

23. The Sacraments of Communion – Holy Orders & Matrimony.

The salvation of others is the goal of the sacraments of Communion. By the laying on of hands in Holy Orders, the Holy Spirit is poured out on each generation to save and to sanctify. Through the marriage covenant, the relationship between man and woman reflects the union of Christ and His Church.

Key terms:

Celibacy:	A freely chosen state or condition to remain unmarried for the sake of serving God and to enable an individual to give himself or herself fully to God and the service of others.
Consecrate:	1) To make holy or set apart for God; 2) through a priest praying the words Jesus said at the Last Supper and the power of the Holy Spirit, to change bread and wine into Jesus' Body and Blood.
Ordination:	The liturgical action by which a man becomes a deacon, priest or bishop.
Annulment:	The Church's determination that a marriage was attempted but never had existed before God.
Conjugal:	A word meaning "of marriage", for example, "conjugal love" is marital love.
Consent:	The mutual gift of each other in marriage made freely, without coercion or fear imposed by others, and without impediment of nature or the laws of the Church.
Indissoluble:	Cannot be dissolved or ended during the lifetime of the spouses.
Marital Act:	A completed act of sexual intercourse between a married couple.

See also: *ex opere operato*, Form, *In persona Christi*, Indelible, Matter, Magisterium, Sacrament, Seal.

THE TRINITY AND THE DIGNITY OF THE PRIESTHOOD

- We need a mediator between us and God the Father to make possible reconciliation (Ex. 19:9-24).
- The Father loved us so much that he sent us his Son as our Saviour and mediator (1 Tim 2:5).
- Jesus is the High Priest and mediator of all that the Father intends for us in his loving plan.
- Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to guide the Church (Jn. 16:7-15).
- The Holy Spirit governs, teaches and sanctifies the Church through those men chosen for Holy Orders.

THROUGH HOLY ORDERS, THE CHURCH CONTINUES THE PRIESTLY MEDIATION OF CHRIST (Jn. 20:19-23)

- Jesus gave his authority to certain men, the apostles (Mt. 16:13-19; Mt. 18:18; Lk. 10:16).
- After Jesus' death, Peter recognises that the office of apostle must be carried on (Acts 1:15-26).
- The apostles, in turn, passed on their authority to others, termed bishops (overseers) (1 Tim 4:14).

HOLY ORDERS IS A SACRAMENT OF SERVICE TO THE ENTIRE BODY OF CHRIST

(Jn. 13:1-17)

- The matter of the sacrament is the laying on of hands by a bishop(s).
- The form of the sacrament is the prayer that accompanies the imposition of hands.
- The call to priesthood is a call from God and a privilege, not a right (Jn. 15:16).
- The vow of celibacy enables those in Holy Orders to make a total commitment to the Church's mission (1 Cor 7:32-34), sacrificing their lives for the salvation of souls – it is a ministry of Christ's willing victimhood.
- The authority of bishops, priests, and deacons is at the service of love.

DEGREES OF HOLY ORDERS (Acts 6:2-6; Acts 14:22; 1Tim 3:1-7)

- Deacons undertake preaching, various forms of service, and the sacramental celebration of Baptism and Holy Matrimony (Acts 6:2-6).
- Priests consecrate the Eucharist during celebration of Mass (the essential definer of the sacrificial priesthood) and absolve sins; they can confer Baptism, Anointing of the Sick, and in certain cases Confirmation; they preside at Matrimony; preach and teach
 - In the sacramental ministry, the priest acts *in persona Christi*; Jesus is the minister of each sacrament.
 - Priests 'image' Jesus as the bridegroom to his Bride, the Church (Eph. 5:25-32).
- Bishops have the fullness of Holy Orders and can confer all sacraments; they are the successors of the apostles and are part of the Magisterium when in communion with the Pope.
- Holy Orders makes an indelible spiritual mark on the soul and so is never repeated, but each degree is conferred separately.
- Holy Orders is a vehicle of the Holy Spirit, the channel that pours out the grace, mercy, and truth won by Christ.

GOD THE FATHER'S PLAN (Mt. 19:3-9)

- Men and women are both made in God's image and likeness, and commanded to be fruitful.
- The crowning glory of marriage is the ability to participate in God's work of creation.
- The sexual act is therefore holy.
- Jesus came to restore the original order of creation that had been disturbed by sin.
- In the sacrament of Matrimony, the mutual love of the couple images:
- The self-giving love of the inner life of the Trinity (Jn. 17:20-23).
- The completely self-giving, unbreakable, and faithful love between Jesus the Bridegroom and his Bride, the Church (Hos. 2:14-20; Eph. 5:21-33).

MARRIAGE IS A SACRAMENT IN SERVICE TO THE BODY OF CHRIST, TO BUILD UP THE KINGDOM (Heb. 13:4; Mt. 5:31-32)

- Marriage is the foundation of society and has the mission of serving the Church by bringing new children into the world.
- Marriage is a sacred vocation to which most people are called, to work out their salvation and sanctify each other.
- The sacrament requires the free and unconditional consent, given before the Church, of a baptised man and woman who intend a union that is indissoluble once it is consummated.
- In granting an annulment the Church determines that a marriage was attempted but did not occur before God:

- The Church does not end a sacramental marriage (an annulment is not a ‘Catholic divorce’).
- There is no effect on the secular legality of a marriage and the legitimacy of children.

SINS AGAINST THE DIGNITY OF MARRIAGE

- Any form of sexual union outside marriage, including adultery, cohabitation, prostitution, homosexual acts, masturbation, rape, and polygamous marriage.
- Any interference with the natural conception of children and the spouses’ mutual openness to life, including contraception, sterilisation, abortion, and artificial forms of conception
- (Gen. 38:1-10).

EXPLORE!

Explore with the candidates the importance of praying for priests and the need to pray for vocations to Holy Orders.

Help the candidates to explore the scriptural parallels with the Rite of Ordination in the Church today.

Invite the candidates to reflect on how they see faith being a part of a couples relationship and future family.

Discuss with the candidates why is marriage good for society?

CELEBRATING THE RITE OF HOLY ORDERS

Presentation of the Candidates

Promise of Obedience

Litany of the Saints

Laying on of Hands

Vesting the New Priest

Anointing with Sacred Chrism

Presentation of the Gifts

Sign of Peace

Liturgy of the Eucharist

CELEBRATING THE RITE OF MARRIAGE

Exchange of Consent

- “Have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage?”
- “Will you honour each other as man and wife for the rest of your lives?”
- “Will you accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?”

Exchange of Rings

The Sacraments of Communion — Suggested Questions for Discussion:

1. Where does marriage appear in God's plan throughout the history of salvation?
2. How does marriage in God's plan differ from how marriage is understood in our culture?
3. How does the mutual love of the spouses reflect the inner life of the Trinity?
4. Why does a married couple need the grace of the sacrament of Matrimony to help them in their marriage?
5. What is the sacramental sign of marriage?
6. Is a Catholic marriage just for the procreation of children?
7. In what three ways did Jesus model the three functions of the priesthood?
8. In what way is the presence of a priest at one's deathbed important?
9. What does it mean to say we are a priestly people?
10. What does it mean to say that the priest acts in the person of Christ (*in persona Christi*) in his sacramental ministry?
11. Why is it helpful to know that the minister's sins or errors cannot impede the validity and fruitfulness of the sacraments, because the true minister is Christ?

PRAYER

Psalm 61 or Psalm 89 or Psalm 22 or Psalm 34

or

Gospel Reflection: Palm Sunday

Year A Mt. 26:14-27:66

Year B Mk. 14:1-15:47

Year C Lk. 22:14-23:56

The following format will be used for all Gospel reflections:

- Read the text aloud.
- Pause for a minute's silence.
- Read the text aloud again.
- Ask everyone to pick a word or a phrase that struck them. They just say the word or phrase without comment or discussion.
- Read the text again.
- Ask those present to comment on their word or phrase. What struck them about it? Why/how is it speaking to them?
- Continue with the discussion.

The following questions may be helpful:

What does this mean to me?

How does it make me feel?

Did I find the text disturbing/hopeful/confusing?

What images of God emerge for me?

What do I think that God is saying in this text?

What impact does this have on my life?

Scripture and Catechism Resources

The Sacraments of Communion

Scripture

Holy Orders

- Gen. 14:18-20 Melchizedek, priest-king of Salem, offers bread and wine as thanksgiving.
- Ex. 40:12-15 Aaron and his sons are clothed with priestly vestments and anointed as priests.
- Mt. 16:18-19 Jesus gives Peter the keys of the Kingdom and the power to bind and loose.
- Mt. 18:18 Whatever the apostles bind on earth is bound in heaven.
- Mt. 19:11-12 Jesus describes the call to celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom.
- Mt. 28:19-20 Jesus gives his apostles authority to baptise and teach all nations.
- Mk. 3:13-19 The choosing of the twelve apostles with authority to preach and cast out demons.
- Lk. 22:14-19 Jesus institutes the Eucharist and commands his apostles to do the same.
- Jn. 13:1-15 Jesus washes the feet of the apostles as an example of humble priestly service.
- Jn. 15:16 The apostles are not self-appointed, but are called by Jesus.
- Jn. 20:19-23 Jesus gives the apostles power to forgive sins.
- Acts 6:6 The public presentation of those chosen to the apostles who prayed and laid their hands on them.
- 1 Cor 7:32-34 Paul describes the single-heartedness of the unmarried man.
- Gal. 2:20 Paul has become another Christ because he lives Christ's life, not his own.
- 1 Tim 4:14 Timothy had been ordained a bishop by the laying on of hands.
- Tit 1:5 Titus is empowered by Paul to ordain other men.
- Heb. 7:15-17 You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

Holy Matrimony

- Gen. 1:26-28 God creates man and woman and commands them to be fruitful and multiply.
- Gen. 2:18-24 God creates 'woman' to be a helpmate to 'man', equal because of the same flesh and bone, and establishes the primacy of marriage.
- Ps. 128:3-4 Children are a blessing.
- Is. 54: 1-14 God is Israel's husband and is steadfastly faithful to her.
- Is. 62:5 God rejoices over the marriage covenant between man and woman.
- Jer. 2:1-3-5 The Israelites' unfaithfulness, but God remains faithful.
- Hos. 2:14-20 God intends for his people to be united to him in a spousal relationship of total intimacy.
- Mal. 2:13-16 God desires faithfulness and godly children from marriage.
- Mt. 5:31-32 Marriage cannot be dissolved, and 'remarriage' is adultery.
- Mt. 19:3-9 God is the Author of marriage and divorce is therefore permissible.
- Jn. 2:1-10 Jesus attends a wedding feast at Cana and sanctifies marriage.
- Eph. 5:21-33 Husbands and wives are to be subject to each other; they thus image the mystery of Jesus the Bridegroom and his Bride, the Church.
- Eph. 6:4 Children are to be brought up knowing God and learning virtue.
- 1 Pet. 3:7 The treatment of one spouse for another.
- Heb. 13:4 Marriage should be honoured by all.

Catechism

Holy Orders

- 1120 Ordained ministers act in Jesus' Person and are our liturgical link to Jesus.
- 1127-1128 By their very action, the sacraments accomplish what they symbolise, working by the power of Christ and not by the holiness of the minister of the sacrament.
- 1534-1535 Holy Orders is a sacrament consecrating some men to the service of the Church.
- 1536-1589 Holy Order: name, purpose and meaning, the three degrees of Holy Orders, how it is celebrated, who can confer and receive, celibacy, effects of the sacrament.

Holy Matrimony

- 1534-1535 The purpose of the sacrament of Matrimony is to strengthen and consecrate marriage for service in building up the Kingdom of God.
- 1601-1658 The sacrament of Matrimony: God's plan in establishing marriage, the impact of sin, how matrimony is celebrated, the importance of free consent by those free to marry, effects of the sacrament, the goods of marriage, the requirements of marital love, the family as the domestic Church.
- 2361-2367 Sexual love is restricted to marriage and is to be chaste, faithful, and fruitful.
- 2368-2377 Contraception and many kinds of laboratory-assisted conception are always morally wrong; children are a gift, and large families are a blessing from God.
- 2685 The family is the school of prayer.

(Source: Adapted from RCIA Catechist's Manual, Association for Catechumenal Ministry, Maryland, 2007)