

# Holy Orders



*St. John Vianney*  
1786-1859

The priest continues the work of  
redemption on earth....  
If we really understood the priest on  
earth, we would die not of fright but  
of love....  
The priesthood is the love of the  
heart of Jesus.



The life and activity  
of a priest  
continues the life and  
activity of  
Christ Himself.

*Pastores Dabo Vobis*

- What is the priesthood?
- Why the priesthood?
- Is Christ a priest?
- What did Christ establish?
- Did He intend succession?
- The Sacrament of Holy Orders
- Other considerations



- The one priesthood of Christ
- Two participations in the one priesthood of Christ
- All believers--common priesthood of the faithful
- Bishops and priests--ministerial priesthood



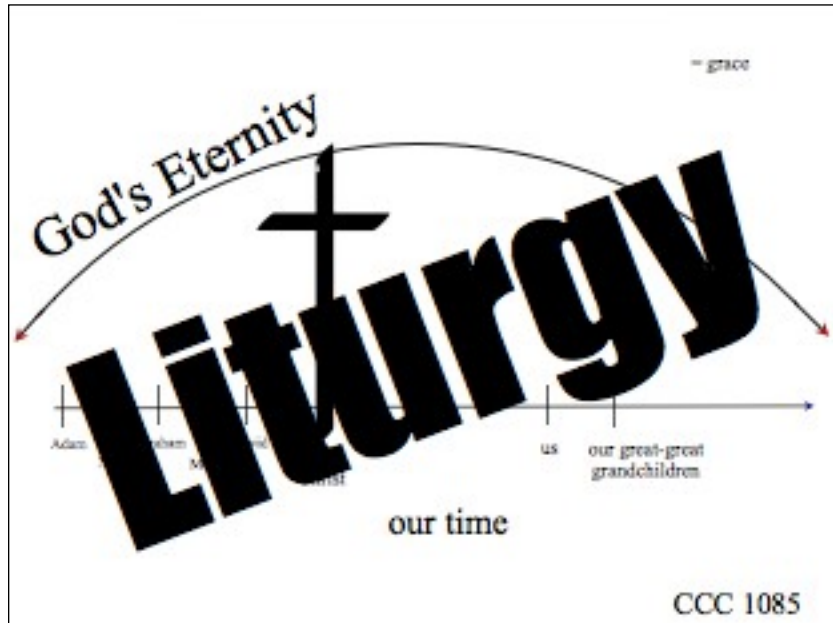
CCC 1544-1553

The Sacrament of Holy Orders is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to His apostles continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time in the person of Christ the Head in the name of the whole Church.

CCC 1536



The Crucifixion  
Gustave Doré  
1832-1882



**Liturgy**

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass





"The Seraph could not touch the fire's coal with his fingers, but just brought it close to Isaiah's mouth: the Seraph did not hold it, Isaiah did not consume it, but us our Lord has allowed to do both."

*St Ephrem of Syria*  
506-573

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# Old Testament Priesthood

- Priesthood of the First Born



Adoration of the Golden Calf  
Nicolas Poussin  
1628-1634

# Old Testament Priesthood

- Levitical Priesthood

- result of sin
- hereditary

CCC 1540: Instituted to proclaim the Word of God and to restore communion with God by sacrifices and prayer, this priesthood nevertheless remains powerless to bring about salvation, needing to repeat its sacrifices ceaselessly and being unable to achieve a definitive sanctification, which only the sacrifice of Christ would accomplish.

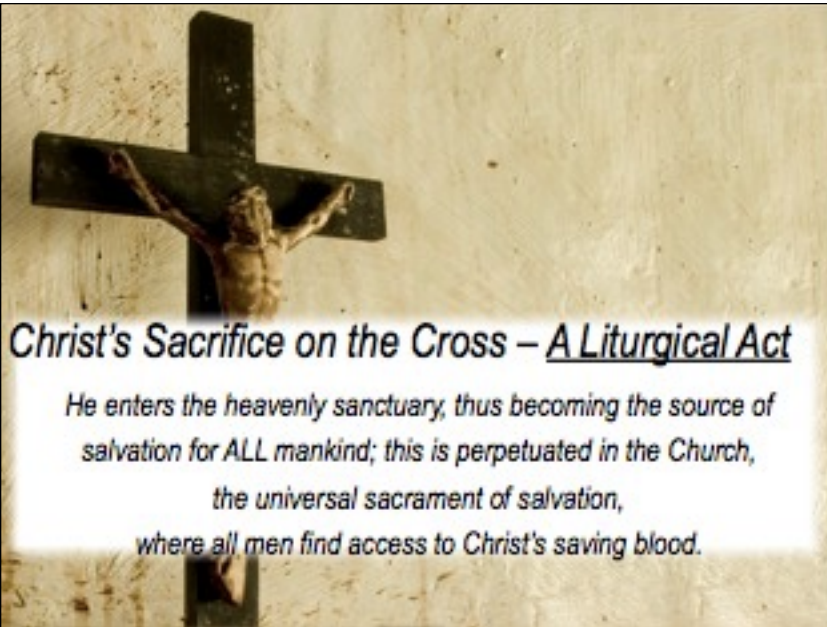


# Old Testament Priesthood

- Priesthood of Melchizedek - Gen 14:18

- greater than Abraham
- older, superior priesthood





## Is Christ a priest?

- Last Supper

John 17: High Priestly Prayer

- tripartite structure
- revelation of the Name
- "hagiozo"

- Trial

John 18: Who is High Priest?

Mark 14:58-64: Accusation & Response

Psalms 110

## What did Christ establish?

- Power & Authority granted  
→ for what?

Mt 9:8; 10:1, 40; 21:23  
Mk 6:7; 13:34  
Lk 4:6; 9:1; 10:16, 19  
Jn 13:20; 17:18; 20:21



- The Apostles can do nothing on their own





But take care then, to be firmly grounded in the teachings of the Lord and His apostles so that you may prosper in all your doings both in body and in soul, in faith and in love, in the

grace of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, in the beginning and end, along with your most worthy bishop and his spiritual crown, your presbyters with the deacons who are men of God.



Be obedient to the Bishop and to one another, as Jesus Christ was in the flesh to the Father and the apostles to Christ and to the Father and to the Spirit so that there may be unity in flesh and in spirit.

The life and activity  
of a priest  
continues the life and  
activity of  
Christ Himself.

*Pastores Dabo Vobis*

- Call of the Apostles

"And He went up on the mountain,  
and called to Him those whom He desired; and  
they came to Him. And He appointed twelve, to  
be with Him, and to be sent out to preach and  
have authority to cast out demons"

Mark 3:13-19

- Washing of the Feet

Jn. 13

- Power to Sacrifice

Ex. 30:20



## Essence of the Priesthood

- Not mere function
- Not one charism among others

*Alter Christus*

The life and activity of a priest  
continues the life and activity  
of Christ Himself.

Here lies their identity,  
their true dignity,  
the source of their joy,  
the very basis of their life.

*Pastores Dabo Vobis*





## Christ as Shepherd

- Shepherd feeds his sheep
- New?
  - Ezekiel 34

"I am the good shepherd.  
The good shepherd lays down his life  
for the sheep."

John 10:11



[The Eucharistic  
sacrifice] stands as  
the root and center  
of the whole life of  
a priest.

*Presbyterorum Ordinis 14*

## Did He intend succession?

- The Papacy: Mt 16:17-19
- The Mission: Mt 28:19-20
- Priestly Power to Sacrifice: Lk 22:19



*emory of Me*

28

## Did He intend succession?

"So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ as well as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed.

Tend the flock of God that is your charge,  
not by constraint but willingly,  
not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as  
domineering over those in your charge but being  
examples to the flock.

And when the chief Shepherd is manifested you will  
obtain the unfading crown of glory."

1 Peter 5:1-4

## The Essential Rite

- Matter: the laying on of hands (CCC 1573)  
Form: the prayer of consecration
- Three degrees of the sacrament (CCC 1554)
  - Bishops, Priests, Deacons
- Sacramental power given according to degree

all 3  
▸ Baptize  
▸ preach  
▸ officiate weddings

▸ confirm  
▸ ordain

P & B  
▸ absolve sins  
▸ consecrate bread & wine



# The Essential Rite



- Only Bishops can ordain  
(CCC 1575)

- Graces conferred by the Sacrament  
indelible mark

- for the Bishop
- for the Priest



CCC 1582: As in the case of Baptism and Confirmation, this share in Christ's office is granted once for all. The sacrament of Holy Orders, like the other two, confers an indelible spiritual character and cannot be repeated or conferred temporarily.

## • Laicization

CCC 1583: It is true that someone validly ordained can, for grave reasons, be discharged from the obligations and functions linked to ordination, or can be forbidden to exercise them; but he cannot become a layman again in the strict sense, because the character imprinted by ordination is for ever. The vocation and mission received on the day of his ordination mark him permanently.

## • Male Priesthood

CCC 1577 "Only a baptized man (vir) validly receives sacred ordination." The Lord Jesus chose men (viri) to form the college of the twelve apostles, and the apostles did the same when they chose collaborators to succeed them in their ministry.



- *Inter Insigniores* (1976)

What is in the deposit of Faith?

- 1) Example of Scripture
- 2) Practice of the Church
- 3) Teaching Authority

- *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* (1994)

"Wherefore, 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 Lk 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."

Blessed Pope John Paul II

- Celibacy

Priestly character =

consecration and conformity to Christ the Shepherd

Mt 19:10-12: Praise for voluntary celibacy

"It is not sufficient to understand priestly celibacy in purely functional terms. Celibacy is really a special way of conforming oneself to Christ's own way of life. This choice has first and foremost a nuptial meaning; it is a profound identification with the heart of Christ the Bridegroom Who gives His life for His Bride."

Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 24

Dignity  
&  
unworthiness