



## **Laity**

The word laity is derived from the Greek word *laos* meaning people. In the Catholic Church, the laity in general terms is the People of God, a term that gained popularity during the Second Vatican Council. The laity are believers who have been initiated into the Church through the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, but have not been ordained priests or professed as religious sisters or brothers.

Before the Second Vatican Council in the mid-1960s, the place of laity was often deemed below that of priests and religious. In the last fifty years, however lay involvement in church affairs and liturgical celebrations has increased dramatically. Lay men and women are actively involved in a range of ministries that includes them being teachers in Catholic schools, readers at Mass, taking communion to the sick, members of Parish Pastoral Councils and leading faith communities in the absence of a priest.