



## Holy orders

Through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, or ordination, a man vows to lead other Catholics by bringing them the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist. He promises to do this by proclaiming the Gospel and by providing Catholics with means to achieve holiness. In order to be ordained a priest, a man must be first ordained a deacon.

### Ordination

In Catholicism, Holy Orders is the Sacrament by which men are ordained as priests or deacons. It is a sacrament carried out by a Bishop, who must lay his hands on the candidate.

Taking Holy Orders is a commitment for life both to God and to the Catholic Church, as the man is given certain powers, including passing on God's forgiveness of sins.

The following is a prayer said at the ordination of a priest:

Lord, holy Father, ... when you had appointed high priests to rule your people, you chose other men next to them in rank and dignity to be with them and to help them in their task... you extended the spirit of Moses to seventy wise men. ... You shared among the sons of Aaron the fullness of their father's power.

### Catechism of the Catholic Church 1542

Holy Orders differs from other sacraments as it has three separate stages. It can only be given by a man who has himself undertaken all three rites and has therefore become a Bishop.

The three stages of Holy Orders:

- **Being ordained a deacon** - a deacon may baptise, preach and distribute Holy Communion (but not transubstantiate it).
- **Being ordained a priest** - a priest is believed to have the power to change bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ (transubstantiation) and to forgive sins.
- **Being ordained a Bishop** - only a Bishop has the complete fullness of the priesthood, with the power to confirm and to ordain deacons, priests and other bishops through the sacrament of Holy Orders.

<https://www.icatholic.ie/category/sacraments/>. They are also available from [www.downandconnor.org](http://www.downandconnor.org).