

The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

"Having therefore a great high priest that hath passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God: let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest, who cannot have compassion on our infirmities: but one tempted in all things like as we are, without sin. Let us go therefore with confidence to the throne of grace in seasonable aid. For every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that He may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins: Who can have compassion on them that are ignorant and that err: because He Himself also is compassed with infirmity. And therefore He ought, as for the people, as also for Himself, to offer for sins. Neither doth any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was." (Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:1-4)

JESUS COMMISSIONS HIS FIRST PRIESTS

"And Jesus coming, spoke to them, saying: 'All power is given to Me in Heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.'" (Matthew 28:18-20)

1. What did Jesus do to continue His work on earth?

To make sure that His work be continued, Jesus established the Catholic Priesthood, through the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

"For Christ therefore we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us" (2 Corinthians 5:20)

2. What is the Sacrament of Holy Orders?

Holy Orders is the Sacrament which gives a man the powers of the Catholic Priesthood.

3. In general, what is a priest?

A man who offers sacrifices to God for the sins of the people.

"For every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins." (Hebrews 5:1)

4. Was Jesus a priest?

Yes, Jesus was and is, the Great High Priest.

"Wherefore it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest before God, that He might be a propitiation for the sins of the people." (Hebrews 2:17)

5. Who were the first Catholic priests?

The twelve Apostles, who were ordained to the priesthood by Jesus Christ Himself.

6. When did Jesus make the twelve Apostles priests?

At the Last Supper, on the night before He died, when He gave them the power to change bread and wine into His Body and Blood.

"Do this for a commemoration of me." (Luke 22:19)

7. Did the Apostles make other men priests?

Yes, for example, Paul, Barnabas, Timothy, Titus, and Matthias.

See Acts 13:3, 14:22, 1:24-26, and Titus 1:5.

8. How did the Apostles ordain other men priests?

By praying for them and imposing hands on them.

"Then they, fasting and praying, and imposing their hands upon them, sent them away."
(Acts 13:3)

9. After the Apostles died, how were the powers of the priesthood handed down?

Before they died, the Apostles made other men bishops, who in turn made other men bishops, and in this way the powers of the priesthood have been handed down during the past 2000 years.

10. How are the powers of the priesthood handed down today?

Today the bishops hand down the powers of the priesthood just as the Apostles did - by praying over and imposing hands on the candidates for priesthood.

11. What are the chief powers of the priesthood?

They are --

- i. To offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which includes the power to change bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ and...
- ii. To forgive sins.

Other powers of the priesthood are to preach with authority, administer other Sacraments and to bless people and objects.

12. Where does the authority of the priesthood come from?

From Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity.

"He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me." (Luke 10:16)

13. Who can give the Sacrament of Holy Orders?

Only a bishop.

"For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and shouldest ordain priests in every city, as I also appointed thee." (Titus 1:5)

14. What is necessary to become a priest?

To become a priest, a man has to continue their study in a special school called a seminary and be approved by his bishop as to his learning, health, morals, and character.

"Impose not hands lightly upon any man." (1 Timothy 5:22)

15. How does a man become a bishop?

The Archbishop of a diocese chooses a priest who is known for his learning and holiness and appoints other bishops to consecrate him a bishop by imposing hands and saying the proper words.

16. Why is the priest called "Father"?

Because he gives the life of grace to his spiritual children, just as a father gives physical life to his children.

"I write not these things to confound you; but that I admonish you as my dearest children. For if you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus, by the gospel, I have begotten you." (1 Corinthians 4:14-15)

VARIOUS TITLES IN THE CHURCH

Archbishop	The Archbishop of a diocese, The Presiding Bishop successor of St. Peter, visible head of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church through the Apostolic Succession.
Bishop	Rules over the people and priests of his diocese; can give Confirmation and Holy Orders.
Priest	Diocesan priests work in a diocese; religious priests belong to a religious order - like the Franciscans, Dominicans, etc...
Deacon	Assist the priestly duties in the ministry, but not given of Holy Sacraments
Rector	Overseer of a parish; is subject to the bishop of the diocese.
Pastor	Rules over a parish; is subject to the bishop of the diocese.
Monk	Monks live in a monastery, follow a strict rule under a superior - like the Benedictines and the Trappists; some are priests, others are brothers.
Chaplain	A man dedicated to teaching, ministering in hospitals, jails, military, etc... takes vows of a Ordained Priest of the Holy Orders.
Reverend	Title of a minister, Ordained to the Holy Order of the Ministry