

DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

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From the Compendium to the Catechism paragraphs: 328 – 336

What is the effect of ordination to the priesthood?

The anointing of the Holy Spirit seals the priest with an indelible, spiritual character that configures him to Christ the priest and enables him to act in the name of Christ the Head. As a co-worker of the order of bishops he is consecrated to preach the Gospel, to celebrate divine worship, especially the Eucharist from which his ministry draws its strength, and to be a shepherd of the faithful.



How does a priest carry out his proper ministry?

A priest, although ordained for a universal mission, exercises his ministry in a particular Church. This ministry is pursued in sacramental brotherhood with other priests who form the “presbyterate”. In communion with the bishop, and depending upon him, they bear responsibility for the particular Church.

What is the effect of the ordination to the diaconate?

The deacon, configured to Christ the servant of all, is ordained for service to the Church. He carries out this service under the authority of his proper bishop by the ministry of the Word, of divine worship, of pastoral care and of charity.

How is the sacrament of Holy Orders celebrated?

The sacrament of Holy Orders is conferred, in each of its three degrees, by means of the imposition of hands on the head of the ordinand (person being ordained) by the bishop who pronounces the solemn prayer of consecration. With this prayer he asks God on behalf of the ordinand for the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit and for the gifts of the Spirit proper to the ministry to which he is being ordained.

Who can confer this sacrament?

Only validly ordained bishops, as successors to the apostles, can confer the sacrament of Holy Orders.

Who can receive this sacrament?

This sacrament can only be validly received by a baptised man. The Church recognises herself as bound by this choice made by the Lord himself. No one can demand to receive the sacrament of Holy Orders, but must be judged suitable for the ministry by the authorities of the Church.

Is it necessary to be celibate to receive the sacrament of Holy Orders?

It is always necessary to be celibate for the episcopacy (office of Bishop). For the priesthood in the Latin Church men who are practising Catholics and celibate are chosen, men who intend to continue to live a celibate life “for the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matthew 19:12). In the Eastern Churches marriage is not permitted after one has been ordained. Married men can be ordained to the permanent diaconate.

What are the effects of the sacrament of Holy Orders?

This sacrament yields a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit which configures the recipient to Christ in his triple office as Priest, Prophet and King, according to the respective degrees of the sacrament. Ordination confers an indelible spiritual character and therefore cannot be repeated or conferred for a limited time.

With what authority is the priestly ministry exercised?

Ordained priests in the exercise of their sacred ministry speak and act not on their own authority, nor even by mandate or delegation of the community, but rather in the Person of Christ the Head and in the name of the Church. Therefore, the ministerial priesthood differs essentially and not just in degree from the priesthood common to all the faithful for whose service Christ instituted it.



It is essential that every Catholic has access to good Catechesis to be able to deepen their faith. The Diocese of Plymouth recommends the many Catechetical Workshops from 'Franciscan at Home,' for more information on access to these and online or real group sessions contact deborah.vankroonenburg@predtr.org.uk

