

Chapter 12 **The Church Today**

I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth. *Isaiah 49:6*

To the Parents:

In chapter 12, your child learned the following:

- All human beings, who have one heavenly Creator, are connected to one another.
- The Church, although universal, promotes justice at the local and national levels.
- Catholics have a mission to evangelize, which is as urgent today as it was in apostolic times.

Throughout the history of the United States, Catholics have arrived in this country as strangers, newcomers, and people looking for a new home. Today, Catholicism in the United States is blessed by a rich diversity of cultures, races, and ethnic backgrounds. Hospitable parishes welcome all those who come to them seeking justice, friendship, and a community of faith.

In the centuries since the founding of the United States, Catholics have brought their customs, traditions, and practices to build a Church that now reflects the diversity of its members. Such diversity shows a Catholic identity that celebrates these differences while maintaining a connection to the universal Church. Catholic Americans are now participants in mainstream political, educational, and legislative institutions, and can help shape the values that form the American way of life in a positive and Christian way.

With Your Child:

1. Find out your family's history in the United States. If possible, ask relatives to share their experiences as immigrants and as Catholics in a new country.
2. Talk about controversial issues that the Church takes a stand against—abortion, euthanasia, suicide, capital punishment—and how they all relate to the Church's view of the sacredness of life.
3. Think of the diversity of your own parish and learn about the cultures and backgrounds of the people with whom you pray.
4. Read about Thea Bowman on the Review and Explore page.