



You may have seen in your weekly parish bulletin, one of the Sunday Mass Intensions (and on Holy Days of Obligation) “For the People of the Parish” (or in Latin: Pro Populo). Why? Well, here is what the Roman Catholic Church’s Code of Canon Law says about it:

After a pastor has taken possession of his parish, he is obliged to apply a Mass for the people entrusted to him [his pastoral care] on each Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation in his diocese. [*Canons 534 - 540 extends this also to Parish Administrators.*]

It is commonly understood in the Church, that a pastor has pastoral care and responsibility for all of the people within his parish’s geographical boundaries, not just for Catholics. For example, read what the Code of Canon Law has to say about his obligation [and the parish faithful] to preach the Word of God and evangelize his parish:

A pastor is obliged to make provision, so that the Word of God is proclaimed in its entirety to those living in the parish [boundaries]. For this reason, he is to take care that the lay members of the Christian faithful are instructed in the truths of the faith, especially by giving a homily on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation and by offering catechetical instruction. He is to foster works through which the Spirit of the Gospel is promoted, even in what pertains to social justice. He is to have particular care for the Catholic education of children and youth. He is to make every effort, even with the collaboration of the Christian faithful, **that the message of the gospel comes also to those who have ceased the practice of their religion or do not profess the true faith.** (*Canon 528*)

So, on those 57 or so days a year when Mass is offered “For the People of the Parish”, it is being offered not only for you, *but for all who live within the parish boundaries*, even those who have another faith or no faith at all!

Tell your non-Catholic neighbors: *We are praying for you each week. We hope you will someday join us. The door is always open. Can I answer any questions for you about the Catholic faith?*

This is in fact, one of the ways that you can collaborate with your Pastor in his work of proclaiming the Word of God to the entire parish. And you never know what kind of seed that you will plant in your neighbors’ heart(s), to know that we pray for them and offer what is most important and sacred to us, the Holy Eucharist, for them as well!