1-2)

¹⁵ (ibid., 7:2)

¹⁶ (ibid.,)

¹⁷ (Confession of St. Patrick 1 [A.D. 452]).



At that time I was barely sixteen years of age . . . and I was led into captivity in Ireland with many thousands of persons, in accordance with our deserts, for we turned away from God, and kept not his commandments, and were not obedient to our Priests, who were wont to admonish us for our salvation"¹⁸

I, Patrick, the sinner, unlearned as everybody knows, avow that I have been established a bishop in Ireland. Most assuredly I believe that I have received from God what I am. And so I dwell in the midst of barbarous heaths, a stranger and an exile for the love of God"¹⁹

In Canon Law a particular church is called "Diocese" or "eparchy". Vatican II also calls it a "local Church". A Diocese has the following characteristics:

- A portion of the people of God.
- An image of the universal Church.
- Its pastoral care is entrusted to a Bishop for him to shepherd it with the cooperation of Priests and Deacons.
- The people, their Bishops and priests are gathered into a communion of love, hope and charity by three forces: Holy Spirit, Gospel and Eucharist.
- As a rule, diocese is territorial and includes all the faithful living in the territory.

Nevertheless, within the same territory another particular Church can be established on another basis, e.g.; language, rite, nationality, etc. (cc.369; 372). In India, for instance, several SyroMalabar and SyroMalankara rite dioceses (eparchies) have been established within the territories of the Latin rite dioceses.

¹⁸ Confession of St.Patrick 1[A.D.452]John skinner in 1998

¹⁹ (Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus 1 [A.D. 452]).