

CATHEDRAL BASILICA SHRINE CHAPEL

Having travelled to many different countries and seen many different churches, I suddenly realised that I didn't know the difference between different types of churches used in the Catholic church.

This document attempts to explain in simple terms the differences between a Cathedral, Basilica, Shrine, and Chapel within the Catholic Church.

WHAT IS A CATHEDRAL

Bishop is the title given to an ordained member of the Roman Catholic Church and head of an area of land called a diocese.

A cathedral is a church run by a bishop; it's the principal church within a diocese, which is the area of land over which a bishop has jurisdiction.

The major factor differentiating a cathedral from a church or chapel is the presence of a bishop. A cathedral is the home church for the bishop or archbishop of a diocese. It takes its name from the bishop's chair, called a '*cathedra*' in Latin.

Cathedrals are the mother churches of their dioceses and act as focal points for services and celebrations for those worshipping in churches throughout the diocese. Its primary purpose is to be a place of Christian worship. They also have choirs involving adults and children, both boys and girls and produce music of a very high standard.

WHAT IS A BASILICA

A Basilica was a large oblong hall or building in ancient Rome. It had double colonnades and a semi-circular apse, and it was used as a law court or for public assemblies. As Christianity grew, its name was used for a large and important church building.

In the Catholic church, a basilica is a designation the Pope gives to a church building, conferring special privileges. There are either major basilicas—of which there are four, all in the diocese of Rome—or minor basilicas, of which there were 1,810 worldwide as of 2019.

THE ANCIENT FOUR MAJOR BASILICAS OF ROME ARE:

The Basilica of St Peter,
The Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls,
The Basilica of St Mary Major
The Arch-Basilica of St John Lateran.

A basilica has the highest permanent designation. A cathedral, however, may or may not have the status of a basilica, but it is where the Bishop's

throne is, which would give that cathedral a more excellent status than a basilica.

SHRINE

Canon 1230 specifically states, "The term shrine signifies a church or other sacred place to which the faithful make pilgrimages for a particular pious reason with the approval of the local ordinary." The distinguishing mark of a shrine is that it is a place to which the faithful make pilgrimages.

CHAPEL

A chapel is a place of worship; it's all about the physical space and is usually smaller than a church—sometimes just a room—and can be within a church itself or in a secular place like a hospital or airport.

Smaller spaces inside a church that have their altar are often called chapels; the Lady Chapel is a common type of these.