

# **THE SACRAMENTS**

## **HOLY ORDERS.**

- 1.** This is a Sacrament which confers on the recipient the power to exercise ecclesiastical functions and the grace to perform them worthily.
- 2.** The principal ecclesiastical functions are (1) the offering up of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, (2) the administration of the Sacraments, and (3) the preaching of the Word of God.
- 3.** The power to exercise the ecclesiastical office comes from Our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave it to the Apostles with the added authority to communicate it to others.
- 4.** To enter the ecclesiastical state one must have a call to it from God, have no other object in view but the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and be of irreproachable morals.
- 5.** Parents have no right either to prevent their children from entering the ecclesiastical state or to force them into it. These must in conscience be given complete liberty to embrace whichever state God calls them to.
- 6.** The faithful ought to honour all priests as Christ's ministers, and to their parish priest in particular they must show due respect and docility.

## **Explanation of the Plate.**

**7.** *The central picture* represents St. Peter ordaining the first seven deacons. The number of their converts in Jerusalem soon became so large that the Apostles found themselves unequal to the twofold work of the ministry and of « serving tables » (distributing food, & from the common store « to every one according as he had need ». They therefore confined themselves « to prayer and to the ministry of the word » and had « seven men of great reputation, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom » elected by their flock from among themselves for the latter work. These

seven were « set before the Apostles, and they praying imposed hands upon them ». (*Acts* VI, 1-6.)

**8.** The authority to exercise the ecclesiastical functions has come down unimpaired, through an uninterrupted succession of bishops, to our own day and will continue thus to the end of the world.

**9.** The episcopate is not an order, but is the full expression of the priesthood. It gives those who receive it the power to administer all the Sacraments, more especially Confirmation and Holy Orders.

**10.** The bishop alone can confer Holy Orders.

**11.** We have in the Church seven different Orders, viz. four *minor* and three *major* Orders.

**12.** The four *minor* Orders are those of (1) Porter, (2) Lector, (3) Exorcist, and (4) Acolyte.

**13.** The *porter's* work is to open and shut the doors of the church. *In the top corner on the left* we see a bishop conferring this Order. He does this by holding the keys of the church against the candidate's hand as he pronounces the words giving him the custody of the keys.

**14.** *Next to the above picture* we observe the bishop conferring the Order of *lector*, the business of which is to read aloud in the church the Old and New Testaments. Holding the missal, he makes the candidate touch it as he pronounces the formula conferring the power to read the word of God.

**15.** *The first of the two pictures in the top right-hand top corner* represents a bishop conferring the Order of *exorcist*, whose function is to drive out evil spirits from possessed persons. Here the book of exorcisms takes the place of the missal as the bishop repeats the words giving to the candidate authority to impose his hands on possessed persons.

**16.** *In the next picture* the bishop is conferring the Order of *Acolyte*, whose work is to serve the priest at the altar. For this he makes the candidate touch first a candlestick and the lighted candle in it, and next the empty cruets and authorises him to light the candles in the church and to serve wine and water at Mass.

**17.** *In the left-hand bottom corner* the bishop is conferring the *subdiaconate*, the business of which is to serve the deacon at the altar and to chant the Epistle. In doing this he makes the candidate touch the chalice, the paten and the Epistle book and authorises him to read this

last in the church. The subdeacon has to take a vow of perpetual chastity and to read daily the divine office.

**18.** *In the opposite corner* the bishop is conferring the diaconate, the work of which is to serve the priest at Mass, to chant the Gospel, to preach and to baptize. Imposing his hands on the candidate, he says: « *Receive the Holy Ghost in order to have the strength to resist the devil and his temptations.* »

**19.** *Between the two last pictures* we see the bishop conferring the *priesthood*, whereby the candidate is authorised to say Mass, to preach and to administer the Sacraments. Imposing his hands over the candidates conjointly, all the priests present doing the same, the bishop anoints each one on the hands with the Holy Oil and makes him touch the chalice containing wine and the paten with a host on it. At the same time he says: « *Receive the power to offer to God the sacrifice and to celebrate the Mass for the living and the dead.* »

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