

Holy Orders



Promises:

There are five promises to be made by those who are to be ordained:

- Promise to discharge the office of priesthood in the presbyteral rank as worthy fellow workers with the Order of Bishops.
- Promise to exercise the ministry of the Word worthily and wisely, preaching the Gospel and teaching the Catholic faith.
- Promise to celebrate faithfully and reverently the mysteries of Christ handed down by the Church, especially the sacrifice of the Eucharist and the sacrament of Reconciliation, for the glory of God and the sanctification of the Christian people.
- Promise to implore God's mercy upon the people entrusted to their care by observing the command to pray without ceasing.
- Promise to be united more closely every day to Christ the High Priest, who offered himself for us to the Father as a pure sacrifice and to consecrate themselves to God for the salvation of all.

1 Promise of Obedience:

After they have made these promises, each one to be ordained goes before the bishop and makes a promise of obedience. As he does so, he kneels before the bishop and places his hands between those of the bishop. The bishop asks him: "Do you promise respect and obedience to me and my successors?" The man to be ordained must answer yes to this question if he is to be ordained.

2 Litany of Supplication:

All of the candidates then lie prostrate on the floor and the Litany of the Saints is sung. This prayer asks for the intercession of the saints in order that God may look favorably upon those to be ordained. A prayer follows asking that the Holy Spirit may be poured upon them. While these prayers are being prayed, the faithful are to join their prayers for the candidates to those of the bishop.

3 Laying on of Hands:

The gift of the Holy Spirit is conferred upon those to be ordained by the laying on of hands and the prayer of ordination. At the ordination of a priest, the ordaining bishop lays hands on each man to be ordained a priest. All of the priests who are present then lay hands on each candidate as well. This communal laying on of hands is to symbolize the fact that they are to be ordained into the presbyteral college of the local Church. The priests are to lay hands on these candidates in silence. This is in keeping with an ancient text found in the *Apostolic Tradition* which is believed to have been written by Hippolytus in 280 A.D.. He states that this common laying on of hands takes place at a priest's ordination, because "they all have a common and similar spirit."

4 Investiture with Stole and Chasuble:

The first explanatory rite consists in the bestowal of the stole and chasuble upon the newly ordained. In most cases, the newly ordained entered the church wearing a stole tied at the side as for a deacon. It is now adjusted to be worn as proper for a priest, hanging down on both sides. Another priest assists in this and then helps the new priest to put on a chasuble. This is the proper vestment for a priest and bishop to wear for the celebration of the Eucharist. It is given to a priest because only he and a bishop may validly celebrate the Mass. He is to wear this whenever he presides at Mass.

5 Anointing of Hands:

The bishop now anoints the palms of each of the new priests. As he does so, he is to say: "The Lord Jesus Christ, whom the Father anointed with the Holy Spirit, guard and preserve you, that you may sanctify the Christian people and offer sacrifices to God." This anointing is a symbol of the anointing with the Holy Spirit which took place through the imposition of hands and the prayer of ordination. It also symbolizes the priest's distinctive participation in Christ's priesthood by the sacrifice he will offer with his hands.

6 Communion

Now that the candidates are priests in the Roman Catholic Church, they are introduced to the community. As Mass continues, they distribute communion to the congregation.