

Holy Orders -- The Sixth Sacrament



"Holy" means to be set apart, to be consecrated for a specific purpose, to continue the Apostolic ministry of Christ by ministering to the faithful in the tradition of the Apostles.

Holy Orders have three divisions:

Those men who are called to be priests are 'ordained' through the 'Rite of Ordination', as bishops, priests, or deacons. Through a bishop's 'laying on of hands', anointing, and a consecrating prayer, the bishop asks for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that those 'ordained' may receive the grace to live out their lives in service to the Church and to God's people.

Bishops are appointed by the Pope, and chosen from among priests as a 'direct and unbroken line' from the apostles. They administer the sacrament of Holy Orders by conferring the grace to sanctify others, teach the faithful and 'bind' their consciences.

Priests, through celebration of the Mass, share with us the eternal priesthood of Christ. The priest may celebrate Mass, teach, counsel, preach, hear confessions, give absolution, celebrate Baptism, serve as witness at the sacrament of Marriage, administer Anointing of the Sick---and administer Confirmation if authorized to do so by the Bishop.

Deacons: A deacon serves in three areas: the Word, the Liturgy and in Charity. Among many of their duties, they may: proclaim the Gospel during Mass, preach, teach, serve as ordinary minister of Holy Communion, give service to the poor, be ordinary minister of the Sacrament of Baptism, witness Holy Matrimony, and preside over funeral rites outside of Mass.

"And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ." Ephesians 4:11-12

"...and like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 2:9

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." 1 Peter 2:9