

## The Sacrament of Holy Orders

### Holy Orders

- The sacraments can be divided into three categories:
  1. Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Communion, Confirmation)
  2. Sacraments of Healing (Confession, Anointing of the Sick)
  3. Sacraments of Service (Holy Orders, Holy Matrimony)
- The Sacrament of Holy Orders makes men ordained ministers (bishops, priests, and deacons).

Jesus instituted the Sacrament of Holy Orders at the Last Supper when he said, "Do this in remembrance of me."

- The passing on of Holy Orders is called apostolic succession.

### Priesthood

- In Baptism, all Christians are united in the common priesthood of the faithful.

This means that all are called to worship the one true God.

This is different from the ordained priesthood which leads us in worship of God.

- To receive this sacrament, a man must be called by God.

### Levels of Holy Orders

- There are three degrees of Holy Orders:
  1. Bishops
  2. Priests
  3. Deacons

### Sacrament

- The matter of Holy Orders is the laying on of hands and the anointing with chrism of a man specially called by God.

The form is the prayer of ordination.

- The effects of ordination include an indelible mark on the soul and an increase in grace to become good and holy ministers.
- To be called to the priesthood is a great gift.

## Vocations: The Religious Life and the Priesthood

### Vocations

- All Christians share the call to holiness.
- God has a plan for every person.  
God calls each of us to a vocation.  
The particular vocations include:
  - Religious life
  - Holy orders (for men)
  - MarriageOur vocation allows us to follow Christ most perfectly on earth.  
We are to seek holiness in the state of life that God calls us to live.

### Religious Life

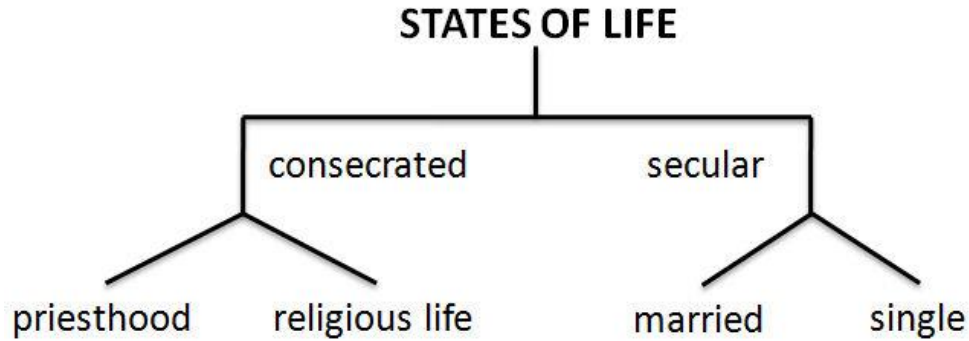
- Religious Life is the highest vocation.  
It consists in following the three evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience.  
Those who live the counsels take vows (free, deliberate promises made to God), which free them to live entirely for God and to serve his Church.
- The evangelical counsels, lived in imitation of Christ, are a witness to the eternal state of heaven.

### Communities

- Religious communities have been instituted throughout history for those called to religious life.  
There are communities for men and for women.  
In both, members live by a rule, or way of life.
- Contemplative orders spend their days in prayer, withdrawn from the world.  
Apostolic orders dedicate themselves to active service of God and neighbor through the works of mercy.

### Holy Orders

- The Sacrament of Holy Orders has three degrees: episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate.
- The priesthood calls a man to live as “another Christ”.  
It is a sacrificial life in service to the life of the Church through the Sacraments.  
Priests promise to pray the Divine Office, obey their bishop, and live a life of celibacy.
- Some priests are members of religious communities.



### Evangelical Councils

	<u>Poverty</u>	<u>Chastity</u>	<u>Obedience</u>
<b>Good offered to God</b>	Property	Marriage	Freewill
<b>Benefit</b>	Freedom to be concerned about God's business	Freedom to love God and neighbor more generously	Freedom to do God's will more perfectly

**Pope John Paul II: Sacred Ordination** In his 1994 Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, Pope John Paul II addressed the issue of women's ordination. He wrote: "In order that all doubt may be removed regarding a matter of great importance, a matter which pertains to the Church's divine constitution itself, in virtue of my ministry of confirming the brethren (cf. Luke 22:32) I declare that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful." This does not mean that women are second-class citizens within the Church. There are many wonderful and important ways that women can serve God – but the priesthood is not one of them.

### **Three Degrees of Holy Orders**

**Bishops (episcopate):** have the fullness of Holy Orders, are successors of the Apostles, and may celebrate all seven sacraments. Their work is to teach, sanctify, and govern a diocese.

**Priests (presbyterate):** are co-workers of the Bishop, who teach, sanctify, and govern in obedience to the Bishop in a given parish community. They cannot ordain and need faculties to be granted in order to celebrate Confirmation.

**Deacons (diaconate):** are also co-workers of the Bishop. They may celebrate marriages and Baptism and lead others in worship through the Liturgy of the Word in funerals and prayer services. They may serve at the Altar as Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. There are permanent and transitional deacons. Permanent deacons may be married before they are ordained.

## Handout – Holy Orders

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### **Suggested Reading on this Issue:**

Pope John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem*. "On the dignity and vocation of women."

Manfred Hauke, *Women in the Priesthood?*

C.S. Lewis, *God in the Dock*.

Edith Stein, *Essays on Women*.

### **Ordinations**

During the ordinations of deacons, priests, and bishops, the ordinands are presented with gifts that signify the ministry they will perform. The prayers that are prayed as the gifts are presented tell of the different ministries of the three degrees of Holy Orders.

**Deacon:** "Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you now are. Believe what you read, teach what you believe, and practice what you teach."

**Priest:** "Accept from the holy people of God the gifts to be offered to him. Know what you are doing, and imitate the mystery you celebrate: model your life on the mystery of the Lord's cross."

**Bishop:** "Receive the Gospel and preach the word of God with unfailing patience and sound teaching. Take this ring, the seal of your fidelity. With faith and love protect the bride of God, his holy Church. Take this staff as a sign of your pastoral office: keep watch over the whole flock in which the Holy Spirit has appointed you to shepherd the Church of God."

### **Act of love by Saint John Vianney**

"I love you, O my God and my sole desire is to love you until the last breath of my life. I love you, O infinitely lovable God and I prefer to die loving you than live one instant without loving you. I love you, O my God, and I do not desire anything but heaven so as to have the joy of loving you perfectly. I love you, O my God, and I fear hell because there will not be the sweet consolation of loving you. O my God, if my tongue cannot say in every moment that I love you, I want my heart to say it in every beat. Allow me the grace to suffer loving you, to love you suffering, and one day to die loving you and feeling that I love you. And as I approach my end, I beg you to increase and perfect my love of you."