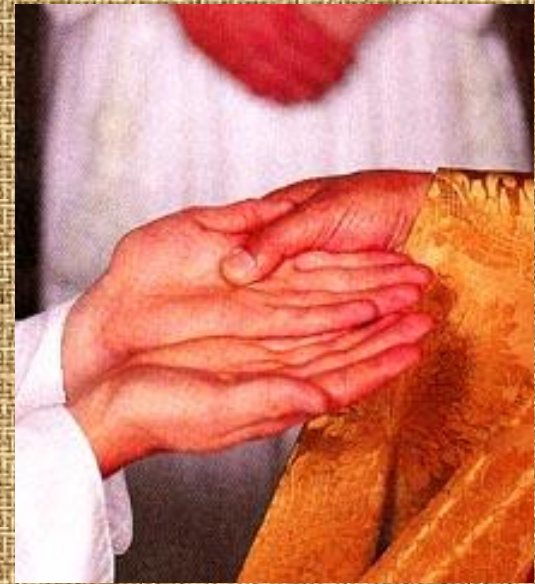
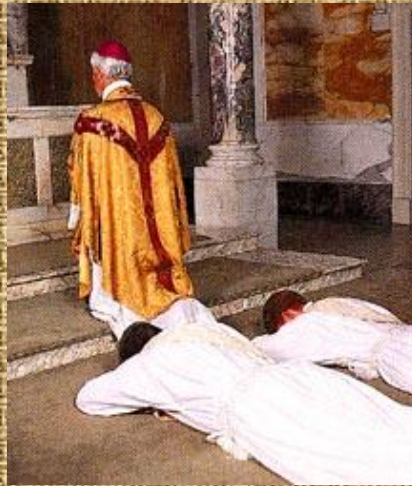
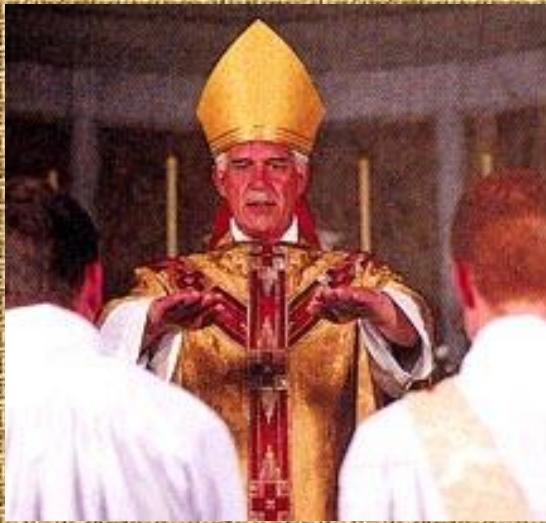


HOLY ORDERS: Deacon, Priest, Bishop



Part Vj:
Holy Orders--Deacon, Priest, Bishop

Orders

Catholic Christians, and some other Christians, believe that the New Testament reveals an order or hierarchy to the organization of the Church. Catholic Christians also believe that these orders within the Church constitute a sacrament. Paul defines the New Testament people chosen to constitute the order of the leadership of the Church.

2 Timothy 2:2

And what you heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will have the ability to teach others as well.



Paul describes the “faithful people” who are to hand on God's Revelation and carry on principal Church functions.

The first category of “faithful people” is *episcopoi*, bishops.

1 Timothy 3:1-2

This saying is trustworthy: whoever aspires to the office of bishop (*episcopos*) desires a noble task. Therefore, a bishop (*episcopos*) must be irreproachable, married only once, temperate, self-controlled, decent, hospitable, able to teach

Titus 1:7,9

For a bishop (*episcopos*) as God's steward must be blameless, ... holding fast to the true message as taught so that he will be able both to exhort with sound doctrine and to refute opponents.



The second category of “faithful people” is *presbyteroi*, the presbyters, priests, elders.

Titus 1:5-6

Appoint presbyters (*presbyterois*) in every town, as I directed you, on condition that a man be blameless, married only once, with believing children who are not accused of licentiousness or rebellious.

1 Timothy 5:17

Presbyters who preside well deserve double honor, especially those who toil in preaching and teaching.



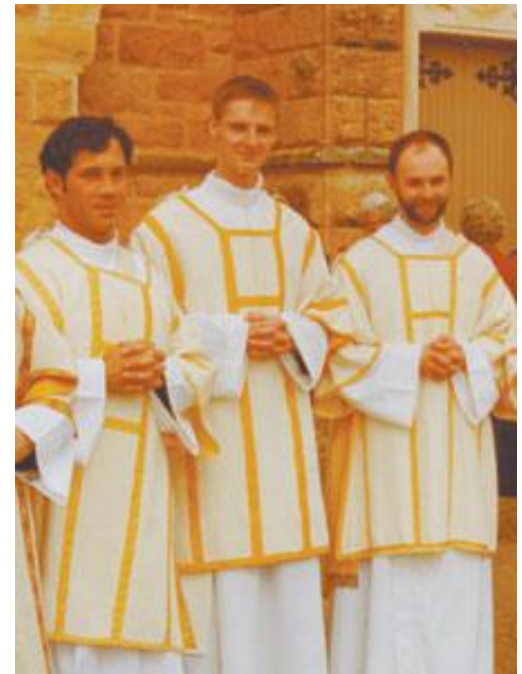
The third category of “faithful people” is *diaconoi*, deacons.

1 Timothy 4:6,13,16

If you will give these instructions to the brothers, you will be a good minister (*diakonos*) of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound teaching you have followed. ... Until I arrive, attend to the reading, exhortation, and teaching. Attend to yourself and to your teaching.

1 Timothy 3:8-9

Similarly, deacons (*diaconos*) must be dignified, not deceitful, not addicted to drink, not greedy for sordid gain, holding fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.



It is clear from Paul's writings that he and the Apostolic Church were aware that order in the Church was conferred by the imposition of hands.

2 Timothy 1:6

For this reason, I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands.

1 Timothy 4:14

Do not neglect the gift you have, which was conferred on you through the prophetic word with the imposition of hands of the presbyterate.



Paul reminds Timothy that the imposition of hands on another is not to be taken lightly.

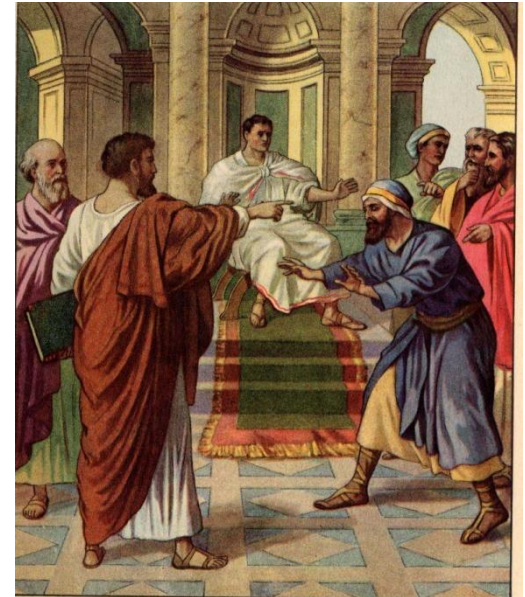
1 Timothy 5:22

Do not lay hands too readily on anyone, and do not share in another's sins.

Paul himself was ordered or ordained by the leaders of the Church at Antioch.

Acts 13:2-3

While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then, completing their fasting and prayer, **they laid hands on them** and sent them off.



The Acts of the Apostles testifies to the belief and practice of creating orders in the early Church.

Acts 14:23

They **appointed presbyters** for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, commended them to the Lord in whom they had put their faith.

Acts 6:6

They presented **these men (seven *diaconoi*)** to the apostles who prayed and **laid hands on them**.

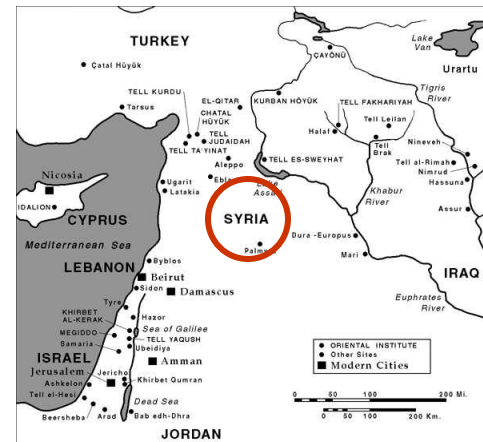
Acts 8:17

Then they (Peter and John) **laid hands on them** and they received the holy Spirit.

The constant teaching of the Fathers of the Church affirm the role of Orders or Ordination in the sacramental system and in the life of the Church.

Didache, Ch 5, Syria, 70-110

“Elect therefore for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, humble men and not covetous, and faithful and well tested; for they also serve you in the ministry of the prophets and teachers. Do not therefore despise them, for they are the honored men among you along with the prophets and teachers.”



**Clement (Rome, 92-101), *Letter to the Corinthians*, Ch 47,
MG 1, 308**

It is disgraceful, beloved, very disgraceful, and unworthy of your training in Christ, to hear that the stable and ancient Church of the Corinthians ... should revolt against its presbyters.

**Ignatius (Antioch, d. 110), *Letter to the Trallians*, Ch 7;
MG 5, 680**

Anyone who is within the sanctuary is pure and anyone who is outside is impure, that is to say, no one who acts apart from the bishop and the priests and the deacons has a clear conscience.

The magisterium of the Church in Ecumenical Councils has always affirmed the role of Orders.

Lateran Council II (1139).

Listed “priesthood and the other ecclesiastical orders” along with baptism, Eucharist and matrimony.

Council of Lyons II (1274).

Taught that there were seven sacraments, including baptism along with orders.



Council of Florence (1438-1445)

The sixth sacrament is holy orders.

Council of Trent (1545-1563), *Session 23*

“In conformity with God's decree, sacrifice and priesthood are so related that both exist in every law. Therefore, in the New Testament, since the Catholic Church has received the holy and visible sacrifice of the Eucharist according to the institution of the Lord, it is likewise necessary to acknowledge that there is in the Church a new, visible, and external priesthood, into which the old priesthood was changed. Moreover, Sacred Scripture makes it clear that this priesthood was instituted by the same Lord our Savior, and that the power of consecrating, offering, and administering his body and blood, and likewise the power of remitting and of retaining sins, was given to the apostles and their successors in the priesthood.”



Clerical Celibacy

The Catholic Church demands celibacy--no voluntary sexual pleasure, hence, no marriage--as a prerequisite to the order of presbyter and bishop.

The primary basis for the requirement of celibacy is clearly the **lifestyle example of Jesus himself**.

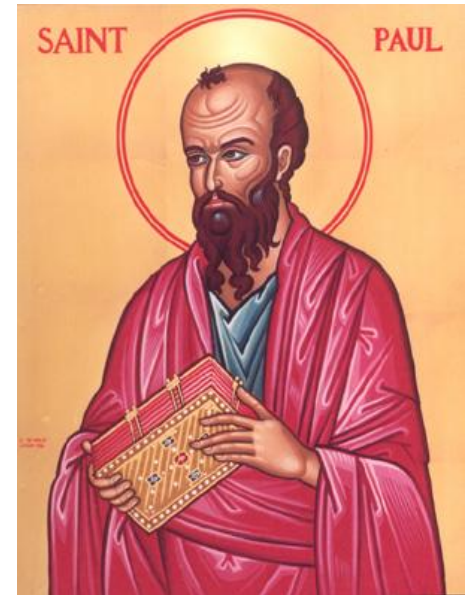
The Church notes that the practice is sanctioned by the New Testament.

Matthew 19:12

Some are incapable of marriage because they were born so; some, because they were made so by others; some, because **they have renounced marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven**. Whoever can accept this ought to accept it.

1 Corinthians 7:6-7

This I say by way of concession, however, not as a command. Indeed, I wish everyone to be as I am (single? widowed?), but **each has a particular gift from God**, one of one kind and one of another.



1 Corinthians 7:25-26

Now in regard to virgins, I have no commandment from the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. So this is what I think best because of the present distress: that **it is a good thing for a person to remain as he is.**

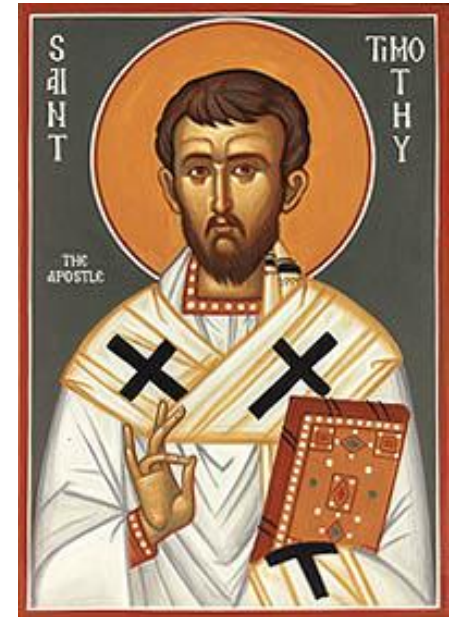
1 Corinthians 7:32-34

I should like you to be free of anxieties. An unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But **a married man is anxious about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is divided.** An unmarried woman or a virgin is anxious about the things of the Lord, so that she may be holy in both body and spirit. **A married woman, on the other hand, is anxious about the things of the world, how she may please her husband.**

There are scriptures that on their surface appear to contradict current practice of the Church regarding priestly celibacy.

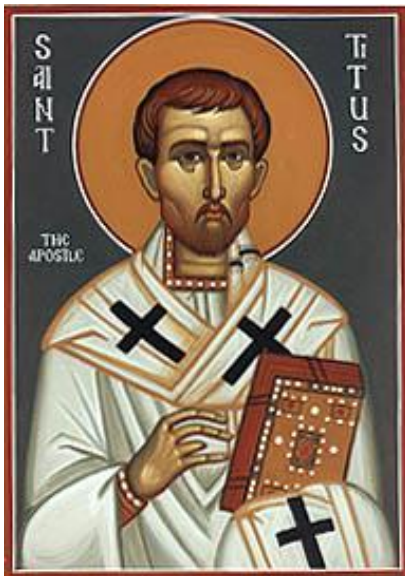
1 Timothy 3:1-2

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Titus 1:5-6

Appoint **presbyters** in every town, as I directed you, on condition that a man be blameless, **married only once**, with **believing children** who are not accused of licentiousness or rebellious.



It must be noted that neither verse requires nor encourages marriage to those in holy orders; they simply reflect the state of those in orders in the apostolic Church. It offers **no mandate nor counsel for the universal Church** either then or now. It was the state of the early Church and available clergy.

The law of celibacy has no doctrinal bearing in the Catholic Church--it is a mere disciplinary law.

Even today, **there are married Catholic priests** in the United States. Each is a former Episcopalian priest who joined the Catholic Church. There are Uniate Churches, churches in union with Rome, e.g., the Greek Byzantine Church, that have a married clergy.

Priestly **celibacy** became law in the Roman Church in the **6th century**.

Priests as “Father”

Catholic Christians have a long custom--tradition--to address their priests as “father.” Many Christians feel that this practice is in disagreement with the word of God.

Matthew 23:8-10

As for you, do not be called ‘Rabbi.’ You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers. Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven. Do not be called ‘Master’; you have but one master, the Messiah.

If this passage was meant to be taken literally, then we all offend the scripture. We all have used “father” to designate our birth father; and “teacher,” our instructors at school. On the other hand, the meaning of the scripture is that no person should be given the respect and honor due ultimately to God the Father.

Catholic Christians call the priests “father” with the sense understood by Paul.

1 Corinthians 4:14-16

I am writing you this not to shame you, but to admonish you as **my beloved children**. Even if you should have countless guides to Christ, yet you do not have many fathers, for **I became your father in Christ Jesus** through the gospel. Therefore, I urge you, be imitators of me.

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12

As you know, we treated each one of you **as a father treats his children**, exhorting and encouraging you and insisting that you conduct yourselves as worthy of the God who calls you into his kingdom and glory.



End of
Holy Orders, Deacon, Priest, Bishop, Part Vi

Go to
Communion of Saints, Part VIa