

Wednesday of the 14th Week of Ordinary Time

Homily of Bishop John Barres

St. Agnes Cathedral

July 12, 2023

The Tenth Chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, verses 1-7, shows us the calling and sending forth of the twelve Apostles.

We thank God today for the four marks of the Catholic Church. We thank God that the Church is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic.

We thank God for the Twelve Apostles and all their Successors in history – all united around the Successors of Peter. We pray for them today in their missionary role of teaching, sanctifying and governing the People of God.

“Successors of the Apostles by divine institution, Bishops are constituted as Pastors of the Church when the Holy Spirit is conferred upon them at their episcopal ordination, and they receive the task of teaching, sanctifying and governing in hierarchical communion with the Successor of Peter and with the other members of the episcopal college.”¹

It makes sense this morning for us to review and pray section 857 of *Catechism of the Catholic Church* which describes why the Catholic Church is “apostolic”:

“The Church is apostolic because she is founded on the apostles in three ways:

--she was and remains built on “the foundation of the Apostles,” the witnesses chosen and sent on mission by Christ himself;

--with the help of the Spirit Dwelling in her, the Church keeps and hands on the teaching, the “good deposit,” the salutary words she has heard from the apostles;

¹ Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops, 2004, Introduction, 5.

--she continues to be taught, sanctified, and guided by the apostles until Christ's return, through their successors in pastoral office: the college of bishops, assisted by priests, in union with the successor of Peter, the Church's supreme pastor."

I invite you later today to go back to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and review section 857. Use the Catechism frequently to enrich your Catholic Faith and your spiritual life.

There is a beautiful prayer grounded in the psalms that I often pray. It reads: "Father, as you made springs in valleys to form streams between mountains, so you made living streams of grace flow from the apostles that their teaching may bring salvation to all nations."

We ask the intercession of the Twelve Apostles today that we ourselves can be truly apostolic missionaries and evangelizers.

We pray for all Bishops, all successors of the Apostles around the world. In a special way, we pray for the Successor of Peter, our Holy Father Pope Francis. We pray for the soul of Pope Benedict XVI and we ask the intercession of Pope St. John XXIII, Pope St. Paul VI, Pope Blessed John Paul I, and Pope St. John Paul II for a rich harvest of vocations to the priesthood on Long Island and in the Universal Church.

I would also ask you to pray for our dedicated evangelizing Bishops in the Diocese of Rockville Centre: Bishop Andrzej, Bishop Robert Coyle, Bishop Luis Romero, Bishop Emeritus William Murphy and retired Bishop John Dunne. Please also pray for the souls of the deceased Bishops of the Diocese.

Please pray for the diocesan bishops who were priests and in some cases auxiliary bishops in the Diocese of Rockville Centre: Archbishop Nelson Perez of Philadelphia, former rector of St. Agnes Cathedral Bishop William Koenig of the Diocese of Wilmington, Delaware and the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Bishop Peter Libasci of the Diocese of Manchester, New Hampshire, Bishop Robert Guglielmone, Emeritus Bishop of the Diocese of Charleston, South Carolina, Bishop Robert Brennan of the Diocese of Brooklyn and Bishop Richard Henning of the Diocese of Providence, Rhode Island.

May all of us give thanks to God today for the liberating Catholic truth of Apostolic Succession. Pray for the spirit of holiness and mission of all Bishops. Pray for the spirit of holiness and mission of all priests. Pray for a rich harvest of vocations. God bless you!