

# HARTFORD SEMINARY FOUNDATION

## SOME THOUGHTS ON THE EPISCOPACY:

### SOME INFORMAL ESSAYS PRESENTED ORALLY IN TUTORIAL SESSIONS

by

R. T. Nolan

#### PASTORAL THEOLOGY 14: EPISCOPAL POLITY

Spring Semester, 1961

The Rev. Kenneth D. Thomas, S.T.B., Tutor

**From RTN (2007): Hartford Seminary is an interdenominational institution with a Congregational heritage. Tutorial courses were set up so that I (the only Episcopalian in the divinity curriculum) could prepare for the canonical exams of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts. Such courses were arranged by the Dean's office with fulltime faculty members and a specially appointed adjunct in Episcopal polity and liturgics. The Rev. Kenneth D. Thomas of the nearby St. Peter's Episcopal Church was recommended to the Dean by the Diocese of Connecticut. [Now closed, St. Peter's was an unusual, ethnic, Italian, Anglo-Catholic parish with an inevitably dwindling membership. It was able to close under the gracious shepherding of Fr. Thomas.]**

**Born in 1927, Fr. Thomas (who retired in 1991) received his B.A. (history major) from Trinity College in 1952 and his divinity degree from General Theological Seminary, NYC, in 1955. Before his retirement, he was a faithful parish priest in a number of settings - with an especially long rectorship at St. John's in Essex CT (1964-1991).**

**As a "low churchman," I was privileged to be able to learn from a priest of "high" churchmanship. Although with different styles of being Anglicans, we had so much in common.**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- I. THE CLASSICAL ANGLICAN DEFENSE OF EPISCOPACY**
- II. A DEFENSE OF EPISCOPACY FOR THE CONTEMPORARY PROTESTANT**
- III. A DEFENSE OF ANGLICAN EPISCOPACY FOR THE CONTEMPORARY  
ROMAN CATHOLIC**
- IV. THE POSSIBLE ROLE FOR EPISCOPACY IN THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT**

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## I. *THE CLASSICAL ANGLICAN DEFENSE OF THE EPISCOPACY*

The combination of the principles of oversight and continuity in the Christian Church has been maintained in the institution known as the episcopate. As a means of preserving continuity, the historic episcopate exists as a separate order of ordained ministry. As a means of oversight, the function of a bishop may take on a variety of forms dependent upon the needs of a given situation. For example, the diocesan episcopate could conceivably be changed to a university or monastic episcopate if the need were to arise. Whatever forms the institution might take, however, the change is bestowed through those who have received commission to confer it.

The defense for episcopacy is supportable in various ways. First, it is symbolic of and a form of apostolic authority and mission within the Church. As a matter of historical development, the episcopate became the organ of mission and authority.

Second, the Anglican position has maintained that through “apostolic succession” the authority and form of the office is handed down from generation to generation. Two understandings of “apostolic succession” have emerged in Anglican thought. According to one interpretation, the succession is primarily a transmission of constituted ecclesiastical authority that is exercised by those in the office. This office is said to be in a continuous line traceable ultimately to the authority of the apostles themselves. Within this understanding, the transmission of authority carries with it a personal gift of divine grace to enable the bishop to act in accordance with Christ’s will. The essential succession, though, rests in the spiritual office and authority. Within the second interpretation, the succession is the transmission of a peculiar gift through the act of episcopal consecration. The gift and power has been handed down from one of the original apostles themselves. Thus, the essential succession rests in the individual bishop’s will or intents and acts – within or outside the Church.

If one takes the first view, his theological bases rest primarily in the belief that the episcopal order handed down from the second century represents the true organic continuity of apostolic authority in the Church. If one holds to the second view, he accepts the idea that a breach at any point in the actual line of consecrations originating in the apostles destroys the succession. In either case, the appeal to apostolicity in the episcopate is said to provide the Church with a guard against erroneous teaching.

The third element that supports the episcopacy from the Anglican point of view is this: The bishop, when speaking *ex cathedra* or acting in office, is the representative of the whole Church to his diocese, and the representative of his diocese to the whole Church. He may be considered a representative of the unity and catholicity of the Church. This quality, however, does not imply infallibility.

Fourth, the bishop is a chief pastor of both clergy and laity. And, fifth, because the unity of the Church is somewhat maintained through order and an orderly manner of making new ministers, the episcopate provides an organ of unity and universality; therefore, it is an appropriate means for making, ordaining, and consecrating new bishops, priests, and deacons.

These five elements together give to the episcopate its peculiar importance. As a defense of the episcopacy as the only means of communicating Christianity from generation from generation, these elements might not seem to be too absolute. No doubt, a different form of ministry, such as the presbytery, could symbolize and give form to apostolic authority. Undoubtedly, the local superintendent could be a chief pastor. Surely, the unity of the church and ordination could be accomplished by other means. Without a doubt, there is a reasonable question concerning the foundations of all interpretations of apostolic succession. Nevertheless, the Anglican Communion has held to what it regards to be most important: the historical development of the office of episcopacy. Perhaps, some modern Anglicans might sum up a contemporary defense of episcopacy by saying that it is “most appropriate,” but the classicists, relying chiefly upon the concept of “apostolic succession,” would still insist upon that notion as the bulwark for an Anglican defense of the Episcopacy.

## *Addendum*

It should be noted that during the tutorial session in which the foregoing essay was read, the tutor pointed out the linkage between the Episcopacy and the throne in England. The principle was this: whatever the monarch willed would determine the polity of the English state church, whether this is Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, etc. Additionally, the tutorial dealt with some unclear statements in Section I.

### II. *A DEFENSE OF EPISCOPACY FOR THE CONTEMPORARY PROTESTANT*

A.L. Peck, in his book *Anglicanism and Episcopacy*, writes: “The difference between episcopal and non-episcopal ministries is not only one of validity and invalidity, but one of degrees of efficacy, and, this is due to the fact that the divinely appointed society is the Apostolic society (the Church), of which the Apostolic ministry is the nucleus and source. Our criticism of non-episcopal ministries therefore is not that they are not ‘valid’ (*i.e.*, not that God refuses to work through them), but that they are not the divinely appointed ministry, and therefore cannot constitute the Apostolic society, in which alone the conditions can be provided in which sacraments can be efficacious in the way God intends them to be.” (Peck, p.100.)

It would seem that in a defense of Episcopacy to the contemporary Protestant, were one first to grant that the Apostolic ministry is the nucleus and source of the Church, one would then have to establish the nature of the structure of the first-century ministry. It is with this issue that so much difficulty arises. With regard to the Episcopacy itself, A.G. Hebert has raised the following question: “Can the Episcopal Ministry be reckoned, as one of the essential forms of the Church, that is to say, as being substantially of Divine Ordinance?” In reply to the question, Fr. Hebert notes: “Episcopacy was not instituted as such by our Lord, and we ought to be chary of accepting the results of endeavours of controversialists to prove from the New Testament each his own form of Church order - and still more the theory of the Church order popularized by Dr. Streeter, that it is characteristic of the Church that it has no principles of Church order.” (Hebert, p.109).

When various manuscripts of the first century are examined, a logical conclusion that might be drawn would be, I would think, similar to that of church historian, Prof. E. R. Hardy of Berkeley Divinity School. In a lecture last year at Berkeley Dr. Hardy mentioned that from evidences taken from Scripture and early documents (such as Clement’s letter to Rome and the Didache) it is a reasonable conclusion that various forms of ministries were developing in various geographical areas of the Apostolic Church. Dr. K. S. Latourette writes, in agreement with Dr. Hardy, “For the first two or three generations, the Christian Community exhibited great variety. ... Uniformity of structure was far from coming into being at once. In the earliest mention of what appears to be officers or leaders in the great Gentile Church of Antioch, we hear of prophets and teachers, but not of deacons, elders, or bishops.” (Latourette, Pp. 115 f.) Professor Latourette further points out the various offices used in the earliest Churches, but notes that the distinct office of Bishop finally emerged as dominant after the fore part of the second century.

Inasmuch as it seems impossible to acknowledge the establishment of the episcopate *per se* as an essential ingredient of the Apostolic (1st century) period, it would seem difficult to accept, as does Fr. Hebert, the episcopacy as the “Essential Ministry.” The emergence of the episcopate by the middle of the second century as a form to be preserved from that time on as a protection of the Faith is a point less disputable. However, in that the episcopate does not seem to be of the *esse* of the earliest Church structure everywhere, it certainly does not seem defensible that to regard that venerable institution as the *sine qua non* of Christianity.

As a defense of the episcopate, however, this student would offer the contemporary Protestant this defense: (1) The episcopate emerged in the early Church both as a means of ecclesiastical government and as a guardian of the Resurrection Faith of the Apostles. Although its effectiveness in the church has not always been of a positive nature, its function as a means of ordaining other Christian ministers serves (and has served) as a great bulwark against gross misinterpretations of the Gospel. (2) The institution’s link with the past and the future provides the Church with a sacramental, a visible, expression of the continuity of the Faith. (3) Finally, although the episcopate need not be considered the *esse* of the Church, it could well be considered the *bene esse*, inasmuch as its foundations are laid in the historical drama of God’s Search for man.

### III. *A DEFENSE OF ANGLICAN EPISCOPACY FOR THE CONTEMPORARY ROMAN CATHOLIC*

One might think that an effort toward a defense of Anglican episcopacy for the contemporary Roman Catholic might not be too difficult - certainly not so difficult as a defense of the episcopacy for the Protestant. Both Anglicans and Romans appeal to Scripture, Tradition, and Reason; both include bishops, priests, and deacons in their ministries. Serious problems emerge, however, in the respective Roman and Anglican understandings of Scripture, Reason, and Tradition, and that gives bases to contrasting interpretations of the ministry and church polity. The Roman appeal to S.T.R. (scripture, Tradition, & Reason) yields an interpretation of church and ministry focused upon the Bishop of Rome; the Anglican appeal results in significant differences.

A relevant case in point is the concept of priesthood. In the Roman *Apostolicae Curae*, a papal bull, it is written: "Ordinations carried out according to the Anglican rite have been and are absolutely null and utterly void. . . . The Words which until recently were commonly held by Anglicans to constitute the proper form of priestly ordination - namely, 'Receive the Holy Ghost,' certainly do not in the least definitely express the sacred order of priesthood, or its grace and power which is chiefly the power of offering the Sacrifice of the Mass." According to the Roman appeal to S.T.R., the offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass is the chief function and duty of the Priest.

In a comment upon the Roman pronouncement against Anglican Orders, Anglican Bishop Knox wrote in the *National Review* (Sept., 1925): "The Pope refused absolutely to recognize our Anglican Orders on the ground that our Church does not ordain priests to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass. In spite of attempts made by our Archbishop to conceal this defect, the Pope from his point of view was unquestionably right. It is true that certain priests of the Church of England offer so-called Masses, but as they were not ordained by the Church with the intention that they should offer the Body and Blood of Christ to the Father, the Sacrament of their Ordination is for this purpose a failure. . . . No one reading the Roman Ordinal can doubt that it is full of the intention of ordaining sacrificing priests. No one reading the English Ordinal can suspect that it has such an object."

Thus, the apparent similarities between Roman and Anglican concepts of priesthood may be in no more harmony than in the case of the Anglican and Protestant concepts. The Roman notion focuses upon a sacrificing priesthood, the Anglican apparently upon a pastoral-sacramental-evangelical ministry, and the Protestant upon a pastoral-evangelical ministry. It is this student's opinion that the differences in understanding arise because of different basic methods of interpreting S.T.R. by these three great traditions in Christianity.

Now to the episcopacy itself. Both Anglicans and Romans agree that the priesthood is inherent to the office of a bishop, but that the bishop has the additional authority, among other duties, to perpetuate the ministry through ordination. However, the Romans and Anglicans intend in fact to perpetuate two variations of priesthood, and, the organ of transmission, the episcopacy, is understood as differently as is the priesthood. The Roman Bishop, among other things, is first a sacrificing Priest and voice of authority. The Anglican Bishop is first a pastor. (It should be noted here that most Anglo-Catholics would probably not agree with the various distinctions here drawn.)

Although it may be argued that the differences are ones of emphasis rather than essence - that is, that Roman and Anglican episcopacy are essentially the same but certain aspects of the whole are differently emphasized by both Communion - it should be recalled that a strong difference exists in concept of priesthood, which is a part of the episcopal office, and that other factors enter also; for example, it is agreed by all Romans that the episcopate is of the *esse* of Christianity, but not so by all Anglicans. In addition, each Roman bishop is subject to the Roman Pontiff and derives his wholeness from his communion with the papal office; whereas the Anglican bishop is subject to the norms of the Church (Bible, canons, creeds) and derives his wholeness therefrom. All of these theories - Anglican and Roman - can be supported by appeals to S.T.R., depending upon one's approach.

It would seem that a defense of Anglican episcopacy for the contemporary Roman Catholic is impossible. Though both Catholic heritages appeal to common elements for support of their polities, etc., they vary considerably in their interpretations. The source of the difficulty seems to be centered in the problem of methodology: How is S.T.R. to be employed? The Roman refusal to consider seriously critical methods of biblical interpretation on certain issues (such as this one) prevents a meeting of the minds, inasmuch as most Anglicans value sound biblical criticism. The non-papal perspectives can hardly agree with Rome's dogmatic and one-sided opinions. Any defense of Anglican episcopacy would include, I hope, thorough scholarship, which Rome refuses to consider at the Magisterium level.

Were Rome to come of age intellectually, Canterbury could defend itself by rightly asserting that the Anglican concept of pastoral-sacramental-evangelical priesthood (and episcopate) is grounded in Scripture, has been nurtured and developed throughout history, and makes good sense. This type of episcopate (which, among others, has been used by the Church since the earliest times among its structures of ministry) meets the traditional canonical requirements: the proper minister has always transmitted the office; a proper form has been used faithfully; a proper action has been performed continuously; and, the undoubted intent to perpetuate a true Apostolicity has existed, although at times misunderstood - as Rome's whole concept may be. Nevertheless, such a defense would be meaningless to most contemporary Roman Catholics, because they refuse to re-think the New Testament conceptions of ministry with the scholarly aids which most Anglicans use with the hope of the guidance of the Holy Spirit. (Dissenting Roman Catholic theologians' views are quite compatible with mainstream Anglican thought.)

#### IV. *THE POSSIBLE ROLE FOR EPISCOPACY IN THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT*

In our preceding discussions we have heard some of the problems that need to be raised in attempts to defend the episcopacy. To both the Catholic and Protestant the various interpretations of the Church and its ministry seem to result from varying perspectives of reason, tradition, and Scripture. Because of the uncertainty of the scriptural, traditional, and rational foundations of the episcopacy, this student has taken the position that the great Office cannot be regarded as of the *esse* of the Church. He does, however, regard the episcopacy as a means of ecclesiastical government, as a guardian of the Resurrection Faith, as a means of ordaining Christian ministers, as a protection against gross misinterpretations of the Gospel, as an outward link with the Church past and future, as a visible expression of the enduring relevancy of the Faith, as an historical development, and, therefore, as of the *bene esse* to Christianity.

Dean Richard Wilmer of Berkeley Divinity School has written in a discussion of Reunion (*Viewpoints*, p. 263.): "Genuine ecumenicity embraces all constructive means of bringing together the churches, realizing that it is only through God's Grace that our human means are enabled to be of any use. It takes seriously the statement in our (1928) Prayer Book "Office of Instruction" that the Church is the Body of which Jesus Christ is the Head, and that all baptized people, what ever their denomination, are the members." With such concern for the focal point of Christianity, *i.e.*, Jesus Christ, the Church Universal has the responsibility to rethink its many of its fundamental doctrines and purposes. The need for the most effective communication of Christianity faces the Church today as perhaps in no other age; and, certainly a Church united in fellowship and mission, together at the altar of God, is prerequisite to a maximum effectiveness.

The episcopacy is an institution of noble origins and purpose. Its roots in the history of God's search for man provide the Church with a potential chief pastorate.

The disagreements over the minutiae of its origins and functions continue to be a divisive factor in Christianity. Whereas some would charge it with prelacy and a lack of sound basis, others would assert its essentiality.

Perhaps in an age when man is realizing how much he cannot know, and, indeed, that knowledge alone is not the solution to our unhappy divisions, a more humble approach to theological problems needs to be taken by all committed Christians. To assert "yea" or "nay" to the episcopacy may be missing the boat. Perhaps a "why not" would approach a solution to the problem.

It is the writer's opinion that the episcopacy can play a vital role in the Ecumenical Movement, especially in its inherent symbolic unity. All of the functions, etc. that the episcopate represents is certainly of great value to the Church Universal. Both Catholic and Protestants, however, need to overcome dogmatic and inflexible biases to begin to appreciate the Office's historical misconceptions and potential greatness. When regarded as a chief pastorate grounded in history to serve the Gospel, the episcopacy could be hardly denied as a means to fulfill the many vital roles in the re-formation of the Holy Catholic Church. In short, I should like to submit the opinion that there is no end to the possible role of the episcopacy in the Ecumenical Movement; its function alone as chief pastorate offers a dynamic means for guiding the Church into the bond of peace in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

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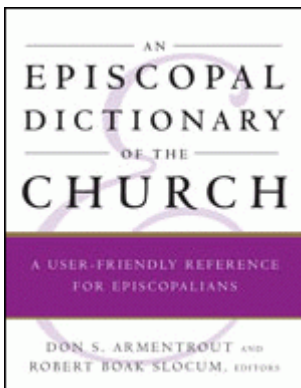
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## 2007 SUPPLEMENT

from



Church Publishing Incorporated, New York by Don S. Armentrout and Robert Boak Slocum, editors.

May be ordered at [www.churchpublishing.org/](http://www.churchpublishing.org/).

### **Episcopate, Episcopacy, Episcopos**

The terms may refer to the collective role of the order or office of bishops in the church. The "Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church" is one of the four points of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral. The 1886 General Convention of the Episcopal Church in Chicago identified the historic episcopate as an inherent part of the sacred deposit of Christian faith and order committed by Christ and his apostles to the church until the end of the world. The Convention accounted the historic episcopate to be one of four essentials for the restoration of unity among the divided branches of Christendom (BCP, p. 877). The Lambeth Conference of 1888 included the historic

episcopate as one of the four points that supply a basis on which approach may be made towards Home Reunion (BCP, pp. 877-878).

### **Historic Episcopate**

The succession of bishops in the history of the church from the apostles until the present. During the colonial period there were several efforts to bring the historic episcopate to America, but none succeeded. Samuel Seabury went to England in 1783 to receive the historic episcopate. It proved impossible for Seabury to be ordained and consecrated a bishop in England because English law required all ordinands to swear an oath of loyalty to the English sovereign. Seabury was ordained and consecrated into the historic episcopate by nonjuring bishops of the Episcopal Church in Scotland on Nov. 14, 1784. On June 26, 1786, Parliament passed an act which granted the Archbishop of Canterbury the right to consecrate three bishops who would not be required to take the oath of loyalty to the sovereign. William White and Samuel Provoost were consecrated Bishops of Pennsylvania and New York, respectively, on Feb. 4, 1787, and James Madison was consecrated Bishop of Virginia on Sept. 19, 1790. On Sept. 17, 1792, Thomas Claggett was consecrated Bishop of Maryland by Bishop Provoost, assisted by Bishops Seabury, White, and Madison. This combined the lines of succession of the historic episcopate in the Episcopal Church. The fourth point of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral states that one of the "inherent parts" of the sacred deposit of the Christian faith is "The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church" (BCP, pp. 876-878).

### **Apostolic Succession**

The belief that bishops are the successors to the apostles and that episcopal authority is derived from the apostles by an unbroken succession in the ministry. This authority is specifically derived through the laying on of hands for the ordination of bishops in lineal sequence from the apostles, through their performing the ministry of the apostles, and through their succession in episcopal sees traced back to the apostles. The apostolic succession is continued in the bishops of the Episcopal Church, who seek to "carry on the apostolic work of leading, supervising, and uniting the Church" (BCP, p. 510). The apostolic succession may also be understood as a continuity in doctrinal teaching from the time of the apostles to the present. The apostolic succession is said to be a "sign, though not a guarantee" of the church's basic continuity with the apostles and their time. The meaning of the apostolic succession relative to the historic episcopate has been a significant issue in Lutheran-Episcopal dialogues. See Bishop.

### **Bishop**

One of the three orders of ordained ministers in the church, bishops are charged with the apostolic work of leading, supervising, and uniting the church. Bishops represent Christ and his church, and they are called to provide Christian vision and leadership for their dioceses. The BCP (p. 855) notes that the bishop is "to act in Christ's name for the reconciliation of the world and the building up of the church; and to ordain others to continue Christ's ministry." Bishops stand in the apostolic succession, maintaining continuity in the present with the ministry of the Apostles. Bishops serve as chief pastors of the church, exercising a ministry of oversight and supervision. Diocesan bishops hold jurisdiction in their dioceses, with particular responsibility for the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the church. Bishops serve as the focus for diocesan unity and for the unity of their dioceses with the wider church. Since the bishop's ministry is a ministry of oversight, the term "episcopal" (derived from the Greek episcopos, "overseer") is applied to matters pertaining to bishops. An "episcopal" church is a church governed by bishops, and "episcopal" services are led by bishops. Episcopal services in the BCP include the services for the Ordination and Consecration of Bishops, Ordination of Priests, Ordination of Deacons, the Celebration of a New Ministry, and the Consecration of a Church or Chapel.

Bishops also preside at services of Confirmation, Reception, or Reaffirmation. Bishops bless altars and fonts, and the blessing of chalices and patens and church bells are traditionally reserved for the bishop. In the Episcopal Church, diocesan and suffragan bishops are elected by Diocesan Convention. Bishops-elect are

ordained and consecrated after consents have been received from a majority of the diocesan standing committees and from a majority of the bishops exercising jurisdiction in the Episcopal Church. If the episcopal election takes place within three months before General Convention, the consent of the House of Deputies is required instead of a majority of the standing committees. Three bishops are required to participate in the ordination and consecration of a bishop. Diocesan bishops may be succeeded by bishops-coadjutor upon resignation of diocesan jurisdiction. Diocesan bishops may also be assisted by suffragan and assistant bishops, who have no right of succession upon the resignation of the diocesan bishop. See Apostolic Succession.

### **Presiding Bishop**

Chief Pastor and Primate of the Episcopal Church. The office evolved originally from a rule of the House of Bishops in 1789 making its presiding officer the senior member in terms of date of consecration. As a result of increased duties, the office was incorporated into the Constitution of the Church in 1901 and styled Presiding Bishop of the Church. In 1919 the office was made elective and invested with executive responsibility for all departments of the church's work. The first election of a Presiding Bishop by General Convention took place in 1925. Since 1943 the Presiding Bishop has been required to resign diocesan jurisdiction upon election. In 1967 the duties of the office were significantly enhanced. As "Chief Pastor," the Presiding Bishop is charged with initiating and developing church policy and strategy, speaking God's Word to the church and the world, and visiting every diocese of the church. The title "Primate" was added in 1982. The Cathedral of Saint Peter and Saint Paul in Washington, D. C., is the official seat of the Presiding Bishop. The office of the Presiding Bishop is located at the Episcopal Church Center in New York City. The present term of office for the Presiding Bishop is nine years.

### **Primate**

The chief bishop in an Anglican Province is called a primate. In the United States, the Presiding Bishop serves as "Chief Pastor and Primate." The 1978 Lambeth Conference requested that primates' meetings should be established to enable regular consultation among the primates of the Anglican Communion. These meetings have taken place throughout the Anglican Communion. The primates' meeting provides opportunities for collegiality and enables the primates to provide support for the Archbishop of Canterbury.

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See the section on The Ministry at [www.philosophy-religion.org/catechism/unit7.htm](http://www.philosophy-religion.org/catechism/unit7.htm) /.

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## **From *THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER (1979)***

### **Episcopal Services**

page 510

#### **Preface to the Ordination Rites**

The Holy Scriptures and ancient Christian writers make it clear that from the apostles' time, there have been different ministries within the Church. In particular, since the time of the New Testament, three distinct orders of ordained ministers have been characteristic of Christ's holy Catholic Church. First, there is the order of bishops who carry on the apostolic work of leading, supervising, and uniting the Church. Secondly, associated with them are the presbyters, or ordained elders, in subsequent times generally known as priests. Together with the bishops, they take part in the governance of the Church, in the carrying out of its missionary and pastoral work, and in the preaching of the Word of God and administering his holy Sacraments. Thirdly, there are deacons who assist bishops and priests in all of this work. It is also a special responsibility of deacons to minister in Christ's name to the poor, the sick, the suffering, and the helpless.

The persons who are chosen and recognized by the Church as being called by God to the ordained ministry are admitted to these sacred orders by solemn prayer and the laying on of episcopal hands. It has been, and is, the intention and purpose of this Church to maintain and continue these three orders; and for this purpose these

services of ordination and consecration are appointed. No persons are allowed to exercise the offices of bishop, priest, or deacon in this Church unless they are so ordained, or have already received such ordination with the laying on of hands by bishops who are themselves duly qualified to confer Holy Orders.

It is also recognized and affirmed that the threefold ministry is not the exclusive property of this portion of Christ's catholic Church, but is a gift from God for the nurture of his people and the proclamation of his Gospel everywhere. Accordingly, the manner of ordaining in this Church is to be such as has been, and is, most generally recognized by Christian people as suitable for the conferring of the sacred orders of bishops, priest, and deacon. page 511

#### **Concerning the Ordination of a Bishop**

In accordance with ancient custom, it is desirable, if possible, that bishops be ordained on Sundays and other feasts of our Lord or on the feasts of apostles or evangelists.

When a bishop is to be ordained, the Presiding Bishop of this Church, or a bishop appointed by the Presiding Bishop, presides and serves as chief consecrator. At least two other bishops are co-consecrators. Representatives of the presbyterate, diaconate, and laity of the diocese for which the new bishop is to be consecrated, are assigned appropriate duties in the service.

From the beginning of the service until the Offertory, the chief consecrator presides from a chair placed close to the people, so that all may see and hear what is done. The other bishops, or a convenient number of them, sit to the right and left of the chief consecrator.

The bishop-elect is vested in a rochet or alb, without stole, tippet, or other vesture distinctive of ecclesiastical or academic rank or order.

When the bishop-elect is presented, his full name (designated by the symbol N. N.) is used. Thereafter, it is appropriate to refer to him only by the Christian name by which he wishes to be known.

At the Offertory, it is appropriate that the bread and wine be brought to the Altar by the family or friends of the newly ordained.

The family of the newly ordained may receive Communion before other members of the congregation. Opportunity is always given to the people to communicate.

Additional Directions are on page 552.  
page 512

#### **The Ordination of a Bishop**

Hymns, psalms, and anthems may be sung during the entrance of the bishops and other ministers.

The people standing, the Bishop appointed says

Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  
People And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

In place of the above, from Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost

Bishop Alleluia. Christ is risen.  
People The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.

In Lent and on other penitential occasions

Bishop Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

**People His mercy endures for ever.**

**The Bishop then says**

**Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen. page 513**

**The Presentation**

**The bishops and people sit. Representatives of the diocese, both Priests and lay Persons, standing before the Presiding Bishop, present the bishop-elect, saying**

**N., Bishop in the Church of God, the clergy and people of the Diocese of N., trusting in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, have chosen N.N. to be a bishop and chief pastor. We therefore ask you to lay your hands upon him and in the power of the Holy Spirit to consecrate him a bishop in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.**

**The Presiding Bishop then directs that the testimonials of the election be read.**

**When the reading of the testimonials is ended, the Presiding Bishop requires the following promise from the Bishop-elect**

**In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, I, N.N., chosen Bishop of the Church in N., solemnly declare that I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation; and I do solemnly engage to conform to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Episcopal Church.**

**The Bishop-elect then signs the above Declaration in the sight of all present. The witnesses add their signatures.**

**All stand.**

**The Presiding Bishop then says the following, or similar words, and asks the response of the people**

**page 514**

**Brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, you have heard testimony given that N.N. has been duly and lawfully elected to be a bishop of the Church of God to serve in the Diocese of N. You have been assured of his suitability and that the Church has approved him for this sacred responsibility. Nevertheless, if any of you know any reason why we should not proceed, let it now be made known.**

**If no objections are made, the Presiding Bishop continues**

**Is it your will that we ordain N. a bishop?**

**The People respond in these or other words**

**That is our will.**

**Presiding Bishop**

**Will you uphold N. as bishop?**

**The People respond in these or other words**

**We will.**

**The Presiding Bishop then says**

**The Scriptures tell us that our Savior Christ spent the whole night in prayer before he chose and sent forth his twelve apostles. Likewise, the apostles prayed before they appointed Matthias to be one of their number. Let**

us, therefore, follow their examples, and offer our prayers to Almighty God before we ordain N. for the work to which we trust the Holy Spirit has called him.

page 515

All kneel, and the Person appointed leads the Litany for Ordinations, or some other approved litany. At the end of the litany, after the Kyries, the Presiding Bishop stands and reads the Collect for the Day, or the following Collect, or both, first saying

The Lord be with you  
People And also with you.

Let us pray.

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquillity the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were being cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Ministry of the Word

Three Lessons are read. Lay persons read the Old Testament Lesson and the Epistle.

The Readings are ordinarily selected from the following list and may be lengthened if desired. On a Major Feast or on a Sunday, the Presiding Bishop may select Readings from the Proper of the Day.

Old Testament Isaiah 61:1-8, or Isaiah 42:1-9

Psalms 99, or 40:1-14, or 100

Epistle Hebrews 5:1-10, or 1 Timothy 3:1-7, or 2 Corinthians 3:4-9

page 516

The Reader first says

A Reading (Lesson) from \_\_\_\_\_.

A citation giving chapter and verse may be added.

After each Reading, the Reader may say

The Word of the Lord.  
People Thanks be to God.

or the Reader may say Here ends the Reading (Epistle).

Silence may follow.

A Psalm, canticle, or hymn follows each Reading.

Then, all standing, a Deacon or a Priest reads the Gospel, first saying

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to \_\_\_\_\_.

**People Glory to you, Lord Christ.  
John 20:19-23, or John 17:1-9,18-12, or Luke 24:44-49a**

**After the Gospel, the Reader says**

**The Gospel of the Lord.  
People Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

**The Sermon  
After the Sermon, the Congregation sings a hymn.**

**page 517**

**The Examination  
All now sit, except the bishop-elect, who stands facing the bishops. The Presiding Bishop addresses the bishop-elect**

**My brother, the people have chosen you and have affirmed their trust in you by acclaiming your election. A bishop in God's holy Church is called to be one with the apostles in proclaiming Christ's resurrection and interpreting the Gospel, and to testify to Christ's sovereignty as Lord of lords and King of kings.**

**You are called to guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church; to celebrate and to provide for the administration of the sacraments of the New Covenant; to ordain priests and deacons and to join in ordaining bishops; and to be in all things a faithful pastor and wholesome example for the entire flock of Christ.**

**With your fellow bishops you will share in the leadership of the Church throughout the world. Your heritage is the faith of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and those of every generation who have looked to God in hope. Your joy will be to follow him who came, not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.**

**Are you persuaded that God has called you to the office of bishop?**

**Answer I am so persuaded.**

**The following questions are then addressed to the bishop-elect by one or more of the other bishops**

**page 518**

**Bishop Will you accept this call and fulfill this trust in obedience to Christ?**

**Answer I will obey Christ, and will serve in his name.**

**Bishop Will you be faithful in prayer, and in the study of Holy Scripture, that you may have the mind of Christ?**

**Answer I will, for he is my help.**

**Bishop Will you boldly proclaim and interpret the Gospel of Christ, enlightening the minds and stirring up the conscience of your people?**

**Answer I will, in the power of the Spirit.**

**Bishop As a chief priest and pastor, will you encourage and support all baptized people in their gifts and ministries, nourish them from the riches of God's grace, pray for them without ceasing, and celebrate with them the sacraments of our redemption?**

**Answer I will, in the name of Christ, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.**

**Bishop Will you guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church of God?**

**Answer I will, for the love of God.**

**Bishop Will you share with your fellow bishops in the government of the whole Church; will you sustain your fellow presbyters and take counsel with them; will you guide and strengthen the deacons and all others who minister in the Church?**

**Answer I will, by the grace given me.**

**Bishop Will you be merciful to all, show compassion to the poor and strangers, and defend those who have no helper?**

**Answer I will, for the sake of Christ Jesus.**

**page 519**

**All stand. The Presiding Bishop then says**

**N., through these promises you have committed yourself to God, to serve his Church in the office of bishop. We therefore call upon you, chosen to be a guardian of the Church's faith, to lead us in confessing that faith.**

**Bishop-elect**

**We believe in one God.**

**Then all sing or say together**

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father.**

**Through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation**

**he came down from heaven:**

**by the power of the Holy Spirit**

**he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,**

**and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;**

**he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;**

**he ascended into heaven**

**and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**page 520**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.**

**With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.**

**He has spoken through the Prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,**

**and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

### **The Consecration of the Bishop**

**All continue to stand, except the bishop-elect, who kneels before the Presiding Bishop. The other bishops stand to the right and left of the Presiding Bishop.**

**The hymn, Veni Creator Spiritus, or the hymn, Veni Sancte Spiritus, is sung.**

**A period of silent prayer follows, the people still standing.**

**The Presiding Bishop then begins this Prayer of Consecration**

**God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of mercies and God of all comfort, dwelling on high but having regard for the lowly, knowing all things before they come to pass: We give you thanks that from the beginning you have gathered and prepared a people to be heirs of the covenant of Abraham, and have raised up prophets, kings, and priests, never leaving your temple untended. We praise you also that from the creation you have graciously accepted the ministry of those whom you have chosen.**

**page 521**

**The Presiding Bishop and other Bishops now lay their hands upon the head of the bishop-elect, and say together**

**Therefore, Father, make N. a bishop in your Church. Pour out upon him the power of your princely Spirit, whom you bestowed upon your beloved Son Jesus Christ, with whom he endowed the apostles, and by whom your Church is built up in every place, to the glory and unceasing praise of your Name.**

**The Presiding Bishop continues**

**To you, O Father, all hearts are open; fill, we pray, the heart of this your servant whom you have chosen to be a bishop in your Church, with such love of you and of all the people, that he may feed and tend the flock of Christ, and exercise without reproach the high priesthood to which you have called him, serving before you day and night in the ministry of reconciliation, declaring pardon in your Name, offering the holy gifts, and wisely overseeing the life and work of the Church. In all things may he present before you the acceptable offering of a pure, and gentle, and holy life; through Jesus Christ your Son, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and power and glory in the Church, now and for ever.**

**The People in a loud voice respond Amen.**

**The new bishop is now vested according to the order of bishops.**

**A Bible is presented with these words**

**Receive the Holy Scriptures. Feed the flock of Christ committed to your charge, guard and defend them in his truth, and be a faithful steward of his holy Word and Sacraments.**

**After this other symbols of office may be given.**

**page 522**

**The Presiding Bishop presents to the people their new bishop.**

**The Clergy and People offer their acclamation and applause.**

**The Peace**

**The new Bishop then says**

**The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
People And also with you.**

**The Presiding Bishop and other Bishops greet the new bishop.**

**The People greet one another.**

**The new Bishop also greets members of the clergy, family members, and the congregation.**

**The new Bishop, if the Bishop of the Diocese, may now be escorted to the episcopal chair.**

**At the Celebration of the Eucharist  
The liturgy continues with the Offertory.**

**Deacons prepare the Table.**

**Then the new Bishop goes to the Lord's Table as chief Celebrant and, joined by other bishops and presbyters, proceeds with the celebration of the Eucharist.**

**After Communion**

**In place of the usual postcommunion prayer, one of the bishops leads the people in the following**

**page 523**

**Almighty Father, we thank you for feeding us with the holy food of the Body and Blood of your Son, and for uniting us through him in the fellowship of your Holy Spirit. We thank you for raising up among us faithful servants for the ministry of your Word and Sacraments. We pray that N. may be to us an effective example in word and action, in love and patience, and in holiness of life. Grant that we, with him, may serve you now, and always rejoice in your glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.**

**The new Bishop blesses the people, first saying**

**Our help is in the Name of the Lord;  
People The maker of heaven and earth.**

**New Bishop Blessed be the Name of the Lord;  
People From this time forth for evermore.**

**New Bishop The blessing, mercy, and grace of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you, and remain with you for ever. Amen.**

**A Deacon dismisses the people**

**Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.  
People Thanks be to God.**

**From Easter Day through the Day of " "Alleluia, alleluia," may be added to the dismissal and to the response.**

**page 524**

**Concerning the Service**

**When a bishop is to confer Holy Orders, at least two presbyters must be present.**

**From the beginning of the service until the Offertory, the bishop presides from a chair placed close to the people, and facing them, so that all may see and hear what is done.**

**The ordinand is to be vested in surplice or alb, without stole, tippet, or other vesture distinctive of ecclesiastical or academic or order.**

**When the ordinand is presented, his full name (designated by the symbol N.N.) is used. Thereafter, it is appropriate to refer to him only by the Christian name by which he wishes to be known.**

**At the Offertory, it is appropriate that the bread and wine be brought to the Altar by the family and friends of the newly ordained.**

**At the Great Thanksgiving, the new priest and other priests stand at the Altar with the bishop, as associates and fellow ministers of the Sacrament, and communicate with the bishop.**

**The family of the newly ordained may receive Communion before other members of the congregation. Opportunity is always given to the people to communicate.**

**Additional Directions are on page 552.**

**page 552**

#### **Additional Directions**

##### **At all Ordinations**

**The celebration of the Holy Eucharist may be according to Rite One or Rite Two. In either case, the rubrics of the service of ordination are followed. The Summary of the Law, the Gloria in excelsis, the Prayers of the People after the Creed, the General Confession, and the usual postcommunion prayer are not used.**

**At the Presentation of the Ordinand, the Declaration "I do believe the Holy Scriptures..." is to be provided as a separate document to be signed, as directed by Article VIII of the Constitution of this Church and by the rubrics in each of the ordination rites. (Where there are more ordinands than one, each is to be presented with a separate copy for signature.)**

**The hymn to the Holy Spirit before the Prayer of Consecration may be sung responsively between a bishop and the congregation, or in some other convenient manner.**

**If vestments or other symbols of office are to be dedicated, such blessing is to take place at some convenient time prior to the service. The following form may be used.**

**V. Our help is in the Name of the Lord;**

**R. The maker of heaven and earth.**

**V. The Lord be with you.**

**R. And also with you.**

**Let us pray.**

**Everliving God, whose power is limitless, we place before you, with our praise and thanks, these tokens of your servant's ministry and dignity. Grant that N., who has been called to leadership in your Church, and bears these signs, may faithfully serve you and share in the fullness of your life-giving Spirit; through the high priest and good shepherd of us all, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**page 553**

#### **At the Ordination of a Bishop**

**Following the Consecration Prayer, and while the new bishop is being clothed with the vesture of the episcopate, instrumental music may be played.**

**Following the presentation of the Bible, and the formula "Receive the Holy Scriptures..." a ring, staff, and mitre, or other suitable insignia of office may be presented.**

**During the Eucharistic Prayer, it is appropriate that some of the consecrating bishops, and representative presbyters of the diocese, stand with the new bishop at the Altar as fellow ministers of the Sacrament.**

**The newly ordained bishop, assisted by other ministers, distributes Holy Communion to the people. When necessary, the administration may take place at several conveniently separated places in the church.**

**After the pontifical blessing and the dismissal, a hymn of praise may be sung.**

**The bishops who are present are not to depart without signing the Letters of Consecration.**