

## HOLY ORDERS



### Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we praise you for the gift of your Son who is our Good Shepherd and one true High Priest who leads us to you. Help us to understand the Sacrament of Holy Orders as a way for you to provide us shepherds in the image of your Son to guide us into your presence. In your wisdom, continue to send us good shepherds to guide and direct the Church. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Scripture Reading *John 10:11-16*

In the Gospel of John, Jesus gives several descriptions of his true identity. In this case, he describes himself as the Good Shepherd who knows and has a relationship with his sheep. In the sacrament of Holy Orders, Jesus offers the Church shepherds to accompany and care for the members of the Church.

### What is the Sacrament of Holy Orders?

- By Christ's command, the sacrament of orders establishes some among the Christian faithful as sacred ministers. They are consecrated and designated to nourish the people of God, fulfilling in the person of Christ the Head the functions of teaching, sanctifying, and governing.
- Holy Orders is the sacrament in which the mission of the Church entrusted by Christ to his apostles continues to be exercised (CCC 1536).
- Orders means the incorporation into an order, as opposed to being given a directive.
- This Sacrament configures the bishop and priest to Christ as the Head of the Church in Christ's threefold office of priest, prophet, and king. This Sacrament configures the deacon to Christ as servant.
- There are three degrees of Holy Orders:
  - Episcopate (bishops)
  - Presbyterate (priests)
  - Diaconate (deacons)

# *Incarnating* THE **KERYGMA** HOLY ORDERS

## What are the essential elements of Holy Orders?

- The essential rite of the sacrament of Holy Orders consists in the bishop's imposition of hands on the head of the ordinand and in bishop's specific consecratory prayer asking God for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and his gifts proper to the ministry to which the candidate is being ordained. Bishops and priests are ordained using chrism.
- The additional rites surrounding this core ordination rite vary greatly among differing liturgical traditions, but all have in common the expression of aspects of sacramental grace. The only valid minister of ordination is a bishop. Now ascended to the Father, Christ continues to guide the Church through the bishops, who confer this Sacrament of apostolic ministry and hand on the gift of the Holy Spirit.

## Who are bishops?

- The Episcopal Ordination is the fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders.
- The consecration of a bishop confers the offices of sanctifying, teaching, and ruling.
  - "Bishops, in an eminent and visible manner, take the place of Christ himself, teacher, shepherd, and priest, and act as his representative" (CCC 1558).
- Although bishops generally exercise authority over a particular region, they collegially share responsibility for the entire Church.
- Symbols of a Bishop
  - **Miter:** ceremonial headdress which is worn as a sign of the bishop's teaching authority.
  - **Crosier:** pastoral staff symbolizing his role as shepherd, leader of his flock.
  - **Ring:** symbol of his fidelity to his people and of his jurisdiction and dignity.

### Who are priests?

- The redemptive sacrifice of Christ is unique, accomplished once for all; yet it is made present in the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Church. In the same way, the one priesthood of Christ is made present through the ministerial priesthood without diminishing the uniqueness of Christ's priesthood: "Only Christ is the true priest, the others being only his ministers (CCC 1545).
- Two kinds of priesthood: (Difference in kind, not in degree.)
  - **Presbyteros**: the ordained priesthood, the elders who preside over the Eucharist and are servants to the faithful. The presbyter is the means in which Christ unceasingly builds up and leads his Church. The presbyter acts in the person of Christ and in the person of the Church to administer the sacraments.
  - **Sacerdos**: through baptism, all Christians share in this priesthood. Together we all sacrifice our lives to God, most especially in the Eucharist.
- The function of the bishops' ministry was handed over in a subordinate degree to priests so that they may be appointed in the order of the priesthood and be co-workers of the bishop. By joining with the bishop, the office of priest shares in the authority of Christ and are anointed with a special character and so are configured to Christ, able to act in his person.
- Priests represent the bishop to the local assembly. Priests can exercise their ministry only in dependence on the bishop and in communion with him.
- Symbols of Priesthood
  - **Stole**: worn over both shoulders, it symbolizes priestly authority.
  - **Chasuble**: sleeveless garment worn at Mass, it symbolizes charity. (The priest should always wear a chasuble at Mass, reminding him that charity always prevails over authority).
  - **Paten and Chalice**: the priest receives the gifts of the assembly which he is called to present to God.



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### Who are Deacons?

- Deacons share in Christ's mission and grace in a special way which cannot be removed and which configures them to Christ, who made himself the deacon of all.
- Deacons assist the bishop and priests in the celebration of the Eucharist, assisting at Marriages, in the proclamation of the Gospel and preaching the Gospel.
  - **Permanent Diaconate:** can be conferred on married men, this order allows men who perform the good works of the Church to be strengthened by the imposition of hands and sacramental grace.
  - **Transitional Diaconate:** all men who are to be ordained priests are ordained to the order of the diaconate one year prior to their priestly ordination.
- Symbols of a Deacon:
  - **Stole:** worn over one shoulder and connected at the waist, the stole is a sign of authority to preach the Gospel.
  - **Dalmatic:** sleeved garment worn over the stole, the dalmatic is a sign of service to God's people.
  - **Book of the Gospels:** symbolic of the deacon's mission to proclaim and preach the Gospel.