**culture:** Culture is the **system of meanings, beliefs, values** and held in common by a group or by a part of society. It is the web of meanings spun by a particular group in order to live daily life. Because each society has a unique configuration of meanings, beliefs and values, cultures differ one from the other. Each culture has a unique identity.

**tradition:** The systems of beliefs and values come from a shared or common experience of a society. They are inherited from parents, schools, literature, art and the media. Tradition is the sum-total of beliefs, values, practices that culture has inherited. For Catholics, "tradition" has another important meaning: "What Christ gave to the apostles, they in turn handed on by their preaching and writing, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to all generations, until Christ returns in glory" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 196). Tradition in this sense is the handing on of the living gospel through the apostolic succession of bishops, the chief teachers in the Church.

**multicultural societies:** Canadian society is multicultural we have not one set of and values, but many. We refer to this diversity as our "cultural mosaic."

**expressions of culture:** The sets of meanings, beliefs, values and practices are formed around the **basic needs of human beings** (the for food, housing, health, religion, work, communication, etc.). Each culture expresses these needs differently. Also, within each culture, different sets of meanings, and interact with other sets to form a total set of beliefs, values and meanings.

**institutions:** Over time, the sets or systems of meanings, beliefs and values around such things as food, housing, health, education or the economy become stabilized and take on a lasting **form in social structures.** We call these stable forms institutions. They include things like agriculture, health care, religion, economy, **sports and communication.** Each culture's institutions will have things in common with and different from the institutions of other cultures.

**symbolic action:** Culture is the way we eat, the way we dress, the way we live in houses, the way we play, the way we exchange goods. We never only eat, just dress ourselves, or just speak. We eat and dress and play and pray in a certain way. We do not just speak; we speak English. All of our actions are symbolic in the sense that they reveal something of our values, beliefs and meaning structures.