



## Holy Orders

### THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY ORDERS

Christ established his Church, and instituted the ministry of shepherding his people through the sacrament of Holy Orders.

The Sacrament of Holy Orders comprises bishops, priests and deacons. The bishops are the successors of the Apostles. The sacrament has been passed down from Christ who called his chosen ones to be ordained. There is an unbroken succession from Peter to our present Pope Benedict XVI, who is the bishop of Rome.



There are two types of deacons, permanent and transitional. The permanent diaconate is very popular in our parishes. The men are usually married and after discerning their vocational calling, undertake the requisite training, followed by ordination as deacons for the service of God's people in the Church. The



Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Calling of the Apostles*, 1481

transitional diaconate is a step toward the priesthood.

The Church is God's family. By divine constitution, "the husband is the head" (Ephesians 5:23) of a natural family. In the Church, Christ who does his Father's will (John 4:34), chose certain men to represent him as "Bridegroom" to the Church, His "Bride."

In this secular age, there is the controversy of why the Church reserves this sacrament to men only. Christ does his Father's will and the Church only has the mandate to do the Father's will as proclaimed and exemplified by Christ and his Apostles. Neither Christ nor the Apostles conferred this sacrament on anyone other than men. Not even the Blessed Virgin Mary, the most blessed of all women was called to the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Yet, the Church reverences and venerates her as the most honored of the entire human race, for all time.

### Biblical References

Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.....Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance *when the council of elders laid their hands upon you* (1 Timothy 4:12, 14).

For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this, he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee." (Hebrews 5:1-5).

### Teaching of the Church

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: thus, it is the sacrament of apostolic ministry. It includes three degrees: episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1536).

### Vocations

In this age, where there is a scarcity of vocations, let us resolve to pray for more vocations. "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2)

If you are curious or feel called to the priesthood or religious life, contact your parish priest or call the Office of Vocations at 1 - 407- 246 - 4876.