



THE REAL PRESENCE

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A Brief Study of the Eucharistic Christ
in the Christian Faith

Dedicated to Marie Arundell James (1923-2015)

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At the time he was betrayed
and entered willingly into his Passion,
he took bread and, giving thanks, broke it,
and gave it to his disciples, saying:

*Take this, all of you, and eat of it,
for this is my body,
which will be given up for you.*

In a similar way, when supper was ended,
he took the chalice
and once more giving thanks,
he gave it to his disciples, saying:

*Take this, all of you, and drink from it,
for this is the chalice of my Blood,
the Blood of the new and eternal covenant,
which will be poured out for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this in memory of me.*

The mystery of faith:

When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,
we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

(From the Roman Missal, Eucharistic Prayer # II)

There is no magic in these words. They are simple, concise, and precise. They are the words believed and understood to be uttered by Jesus, the Christ, in the “upper room,” at the last supper. The following has been excerpted from The New Revised Standard Version of the New Testament:

*Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “**This is my body**, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.”*

*And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup is **the new covenant in my blood**, which will be shed for you.*

(Luke 22: 19)

*While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; **this is my body**.’ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you; for **this is my blood of the covenant**, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*

(Matthew 26: 26)

*While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, ‘Take; **this is my body**.’ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, **This is my blood of the covenant**, which is poured out for many.*

(Mark 14: 22)

If we believe the gospels to be Sacred Scripture and ultimately true, or even ostensibly true, and have been baptized, we can call ourselves Christian. However, there is much more in Catholic Christianity than people are willing to embrace for one reason or another. It is fair to clip another verse from Mark:

John said to him, 'Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.' But Jesus said, 'Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterwards to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.' (Mark 9: 38)

Certainly, this gives Catholics reason to believe that those who left the Mother Church on account of theological or other complex differences are not to be thought of as heretics, as long as they have sincerely followed their consciences with regard to Jesus; although we should have a quick look at the reasons for the Great Schism and the Reformation; the two big splits from Catholicism. It is appropriate, in my view, to take clips from Wikipedia, a known secular source of pertinent material respecting The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

The Great Schism:

“Political, linguistic, theological, cultural and geographical differences between the Western and Eastern churches led to the East-West Schism. The proximate cause of the split was the mutual excommunication of the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Pope (Leo IX). Charlemagne's crowning made the Byzantine Emperor redundant, and relations between the East and the West deteriorated until a formal split occurred in 1054. The Eastern Church became the Greek Orthodox Church by severing all ties with Rome and the Roman Catholic Church — from the pope to the Holy Roman Emperor on down.” The linguistic and theological aspects of the schism are much too detailed to go into here. Over the centuries, many wonderful studies have been published elaborating the intricacies of that

historic debate. It is well to note that recently, Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew, who are friends, have opened up new conversations with respect these ancient disagreements. “While the Orthodox Church has often employed the term transubstantiation, Kallistos Ware claims the term ‘enjoys no unique or decisive authority’ in the Orthodox Church. Nor does its use in the Orthodox Church ‘commit theologians to the acceptance of Aristotelian philosophical concepts’ (as it has in the Roman Catholic Church: one would suppose through Aquinas, et al) Ware also notes that while the Orthodox have always ‘insisted on the reality of the change’ from bread and wine into the body and the blood of Christ at the consecration of the elements, the Orthodox have never attempted to explain the manner of the change.” (Wikipedia, Real Presence)

The Reformation:

In the beginning of the Sixteenth century, many events occurred that led to the protestant reformation. Clergy abuse caused people to begin criticizing the Catholic Church. A central point of criticism were the sale of indulgences (forgiveness) from sins for money. Ninety-five Theses or Disputation on the Power of Indulgences are a list of propositions for an academic disputation written in 1517 by Martin Luther, professor of moral theology at the University of Wittenberg, ... Luther may have also posted the Theses on the door of All Saints' Church and other churches in Wittenberg. It is proper to note that in both cases political pressure was also fundamental to the dispute.

Lutherans

“Lutherans believe in the real presence of the body and blood

of Christ in the Eucharist; that the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially present in, with and under the forms of the consecrated bread and wine (the elements), so that communicants orally eat and drink the holy body and blood of Christ Himself as well as the bread and wine in this Sacrament (cf. Augsburg Confession, Article 10). The Lutheran doctrine of the real presence is more accurately and formally known as the (Sacramental Union.) It has been inaccurately called 'consubstantiation,' a term which is specifically rejected by most Lutheran churches and theologians since it creates confusion about the actual doctrine, and it subjects the doctrine to the control of an abiblical philosophical concept in the same manner as, in their view, does the term 'transubstantiation.' For Lutherans, there is no Sacrament unless the elements are used according to Christ's institution (consecration, distribution, and reception). This was first articulated in the Wittenberg Concord of 1536 in the formula: *Nihil habet rationem sacramenti extra usum a Christo institutum* (Nothing has the character of a sacrament apart from the use instituted by Christ). Some Lutherans use this formula as their rationale for opposing in the church the reservation of the consecrated elements, private masses, the practice of Corpus Christi, and the belief that the *reliquæ* (what remains of the consecrated elements after all have communed (sic) in the worship service) are still sacramentally united to the Body and Blood of Christ. This interpretation is not universal among Lutherans. The consecrated elements are treated with reverence; and, in some Lutheran churches, are reserved as in Orthodox, Catholic, and Anglican practice. The external Eucharistic adoration is usually not practiced by most Lutherans except for bowing, genuflecting, and kneeling to receive the Eucharist from the Words of Institution and elevation to reception of the holy meal. The *reliquæ* traditionally are consumed by the celebrant after the people have communed[sic], except that a small

amount may be reserved for delivery to those too ill or infirm to attend the service. In this case, the consecrated elements are to be delivered quickly, preserving the connection between the communion of the ill person and that of the congregation gathered in public Divine Service.

Lutherans use the terms ‘in, with and under the forms of consecrated bread and wine’ and ‘Sacramental Union,’ to distinguish their understanding of the Eucharist from those of the Reformed and other traditions.” (Wikipedia, Real Presence)

Anglican Eucharistic theology

“Anglicans prefer a view of objective presence that maintains a definitive change, but allows how that change occurs to remain a mystery. Likewise, Methodists postulate a *par excellence* presence as being a ‘Holy Mystery’. Anglicans generally and officially believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, but the specific form of that belief range from a corporeal presence (real objective presence), sometimes even with Eucharistic adoration (mainly high church Anglo-Catholics), to belief in a pneumatic presence (mainly low church Reformed Anglicans).”

“In Anglican theology, a sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. In the Eucharist, the outward and visible sign is that of bread and wine, while the inward and spiritual grace is that of the Body and Blood of Christ. The classic Anglican aphorism with regard to the debate on the Eucharist is the poem by John Donne (1572–1631): ‘He was the Word that spake it; He took the bread and brake it; And what that Word did make it; I do believe and take it’ (On the Sacrament: Divine Poems)”.

“During the English Reformation, the new doctrine of the Church of England had a strong influence from continental Reformed theologians whom Cranmer had invited to England to aid with the reforms. Among these were Martin Bucer, Peter Martyr Vermigli, Bernardino Ochino, Paul Fagius, and Jan Łaski. John Calvin was also urged to come to England by Cranmer, but declined, saying that he was too involved in the Swiss reforms. Consequently, early on, the Church of England has a strong Reformed, if not particularly Calvinistic influence. The view of the real presence, as described in the Thirty-Nine Articles therefore bears much resemblance to the pneumatic views of Bucer, Martyr, and Calvin”.

“The Anglican Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion contends ‘transubstantiation’ (or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of the Lord) cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthrows the nature of a Sacrament, and gives occasion to many superstitions. ‘The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is Faith.’ (Article XXVIII). For many Anglicans, whose mysticism is intensely incarnational, it is extremely important that God has used the mundane and temporal as a means of giving people the transcendent and eternal. Some have extended this view to include the idea of a presence that is in the realm of spirit and eternity, and not about corporeal-fleshiness.”

“During the Oxford Movement of the 19th century, Tractarians advanced a belief in the real objective presence of Christ in the Eucharist, but maintained that the details of how He is present remain mystery of faith, a view also held by the Orthodox Church and Methodist Church. Indeed, one of the oldest Anglo-

Catholic devotional societies, the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, was founded largely to promote belief in the real objective presence of Christ in the Eucharist.”

“From some Anglican perspectives, the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist does not imply that Jesus Christ is present materially or locally. This is in accord with some interpretations of Roman Catholic doctrine, as expressed, for instance by St. Thomas Aquinas, who, while saying that the whole Christ is present in the sacrament, also said that this presence was not ‘as in a place.’ Real does not mean material: the lack of the latter does not imply the absence of the former. The Eucharist is not intrinsic to Christ as a body part is to a body, but extrinsic as his instrument to convey Divine Grace. Some Anglicans see this understanding as compatible with different theories of Christ’s presence—transubstantiation, consubstantiation, or virtualism—without getting involved in the mechanics of ‘change’ or trying to explain a mystery of God’s own doing.”

Anglican and Roman Catholic theologians participating in the first Anglican—Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC I) declared that they had “reached substantial agreement on the doctrine of the Eucharist.” This claim was accepted by the 1988 Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops (Resolution 8), but firmly questioned in the Official Roman Catholic Response to the Final Report of ARCIC I of 1991.

Methodist: Real presence as a “Holy Mystery”

“The followers of John Wesley, the clergymen, have typically affirmed that the sacrament of Holy Communion is an instrumental Means of Grace through which the real presence of Christ is communicated to the believer, but have otherwise

allowed the details to remain a mystery. In particular, Methodists reject the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation (see Article XVIII of the Articles of Religion, Means of Grace). In 2004, the United Methodist Church affirmed its view of the sacrament and its belief in the real presence in an official document entitled *This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion*. Of particular note here is the church's unequivocal recognition of the anamnesis as more than just a memorial but, rather, a re-presentation of Christ Jesus and His Love."

"Holy Communion is remembrance, commemoration, and memorial, but this remembrance is much more than simply intellectual recalling. 'Do this in remembrance of me' (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24–25) is anamnesis (the biblical Greek word). This dynamic action becomes re-presentation of past gracious acts of God in the present, so powerfully as to make them truly present now. Christ is risen and is alive here and now, not just remembered for what was done in the past."

"A United Methodist minister consecrates the elements
This affirmation of real presence can be seen clearly illustrated in the language of the United Methodist Eucharistic Liturgy where, in the epiclesis of the Great Thanksgiving, the celebrating minister prays over the elements"

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

"This reflects the extent to which most Methodists are willing to go in defining real presence."

“Methodists assert that Jesus is truly present, and that the means of His presence is a ‘Holy Mystery’. A celebrating minister will pray for the Holy Spirit to make the elements ‘be for us the body and blood of Christ,’ and the congregation can even sing, as in the third stanza of Charles Wesley's hymn *Come Sinners to the Gospel Feast*”

*Come and partake the gospel feast,
be saved from sin, in Jesus rest;
O taste the goodness of our God,
and eat his flesh and drink his blood.*

“However, most Methodists will not attempt to go beyond this degree of specificity. For Methodist Christians, the affirmation of real presence, as in the above references, is sufficient to know and partake of the sacrament in a worthy manner.”

Reformed and Presbyterian: Spiritual presence

“Many Reformed, particularly those following John Calvin, hold that the reality of Christ's body and blood do not come corporally (physically) to the elements, but ‘the Spirit truly unites things separated in space.’ (Calvin)”

“Following a phrase of Augustine, the Calvinist view is: ‘no one bears away from this Sacrament more than is gathered with the vessel of faith.’ ‘The flesh and blood of Christ are no less truly given to the unworthy than to God’s elect believers,’ Calvin said; but those who partake by faith receive benefit from Christ, and the unbelieving are condemned by partaking. By faith (not a mere mental apprehension), and in the Holy Spirit, the partaker beholds God incarnate, and in the same sense touches him with hands, so that by eating and drinking of bread

and wine Christ's presence penetrates to the heart of the believer more nearly than food swallowed by mouth can enter in.”

“This view holds that the elements may be disposed of without ceremony, as they are not changed in an objective physical sense and, as such, the meal directs attention toward Christ’s ‘bodily’ resurrection and return. Actual practices of disposing of leftover elements vary widely.”

“Reformed theology has traditionally taught that Jesus’ body is seated in heaven at the right hand of God; therefore his body is not physically present in the elements, nor do the elements turn into his body in a physical or any objective sense. However, Reformed theology has also historically taught that when the Holy Communion is received, not only the Spirit, but also the true body and blood of Jesus Christ (hence real) are received through the Spirit, but these are only received by those partakers who eat worthily (i.e., repentantly) with faith. The Holy Spirit unites the Christian with Jesus though they are separated by a great distance. See, e.g., Westminster Confession of Faith, ch. 29; Belgic Confession, Article 35”.

“The sacramental theology of some in the Reformed tradition has been in flux, however, and in 1997, three denominations which historically held to a Reformed view of the supper: the Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ and the Presbyterian Church (USA) signed A Formula of Agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a document which stressed that: ‘The theological diversity within our common confession provides both the complementarity needed for a full and adequate witness to the gospel (mutual affirmation) and the corrective reminder that every theological approach is a partial and incomplete witness to the Gospel (mutual admonition) (A Common Calling, page

66).’ Hence, in seeking to come to consensus about the real presence (see open communion), the churches have written”.

During the Reformation both Reformed and Lutheran Churches exhibited an evangelical intention when they understood the Lord's Supper in the light of the saving act of God in Christ.

“Despite this common intention, different terms and concepts were employed which... led to mutual misunderstanding and misrepresentation. Properly interpreted, the differing terms and concepts were often complementary rather than contradictory”.

*Marburg Revisited**

**The Marburg Colloquy was a meeting at Marburg Castle, Marburg, Hesse, Germany which attempted to solve a disputation between Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli over the Real Presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. It took place between 1 October and 4 October 1529.*

“In the Lord's Supper the risen Christ imparts himself in body and blood, given up for all, through his word of promise with bread and wine ... we proclaim the death of Christ through which God has reconciled the world with himself. We proclaim the presence of the risen Lord in our midst. Rejoicing that the Lord has come to us, we await his future coming in glory ... Both of our communions, we maintain, need to grow in appreciation of our diverse eucharistic traditions, finding mutual enrichment in them. At the same time both need to grow toward a further deepening of our common experience and expression of the mystery of our Lord's Supper”.

Symbolic interpretation

“Some Protestant groups see Communion (also called the Lord's Supper or the Lord's Table) as a strictly symbolic meal, a memorial of the Last Supper and the Passion with symbolic and subjectively meaningful elements, which is done by the ordinance of Jesus, but in which nothing miraculous or objectively significant occurs. This view is known as the Zwinglian view, after Huldrych Zwingli, a Swiss leader during the Reformation”.

“This perspective is commonly associated with Baptists and many other Evangelicals, as well as liberal congregations. It is a perspective not uncommon ‘in the pews’ (that is, among lay members) of some Reformed churches, even among those whose official doctrines are more in accord with the Calvinist spiritual real presence discussed above”.

Consecration, presidency and distribution

“Many Christian churches holding to a doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist (for example, Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Lutheran, Anglican, Reformed, and Methodist) require ordained clergy to officiate at the Eucharist, consecrating and distributing the elements to communicants”.

“Some groups, mostly Protestants, require church leaders who may or may not be ordained (pastors, elders and deacons) to preside over the elements and distribute them.” (Wikipedia, Real Presence)

CATHOLIC TEACHING ON APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

In 1973, The International Theological Commission gave us the Catholic Teaching on Apostolic Succession, which inevitably deals with the Real Presence; since it is intimately connected to

a legitimate ministerial function causing the change of the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. For all intents and purposes this act is the center of Christianity.

“This study sets out to throw light on the concept of apostolic succession, on the one hand, because a clear presentation of the Catholic doctrine would seem to be useful to the Catholic Church as a whole, and, on the other hand, because it is demanded by ecumenical dialogue. For some time now ecumenical dialogue has been going on in various parts of the world, and it has a promising future provided the Catholics taking part in it remain faithful to their Catholic identity. So we propose to present the Catholic teaching on apostolic succession in order to strengthen our brothers in the Faith and to contribute to the mature development of ecumenical dialogue.”

“We begin by listing some of the difficulties that are frequently encountered:

1. What can be deduced, scientifically, from the witness of the New Testament? How can one show the continuity between the New Testament and the Church’s Tradition?
 2. What is the place of the imposition of hands in apostolic succession?
 3. Is there not a tendency in some quarters to reduce apostolic succession to the apostolicity that is common to the whole Church, or, conversely, to reduce the apostolicity of the Church to apostolic succession?
 4. How can one evaluate the ministry of other churches and Christian communities in relation to apostolic succession?
- Behind all these questions lies the problem of the relationship between Scripture, Tradition, and the dogmatic pronouncements of the Church.”

“The dominant note in our thinking is provided by the vision of the Church as willed by the Father, emerging from Christ’s Paschal mystery, animated by the Holy Spirit, and organically structured. We hope to set the specific and essential function of apostolic succession in the context of the whole Church, which confesses its apostolic Faith and bears witness to its Lord.”

“We rely upon Scripture, which has for us a twofold value as a historical record and an inspired document. Insofar as it is a historical record, Scripture recounts the most important events in the mission of Jesus and the life of the Church of the first century; insofar as it is an inspired document, it bears witness to certain facts and at the same time interprets them and reveals their inner significance and dynamic coherence. As an expression of the thought of God in the words of men, Scripture has a normative value for the thinking of Christ’s Church in every age.”

“But any interpretation of Scripture that regards it as inspired and therefore normative for all ages is necessarily an interpretation that takes place within the Church’s Tradition, which recognizes Scripture as inspired and normative. The recognition of the normative character of Scripture fundamentally implies a recognition of that Tradition within which Scripture itself was formed and came to be considered and accepted as inspired. The normative status of Scripture and its relationship to Tradition go hand in hand. The result is that any theological considerations about Scripture are at the same time ecclesial considerations.”

“This, then, is the methodological starting point of the document: any attempt to reconstitute the past by selecting isolated phrases from the New Testament Tradition and

separating them from the way they were received in the living Tradition of the Church is contradictory.”

“The theological approach that sees Scripture as an indivisible whole and that links it with the life and thought of the early community that acknowledges and "recognizes" it as Scripture certainly does not mean that properly historical judgments are eliminated in advance by an ecclesiological a priori, which would make impossible an interpretation in conformity with the demands of historical method.”

“The method adopted here enables one to grasp the limitations of pure historicism: it admits that the purely historical analysis of a book in isolation from its effects and influence cannot show with certainty that the way Faith actually developed in history was the only possible way. But these limits to historical proof, which one cannot doubt, do not destroy the value and weight of historical knowledge. On the contrary, the fact that the early Church accepted Scripture as constitutive is something to be constantly meditated upon: that is, we have to think out again and again the relationship, the differences, and the unity between the different elements.”

“That also means that one cannot dissolve Scripture into a series of unrelated sketches, each one of which would be an attempt to express a lifestyle founded on Jesus of Nazareth, but rather that one must understand it as the expression of a historical unfolding path that reveals the unity and the catholicity of the Church. There are three broad stages along this path: the time before Easter, the apostolic period, and the subapostolic period, and each period has its own specific value; it is significant that what the dogmatic constitution "On Divine Revelation", *Dei Verbum* (18), calls "viri apostolici" should be responsible for some of the New Testament writings.”

“This helps one to see clearly how the community of Jesus Christ solved the problem of remaining apostolic even though it had become subapostolic. This explains why the subapostolic part of the New Testament has a normative character for the Church at a later period, for it must build on the apostles, who themselves have Christ as their foundation. In the subapostolic writings, Scripture itself bears witness to Tradition and gives evidence of the Magisterium in that it recalls the teaching of the apostles (see Acts 2:42; 2 Pet 1:20). This Magisterium really begins to develop in the second century, at the time when the idea of apostolic succession is made fully explicit.”

“Scripture and Tradition taken together, pondered upon and authentically interpreted by the Magisterium, faithfully transmit to us the teaching of Christ our Lord and Savior and determine the doctrine that it is the Church’s mission to proclaim to all peoples and to apply to each generation until the end of the world. It is in this theological perspective — fully in accord with the doctrine of Vatican II — that we have written this document on apostolic succession and evaluated the ministries that exist in churches and communities not yet in full communion with the Catholic Church.”

I. THE APOSTOLICITY OF THE CHURCH AND THE COMMON PRIESTHOOD

“1. The creeds confess their Faith in the apostolicity of the Church. That means not simply that the Church continues to hold the apostolic Faith but that it is determined to live according to the norm of the primitive Church, which derived from the first witnesses of Christ and was guided by the Holy Spirit, who was given to the Church by Christ after his Resurrection. The Epistles and the Acts of the Apostles show

how effective was this presence of the Spirit in the whole Church, and that he ensured not only its diffusion but also and more importantly the transformation of hearts: the Spirit assimilates them to Christ and his feelings. Stephen, the first martyr, repeats the words of forgiveness of his dying Lord; Peter and John are beaten and rejoice that they should be found worthy to suffer with him; Paul bears in his body the marks of Christ (Gal 6:17), wants to be conformed to the death of Christ (Phil 3:10), to know nothing save the crucified One (1 Cor 1:23; 2:2), and he considers his whole life as an assimilation to the expiating sacrifice of the Cross” (Phil 2:17; Col 1:24).

“2. This assimilation to the ‘thoughts’ of Christ and above all to his sacrificial death for the world gives ultimate meaning to the lives of those who want to lead a Christian, spiritual, and apostolic life.”

“That is why the early Church adapted the priestly vocabulary of the Old Testament to Christ, the Paschal Lamb of the New Covenant (1 Cor 5:7), and then to Christians whose lives are defined in relation to the Paschal mystery of Christ. Converted by the preaching of the Gospel, they are convinced that they are living out a holy and royal priesthood that is a spiritual transposition of the priesthood of the Old Testament (1 Pet 2:5-9; see Ex 19:6; Is 61:6) and that was made possible by the sacrificial offering of him who recapitulates in himself all the sacrifices of the Old Law and opens the way for the complete and eschatological sacrifice of the Church” (see St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 10, 6).”

“Christians as living stones in the new building that is the Church founded on Christ offer to God worship in the Spirit who has made them new; their cult is both personal, since they have to ‘present their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and

acceptable to God' (Rom 12:1; see 1 Pet 2:5), and communal, since together they make up the 'spiritual house', the 'royal priesthood' and 'holy nation' (1 Pet 2:9), whose purpose is to offer 'spiritual sacrifices that Jesus Christ has made acceptable to God,'" (1 Pet 2:8).

"This priesthood has a moral dimension—since it must be exercised every day and in ordinary situations—and an eschatological dimension, since it is, in eternity to come that Christ has promised to make of us 'a line of kings, priests to serve his God and Father' (Rev 1:6; see 5:10; 20:6); but it has also a cultural dimension, since the Eucharist by which they live is compared by Saint Paul to the sacrifices of the Old Law and even - though only to make a sharp contrast - to pagan sacrifices (1 Cor 10:16-21)."

"3. Now Christ instituted a ministry for the establishment, animation, and maintenance of this priesthood of Christians. This ministry was to be the sign and the instrument by which he would communicate to his people in the course of history the fruits of his life, death, and Resurrection. The first foundations of this ministry were laid when he called the Twelve, who at the same time represent the new Israel as a whole and, after Easter, will be the privileged eyewitnesses sent out to proclaim the Gospel of salvation and the leaders of the new people, 'fellow workers with God for the building of his temple' (see 1 Cor 3:9). This ministry has an essential function to fulfill toward each generation of Christians. It must therefore be transmitted from the apostles by an unbroken line of succession. If one can say that the Church as a whole is established upon the foundation of the apostles (Eph 2:20; Rev 21:14), one has to add that this apostolicity, which is common to the whole Church, is linked with the ministerial apostolic

succession, and that this is an inalienable ecclesial structure at the service of all Christians.”

II. THE ORIGINALITY OF THE APOSTOLIC FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

“The apostolic foundation has this special characteristic: it is both historical and spiritual.”

“It is historical in the sense that it comes into being through an act of Christ during his earthly existence: the call of the Twelve at the start of his public ministry, their commission to represent the new Israel and to be involved ever more closely with his Paschal journey, which is consummated in the Cross and Resurrection (Mk 1:17; 3:14; Lk 22:28; Jn 15:16). Far from destroying the pre-Easter structure, the Resurrection confirms it. In a special manner Christ makes the Twelve the witnesses of his Resurrection, and they head the list that he had ordered before his death: the earliest confession of Faith in the Risen One includes Peter and the Twelve as the privileged witnesses of his Resurrection (1 Cor).”

“Those who had been associated with Jesus from the beginning of his ministry to the eve of his Paschal death are able to bear public witness to the fact that it is the same Jesus who is risen (Jn 15:27). After Judas’ defection and even before Pentecost, the first concern of the Eleven is to replace him in their apostolic ministry with one of the disciples who had been with Jesus since his baptism, so that with them he could be a witness of his Resurrection (Acts 1:17-22). Moreover Paul, who was called to the apostolate by the risen Lord himself and thus became part of the Church’s foundation, is aware of the need to be in communion with the Twelve.”

“This foundation is not only historical; it is also spiritual. Christ’s pass-over, anticipated at the Last Supper, establishes the New Covenant and thus embraces the whole of human history. The mission and task of preaching the Gospel, governing, reconciling, and sanctifying that are entrusted to the first witnesses cannot be restricted to their lifetime. As far as the Eucharist is concerned, Tradition—whose broad lines are already laid down from the first century (see Lk and Jn)—declares that the apostles’ participation in the Last Supper conferred on them the power to preside at the eucharistic celebration.”

“Thus the apostolic ministry is an eschatological institution. Its spiritual origins appear in Christ’s prayer, inspired by the Holy Spirit, in which he discerns, as in all the great moments of his life, the will of the Father (Lk 6:12). The spiritual participation of the apostles in the mystery of Christ is completed fully by the gift of the Holy Spirit after Easter (Jn 20:22; Lk 24:44-49). The Spirit brings to their minds all that Jesus had said (Jn 14:26) and leads them to a fuller understanding of his mystery (Jn 16:13-15).”

“The kerygma, if it is to be properly understood, must not be separated or treated in abstraction from the Faith to which the Twelve and Paul came by their conversion to the Lord Jesus or from the witness to him manifested in their lives.”

III. THE APOSTLES AND APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION IN HISTORY

“The documents of the New Testament show that in the early days of the Church and in the lifetime of the apostles there was diversity in the way communities were organized, but also that

there was, in the period immediately following, a tendency to assert and strengthen the ministry of teaching and leadership.”

“Those who directed communities in the lifetime of the apostles or after their death have different names in the New Testament texts: the presbyteroi-episkopoi are described as poimenes, hegoumenoi, proistamenoι, kyberneseis. In comparison with the rest of the Church, the feature of the presbyteroi-episkopoi is their apostolic ministry of teaching and governing. Whatever the method by which they are chosen, whether through the authority of the Twelve or Paul or some link with them, they share in the authority of the apostles who were instituted by Christ and who maintain for all time their unique character.”

“In the course of time this ministry underwent a development. This development happened by internal necessity. It was encouraged by external factors, and above all by the need to maintain unity in communities and to defend them against errors. When communities were deprived of the actual presence of apostles and yet still wanted to refer to the authority, there had to be some way of continuing to exercise adequately the functions that the apostles had exercised in and in relation to them.”

“Already in the New Testament texts there are echoes of the transition from the apostolic period to the subapostolic age, and one begins to see signs of the development that in the second century led to the stabilization and general recognition of the episcopal ministry. The stages of this development can be glimpsed in the last writings of the Pauline Tradition and in other texts linked with the authority of the apostles.”

“The significance of the apostles at the time of the foundation of the earliest Christian communities was held to be essential for the structure of the Church and local communities in the thinking of the subapostolic period. The principle of the apostolicity of the Church elaborated in this reflection led to the recognition of the ministry of teaching and governing as an institution derived from Christ by and through the mediation of the apostles. The Church lived in the certain conviction that Jesus, before he left this world, sent the Twelve on a universal mission and promised that he would be with them at all times until the end of the world (Mt 28:18-20).”

“The time of the Church, which is the time of this universal mission, is therefore contained within the presence of Christ, which is the same in the apostolic period and later and which takes the form of a single apostolic ministry.”

“As one can see from the New Testament writings, conflicts could not always be avoided between individuals and communities and the authority of the ministry. Paul, on the one hand, strove to understand the Gospel with and in the community and so to work out with them norms for Christian life, but, on the other hand, he appealed to his apostolic authority whenever it was a matter of the truth of the Gospel (see Gal) or unyielding principles of Christian life (see 1 Cor 7 and so on).”

“Likewise, the ministry of governing should never be separated from the community in such a way as to place itself above it: its role is one of service in and for the community. But when the New Testament communities accept apostolic government, whether from the apostles themselves or their successors, then they obey and relate the authority of the ministry to that of Christ himself.”

“The absence of documents makes it difficult to say precisely how these transitions came about. By the end of the first century the situation was that the apostles or their closest helpers or eventually their successors directed the local colleges of episkopoi and presbyteroi. By the beginning of the second century the figure of a single bishop who is the head of the communities appears very clearly in the letters of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, who further claims that this institution is established "unto the ends of the earth.” (Ad Epk. 3, 2).

“During the second century and after the Letter of Clement this institution is explicitly acknowledged to carry with it the apostolic succession. Ordination with imposition of hands, already witnessed to in the pastoral Epistles, appears in the process of clarification to be an important step in preserving the apostolic Tradition and guaranteeing succession in the ministry. The documents of the third century (Tradition of Hippolytus) show that this conviction was arrived at peacefully and was considered to be a necessary institution.”

“Clement and Irenaeus develop a doctrine on pastoral government and on the word in which they derive the idea of apostolic succession from the unity of the word, the unity of the mission, and the unity of the ministry of the Church; thus apostolic succession became the permanent ground from which the Catholic Church understood its own nature.”

IV. THE SPIRITUAL ASPECT OF APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

“If after this historic survey we try to understand the spiritual dimensions of apostolic succession, we will have to stress first of all that the ordained ministry, although it represents the

Gospel with authority and is essentially a service toward the whole Church, nevertheless demands that the minister should make Christ present in his humility (2 Cor 4:5) and make present Christ crucified.” (see Gal 2:19ff.; 16:14; 1 Cor 4:9ff.)

“The Church that it serves is informed and moved by the Spirit, and ‘Church’ here means the Church as a whole and in its members, for everyone who is baptized is ‘taught by the Spirit’ (1 Thess 4:9; see Heb 8:11; Jer 31:33ff.; 1 Jn 2:20; Jn 6:45). The role of the priestly ministry is therefore to bring to mind authoritatively what is already embryonically included in baptismal Faith but can never be fully realized here below. Likewise the believer should nourish his Faith and his Christian life through the sacramental mediation of the divine life. The norm of Faith - which is formally known as the *regula fidei* - becomes immanent in Christian life thanks to the Spirit while it remains transcendent in relation to men, since it can never be purely an individual matter but is rather by its very nature ecclesial and catholic.”

“Thus in the rule of Faith the immediacy of the divine Spirit in each individual is necessarily linked to the communitarian form of this Faith. Paul’s statement is still valid: ‘No one can say ‘Jesus is the Lord’ except in the Holy Spirit’ (1 Cor 2:3)—without the conversion that the Spirit is always ready to grant to human hearts, no one can recognize Jesus as the Son of God, and only those who know him as the Son will know the one whom Jesus calls ‘Father’ (see Jn 14:7; 8:19; and so on). Since, therefore, it is the Spirit who brings us knowledge of the Father through Jesus, Christian Faith is trinitarian: its pneumatic or spiritual form necessarily implies the content that is realized sacramentally in baptism in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

“The regula fidei, that is, the sort of baptismal catechesis in which the trinitarian content of Faith is developed, constitutes in its form and content the permanent basis for the apostolicity and catholicity of the Church. It realizes apostolicity because it binds those who preach the Faith to the christopneumatological norm: they do not speak in their own name but bear witness to what they have heard” (see Jn 7:18; 16:13ff)

“Jesus Christ shows that he is the Son in that he proclaims that he comes from the Father. The Spirit shows that he is the Spirit of the Father and the Son, because he does not devise something of his own but reveals and recalls what comes from the Son (Jn 16:13). This prolongation of the work of Christ and of his Spirit gives apostolic succession its distinctive character and makes the Church’s Magisterium distinct from both the teaching authority of scholars and the rule of authoritarian power.”

“If the teaching authority were to fall into the hands of professors, Faith would depend upon the lights of individuals and would be thereby exposed to influence from the Zeitgeist, the spirit of the age. And where Faith depends upon the despotic power of certain individuals or groups, who themselves would decide what the norm was, then truth is replaced by arbitrary power. The true Magisterium, on the contrary, is bound by the word of the Lord and thus ushers those who listen to it into the realm of liberty.”

“Nothing in the Church can forego this need to refer to the apostles. Pastors and their flocks cannot avoid it; statements of Faith and moral precepts must be measured by it. The ordained ministry is bound to this apostolic mediation in a double way, since on the one hand it must submit to the norm of Christian origins and on the other hand it has the duty of learning from

the community of believers, who themselves have the duty to instruct it.”

“We draw two conclusions from what has just been said:

1. “No preacher of the Gospel has the right to proclaim the Gospel according to personal theories he may happen to have. He proclaims the Faith of the apostolic Church and not his own personality or his own religious experience.”

“This implies that we must add a third element to those we have already mentioned as belonging to the rule of Faith - form and content: the rule of Faith presupposes a witness who has been entrusted with a mission, who does not authorize him to speak, and that no individual community can authorize him to speak; and this comes about in virtue of the transcendence of the word. Authorization can only be given sacramentally through those who have already received the mission. It is true that the Spirit can freely arouse in the Church various charisms of evangelization and service and inspire all Christians to bear witness to their Faith, but these activities should be exercised with reference to the three elements mentioned in the *regula fidei*” (see LG 12).”

2. “This mission (trinitarian in its basis) enters into the rule of Faith and implies a reference to the catholicity of Faith, which is at once a consequence of apostolicity and a condition of its permanence. For no individual and no community by itself has this power to send on a mission. It is only in relation with the whole - *kath’holon*, catholicity in time and in space - that permanence in mission can be guaranteed. In this way catholicity explains why the believer, as a member of the Church, is introduced into an immediate participation in the

trinitarian life through the mediation not only of the God-Man but of the Church who is intimately associated with him.”

“Because of the catholic dimension of its truth and its life, the mediation of the Church has to be achieved in an ordered way, through a ministry that is given to the Church as one of its constitutive elements. This ministry does not have as its only point of reference a historical period that is now no more (and that is represented by a series of documents); given this reference back, it must be endowed with the power of representing in itself its Source, the living Christ, through an officially authorized proclamation of the Gospel and by authoritative celebration of sacramental acts, above all the Eucharist.”

V. APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION AND ITS TRANSMISSION

“Just as the divine Word made Flesh is itself both proclamation and the communicating principle of the divine life into which it brings us, so the ministry of the word in its fullness and the sacraments of Faith, especially the Eucharist, are the means by which Christ continues to be for mankind the ever-present event of salvation. Pastoral authority is simply the responsibility that the apostolic ministry has for the unity of the Church and its development, while the word is the source of salvation and the sacraments are both the manifestation and the locus of its realization.”

“Thus apostolic succession is that aspect of the nature and life of the Church that shows the dependence of our present-day community on Christ through those whom he has sent. The apostolic ministry is, therefore, the sacrament of the effective presence of Christ and of his Spirit in the midst of the people of

God, and this view in no way underestimates the immediate influence of Christ and his Spirit on each believer.”

“The charism of apostolic succession is received in the visible community of the Church. It presupposes that someone who is to enter the ministry has the Faith of the Church. The gift of ministry is granted in an act that is the visible and efficacious symbol of the gift of the Spirit, and this act has as its instrument one or several of those ministers who have themselves entered the apostolic succession.”

“Thus the transmission of the apostolic ministry is achieved through ordination, including a rite with a visible sign and the invocation of God (epiklesis) to grant to the ordinand the gift of his Holy Spirit and the powers that are needed for the accomplishment of his task. This visible sign, from the New Testament onward, is the imposition of hands (see LG 21). The rite of ordination expresses the truth that what happens to the ordinand does not come from human origin and that the Church cannot do what it likes with the gift of the Spirit.”

“The Church is fully aware that its nature is bound up with apostolicity and that the ministry handed on by ordination establishes the one who has been ordained in the apostolic confession of the truth of the Father. The Church, therefore, has judged that ordination, given and received in the understanding she herself has of it, is necessary to apostolic succession in the strict sense of the word.”

“The apostolic succession of the ministry concerns the whole Church, but it is not something that derives from the Church taken as a whole but rather from Christ to the apostles and from the apostles to all bishops to the end of time.”

VI. TOWARD AN EVALUATION OF NON-CATHOLIC MINISTRIES

“The preceding sketch of the Catholic understanding of apostolic succession now enables us to give in broad outline an evaluation of non-Catholic ministries. In this context it is indispensable to keep firmly in mind the differences that have existed in the origins and in the subsequent development of these churches and communities, as also their own self-understanding.”

1. “In spite of a difference in their appreciation of the office of Peter, the Catholic Church, the Orthodox church, and the other churches that have retained the reality of apostolic succession are one in sharing a basic understanding of the sacramentality of the Church, which developed from the New Testament and through the Fathers, notably through Irenaeus. These churches hold that the sacramental entry into the ministry comes about through the imposition of hands with the invocation of the Holy Spirit, and that this is the indispensable form for the transmission of the apostolic succession, which alone enables the Church to remain constant in its doctrine and communion. It is this unanimity concerning the unbroken coherence of Scripture, Tradition, and sacrament that explains why communion between these churches and the Catholic Church has never completely ceased and could today, hopefully, be revived.”

2. “Fruitful dialogues have taken place with Anglican communions, which have retained the imposition of hands, the interpretation of which has varied. We cannot here anticipate the eventual results of this dialogue, which has as its object to inquire how far factors constitutive of unity are included in the

maintenance of the imposition of hands and accompanying prayers.”

3. “The communities that emerged from the sixteenth-century Reformation differ among themselves to such an extent that a description of their relationship to the Catholic Church has to take account of the many individual cases. However, some general lines are beginning to emerge. In general it was a feature of the Reformation to deny the link between Scripture and Tradition and to advocate the view that Scripture alone was normative. Even if later on some sort of place for Tradition is recognized, it is never given the same position and dignity as in the ancient Church. But since the sacrament of orders is the indispensable sacramental expression of communion in the Tradition, the proclamation of sola scriptura led inevitably to an obscuring of the older idea of the Church and its priesthood.”

“Thus through the centuries, the imposition of hands either by men already ordained or by others was often in practice abandoned. Where it did take place, it did not have the same meaning as in the Church of Tradition. This divergence in the mode of entry into the ministry and its interpretation is only the most noteworthy symptom of the different understandings of Church and Tradition. There have already been a number of promising contacts that have sought to reestablish links with the Tradition, although the break has so far not been successfully overcome.”

“In such circumstances, intercommunion remains impossible for the time being, because sacramental continuity in apostolic succession from the beginning is an indispensable element of ecclesial communion for both the Catholic Church and the Orthodox churches.”

“To say this is not to say that the ecclesial and spiritual qualities of the Protestant ministers and communities are thereby negligible. Their ministers have edified and nourished their communities. By baptism, by the study and the preaching of the word, by their prayer together and celebration of the Last Supper, and by their zeal they have guided men toward faith in the Lord and thus helped them to find the way of salvation. There are thus in such communities elements that certainly belong to the apostolicity of the unique Church of Christ.”

At this point it is necessary to return to the “secular source” Wikipedia under the heading Holy Orders. Having checked most other sources available on the internet, it appears that Wikipedia, once again, is the most concise and less biased than the others. In our opinion there are very important distinctions to be made in this essay, since those that are called to “orders” become personally and intimately involved with the Eucharist; believed by most Christians to be the Christ under the accidents of bread and wine, based on the institution of the Sacrament by Jesus Christ, at table, in communion with the Apostles. Most Christian belief is also Trinitarian; so we are undoubtedly involved with faith and the sacred understandings of Almighty God himself.

Holy Orders

“In the Christian churches, Holy Orders are ordained ministries such as bishop, priest or deacon. In the Roman Catholic (Latin: *sacri ordines*), Eastern Catholic, Eastern Orthodox (ιερωσύνη [*hierōsynē*], ιεράτευμα [*hierateuma*], Свѣщенство [*Svyashchenstvo*]), Oriental Orthodox, Anglican, Assyrian, Old Catholic, Independent Catholic and some Lutheran churches, holy orders is comprised of the three ministerial orders of

bishop, priest and deacon, or the sacrament or rite by which candidates are ordained to those orders. Except for Lutherans and some Anglicans, these churches regard ordination as a sacrament (the sacramentum ordinis). The Anglo-Catholic tradition within Anglicanism identifies more with the Roman Catholic position about the sacramental nature of ordination.”

“Denominations have varied conceptions of Holy Orders. In the Anglican churches and some Lutheran churches the traditional orders of bishop, priest and deacon are bestowed using ordination rites. The extent to which ordination is considered sacramental in these traditions has, however, been a matter of some internal dispute. Many other denominations do not consider ministry as being sacramental in nature and would not think of it in terms of “holy orders” as such. Historically, the word “order” (Latin ordo) designated an established civil body or corporation with a hierarchy, and ordinatio meant legal incorporation into an ordo. The word “holy” refers to the Church. In context, therefore, a holy order is set apart for ministry in the Church. Other positions, such as pope, patriarch, cardinal, monsignor, archbishop, archimandrite, archpriest, protopresbyter, hieromonk, protodeacon and archdeacon, are not sacramental orders but particular ministry positions.”

Eastern Christianity

“Metropolitan Hilarion (Kapral) performs the laying on of hands (Cheirotonia), conferring the holy order of presbyter (priest) upon an Orthodox deacon.

After the transmutation of the Holy Gifts, the bishop presents to the newly ordained priest a portion of the Lamb (i.e., the Body of Christ)"

The laying on of hands (Cheirotonia), conferring the holy order of deacon upon an Orthodox subdeacon.

The Eastern Orthodox Church considers ordination (known as Cheirotonia, “laying on of hands”) to be a Sacred Mystery (what in the West is called a sacrament). Although all other mysteries may be performed by a presbyter, ordination may only be conferred by a bishop, and ordination of a bishop may only be performed by several bishops together. Cheirotonia always takes place during the Divine Liturgy.

It was the mission of the Apostles to go forth into all the world and preach the Gospel, baptizing those who believed in the name of the Holy Trinity (Matthew 28:18–20). In the Early Church those who presided over congregations were referred to variously as episcopos (bishop) or presbyteros (priest). These successors of the Apostles were ordained to their office by the laying on of hands, and according to Orthodox theology formed a living, organic link with the Apostles, and through them with Jesus Christ himself. This link is believed to continue in unbroken succession to this day. Over time, the ministry of bishops (who hold the fullness of the priesthood) and presbyters or priests (who hold a portion of the priesthood as bestowed by their bishop) came to be distinguished. In Orthodox terminology, priesthood or sacerdotal refers to the ministry of bishops and priests.”

The Eastern Orthodox Church also has ordination to minor orders (known as cheirothesia, "imposition of hands") which is performed outside of the Divine Liturgy, typically by a bishop, although certain archimandrites of stavropegial monasteries may bestow cheirothesia on members of their communities.

A bishop is the Teacher of the Faith, the carrier of Sacred Tradition, and the living Vessel of Grace through whom the *energeia* (divine grace) of the Holy Spirit flows into the rest of the church. A bishop is consecrated through the laying on of hands by several bishops. (With the consent of several other bishops, a single bishop has performed the ordination of another bishop, in emergency situations, such as times of persecution), The consecration of a bishop takes place near the beginning of the Liturgy, since a bishop can, in addition to performing the Mystery of the Eucharist, also ordain priests and deacons. Before the commencement of the Holy Liturgy, the bishop-elect professes, in the middle of the church before the seated bishops who will consecrate him, in detail the doctrines of the Orthodox Christian Faith and pledges to observe the canons of the Apostles and Councils, the *Typikon* and customs of the Orthodox Church and to obey ecclesiastical authority. After the Little Entrance, the arch-priest and arch-deacon conduct the bishop-elect before the Royal Gates where he is met by the bishops and kneels before the altar on both knees and the Gospel Book is laid over his head and the consecrating bishops lay their hands upon the Gospel Book, while the prayers of ordination are read by the eldest bishop; after this, the newly consecrated bishop ascends the *synthronon* (bishop's throne in the sanctuary) for the first time. [2] Customarily, the newly consecrated bishop ordains a priest and a deacon at the Liturgy during which he is consecrated.

A priest may serve only at the pleasure of his bishop. A bishop bestows faculties (permission to minister within his diocese) giving a priest *chrism* and an *antimins*; he may withdraw faculties and demand the return of these items. The ordination of a priest occurs before the *Anaphora* (Eucharistic Prayer) in order that he may on the same day take part in the celebration of the Eucharist: During the Great Entrance, the candidate for

ordination carries the Aër (chalice veil) over his head (rather than on his shoulder, as a deacon otherwise carries it then) as a symbol of giving up his diaconate, and comes last in the procession and stands at the end of the pair of lines of the priests. After the Aër is taken from the candidate to cover the chalice and diskos, a chair is brought for the bishop to sit on by the northeast corner of the Holy Table (altar). Two deacons go to priest-elect who, at that point, had been standing alone in the middle of the church, and bow him down to the west (to the people) and to the east (to the clergy), asking their consent by saying “Command ye!” and then lead him through the holy doors of the altar where the archdeacon asks the bishop’s consent, saying, “Command, most sacred master!” after which a priest escorts the candidate three times around the Holy Table, during which he kisses each corner of the Holy Table as well as the bishop’s epigonation and right hand and prostrates himself before the holy table at each circuit. The candidate is then taken to the southeast corner of the Holy Table and kneels on both knees, resting his forehead on the edge of the Holy Table. The ordaining bishop then places his omophor and right hand over the ordinand’s head and recites aloud the first Prayer of Cheirotonia and then prays silently the other two prayers of cheirotonia while a deacon quietly recites a litany and the clergy, then the congregation, chant “Lord, have mercy”. Afterwards, the bishop brings the newly ordained priest to stand in the Holy Doors and presents him to the faithful. He then clothes the priest in each of his sacerdotal vestments, at each of which the people sing, Worthy! Later, after the Epiklesis of the Liturgy, the bishop hands him a portion of the Lamb (Host) saying:

Receive thou this pledge, and preserve it whole and unharmed until thy last breath, because thou shalt be held to an

accounting therefore in the second and terrible Coming of our great Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ.

A deacon may not perform any Sacrament and performs no liturgical services on his own but serves only as an assistant to a priest and may not even vest without the blessing of a priest. The ordination of a deacon occurs after the Anaphora (Eucharistic Prayer) since his role is not in performing the Holy Mystery but consists only in serving; the ceremony is much the same as at the ordination of a priest, but the deacon-elect is presented to the people and escorted to the holy doors by two sub-deacons (his peers, analogous to the two deacons who so present a priest-elect) is escorted three times around the Holy Table by a deacon, and he kneels on only one knee during the Prayer of Cheirotonia. After being vested as a deacon and given a liturgical fan (ripidion or hexapterygon), he is led to the side of the Holy Table where he uses the ripidion to gently fan the Holy Gifts (consecrated Body and Blood of Christ).

Anglicanism

The Anglican churches hold their bishops to be in apostolic succession, although there is some difference of opinion with regard to whether ordination is to be regarded as a sacrament. The Anglican Articles of Religion hold that only Baptism and the Lord's Supper are to be counted as sacraments of the gospel, and assert that other rites considered to be sacraments by such as the Roman Catholic and Eastern churches were not ordained by Christ and do not have the nature of a sacrament in the absence of any physical matter such as the water in Baptism and the bread and wine in the Eucharist. The Book of Common Prayer provides rites for ordination of bishops, priests and deacons. Only bishops may ordain. Within Anglicanism, three bishops are normally required for ordination to the episcopate,

while one bishop is sufficient for performing ordinations to the priesthood and diaconate.

Lutheranism

Lutherans reject the Roman Catholic understanding of holy orders because they do not think sacerdotalism is supported by the Bible. Martin Luther taught that each individual was expected to fulfill his God-appointed task in everyday life. The modern usage of the term vocation as a life-task was first employed by Martin Luther. In Luther's Small Catechism, the holy orders include, but are not limited to the following: bishops, pastors, preachers, governmental offices, citizens, husbands, wives, children, employees, employers, young people, and widows. However, also according to the Book of Concord: "But if ordination be understood as applying to the ministry of the Word, we are not unwilling to call ordination a sacrament. For the ministry of the Word has God's command and glorious promises, Rom. 1:16: The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes. Likewise, Isa. 55:11: So shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth; it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please. If ordination be understood in this way, neither will we refuse to call the imposition of hands a sacrament. For the Church has the command to appoint ministers, which should be most pleasing to us, because we know that God approves this ministry, and is present in the ministry [that God will preach and work through men and those who have been chosen by men]."

Roman Catholicism

See: Holy orders (Catholic Church), Priesthood (Catholic Church) and Bishop (Catholic Church)

“Ordination to the Catholic priesthood, (Latin rite): Devotional card, 1925.”

“The ministerial orders of the Catholic Church include the orders of bishops, deacons and presbyters, which in Latin is sacerdos. The ordained priesthood and common priesthood (or priesthood of the all the baptized) are different in function and essence.”

“A distinction is to be made between ‘priest’ and ‘presbyter’. In the 1983 Code of Canon Law, "The Latin words sacerdos and sacerdotium are used to refer in general to the ministerial priesthood shared by bishops and presbyters. The words presbyter, presbyterium and presbyteratus refer to priests [in the English use of the word] and presbyters.”

“While the consecrated life is neither clerical nor lay by definition, clerics can be members of institutes of consecrated or secular (diocesan) life.”

“At priestly ordination the bishop imposes hands upon the deacon who is by that matter and the form of the consecratory preface ordained to the priesthood. The sequence in which holy orders are received are: minor orders, deacon, priest, bishop.”

“For Catholics, it is typical in the year of seminary training that a man will be ordained to the diaconate, which Catholics since the Second Vatican Council sometimes call the “transitional diaconate” to distinguish men bound for priesthood from permanent deacons. They are licensed to preach sermons (under certain circumstances a permanent deacon may not receive faculties to preach), to perform baptisms, and to witness Catholic marriages, but to perform no other sacraments. They assist at the Eucharist or the Mass, but are not

able to consecrate the bread and wine. Normally, after six months or more as a transitional deacon, a man will be ordained to the priesthood. Priests are able to preach, perform baptisms, confirm (with special dispensation from their ordinary), witness marriages, hear confessions and give absolutions, anoint the sick, and celebrate the Eucharist or the Mass.”

Orthodox Catholicism

“Orthodox seminarians are typically tonsured as readers before entering seminary, and may later be made subdeacons or deacons; customs vary between seminaries and between Orthodox jurisdictions. Some deacons remain permanently in the diaconate while most subsequently are ordained as priests. Orthodox clergy are typically either married or monastic. Monastic deacons are called hierodeacons, monastic priests are called hieromonks. Orthodox clergy who marry must do so prior to ordination to the subdiaconate (or diaconate, according to local custom) and typically one is either tonsured a monk or married before ordination. A deacon or priest may not marry, or remarry if widowed, without abandoning his clerical office. Often, widowed priests take monastic vows. Orthodox bishops are always monks; a single or widowed man may be elected a bishop but he must be tonsured a monk before consecration as a bishop.”

“For Anglicans, a person is usually ordained a deacon once he (or she) has completed training at a theological college. The historic practice of a bishop tutoring a candidate himself ("reading for orders") is still to be found.”

“The candidate then typically serves as an assistant curate and may later be ordained as a priest at the discretion of the

bishop.” Other deacons may choose to remain in this order. Anglican deacons can preach sermons, perform baptisms and conduct funerals, but, unlike priests, cannot celebrate the Eucharist. In most branches of the Anglican church, women can be ordained as priests, and in some of them, can also be ordained bishops.”

“Bishops are chosen from among priests in churches that adhere to Catholic usage. In the Roman Catholic Church, bishops, like priests, are celibate and thus unmarried; further, a bishop is said to possess the fullness of the sacrament of holy orders, empowering him to ordain deacons, priests, and – with papal consent – other bishops. If a bishop, especially one acting as an ordinary – a head of a diocese or archdiocese – is to be ordained, three bishops must usually co-consecrate him with one bishop, usually an archbishop or the bishop of the place, being the chief consecrating prelate.”

“Among Eastern Rite Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, which permit married priests, bishops must either be unmarried or agree to abstain from contact with their wives. It is a common misconception that all such bishops come from religious orders; while this is generally true, it is not an absolute rule. In the case of both Catholics – (Western and) Eastern Catholic, Oriental Orthodox and Eastern Orthodox, they are usually leaders of territorial units called dioceses (or its equivalent in the East, an eparchy). Only bishops can validly administer the sacrament of holy orders.”

“The Roman Catholic Church unconditionally recognizes the validity of ordinations in the Eastern churches. Some Eastern Orthodox churches reordain Catholic priests who convert while others accept their Roman Catholic ordination using the concept of *economia* (church economy).”

Anglicanism

“Anglican churches claim to have maintained apostolic succession. The succession of Anglican bishops is not universally recognized, however. The Roman Catholic Church judged Anglican orders invalid when Pope Leo XIII in 1896 wrote in *Apostolicae curae* that Anglican orders lack validity because the rite by which priests were ordained was not correctly worded from 1547 to 1553 and from 1559 to the time of Archbishop William Laud, (Archbishop of Canterbury 1633–1645). The Papacy claimed the form and matter was inadequate to make a Catholic bishop. The actual ‘mechanical’ succession, prayer and laying on hands was not disputed. Two of the four consecrators of Mathew Parker in 1559 had been consecrated using the English Ordinal and two using the Roman Pontifical. Nonetheless, they believed that this caused a break of continuity in apostolic succession, making all further ordinations null and void.”

“Eastern Orthodox bishops have, on occasion, granted ‘economy’ when Anglican priests convert to Orthodoxy. Various Orthodox churches have also declared Anglican orders valid subject to a finding that the bishops in question did indeed maintain the true faith, the Orthodox concept of Apostolic Succession being one in which the faith must be properly adhered to and transmitted, not simply that the ceremony by which a man is made a bishop is conducted correctly.”

“Changes in the Anglican Ordinal since King Edward VI, and a fuller appreciation of the pre-Reformation ordinals, suggest that the correctness of the enduring dismissal of Anglican orders is questionable. To reduce doubt concerning Anglican apostolic succession, especially since the 1930 Bonn agreement between

the Anglican and Old Catholic churches, some Anglican bishops have included among their consecrators bishops of the Old Catholic Church, whose holy orders are recognized as valid and regular by the Roman Catholic Church.”

“Neither Roman Catholics nor Anglicans recognize the validity of ordinations of ministers in Protestant churches that do not maintain Apostolic Succession; but some Anglicans, especially Low Church or Evangelical Anglicans, commonly treat Protestant ministers and their sacraments as valid. Rome also does not recognize the apostolic succession of those Lutheran bodies which retained Apostolic Succession.”

“Officially, the Anglican Communion accepts the ordinations of those denominations which are in full communion with their own churches, such as the Lutheran State churches of Scandinavia. Those clergy may preside at services requiring a priest if one is not otherwise available.”

Marriage and Holy Orders

“See also: Clerical celibacy and Clerical celibacy (Catholic Church)”

“The rules discussed in this section are not considered to be among the infallible dogmas of the Catholic Church, but are mutable rules of discipline. See clerical celibacy for a more detailed discussion.”

“Married men may be ordained to the diaconate as Permanent Deacons, but in the Latin Rite of the Roman Catholic Church generally may not be ordained to the priesthood. In the Eastern Catholic Churches and in the Eastern Orthodox Church, married deacons may be ordained priests but may not become bishops. Bishops in the Eastern Rites and the Eastern Orthodox

churches are almost always drawn from among monks, who have taken a vow of celibacy. They may be widowers, though; it is not required of them never to have been married.”

“In some cases, widowed permanent deacons have been ordained to the priesthood. There have been some situations in which men previously married and ordained to the priesthood in an Anglican church or in a Lutheran church have been ordained to the Catholic priesthood and allowed to function much as an Eastern Rite priest but in a Latin Rite setting. This is never sub conditione (conditionally), as there is in Catholic canon law no true priesthood in Protestant denominations. Such ordination may only happen with the approval of the priest's Bishop and a special permission by the Pope.”

“Anglican clergy may be married and/or may marry after ordination. In the Old Catholic Church and the Independent Catholic Churches there are no ordination restrictions related to marriage.”

Other concepts of ordination

“Ordination ritual and procedures vary by denomination. Different churches and denominations specify more or less rigorous requirements for entering into office, and the process of ordination is likewise given more or less ceremonial pomp depending on the group. Many Protestants still communicate authority and ordain to office by having the existing overseers physically lay hands on the candidates for office.”

Methodist churches

“The American Methodist model is an episcopal system loosely based on the Anglican model, as the Methodist Church arose

from the Anglican Church. It was first devised under the leadership of Bishops Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the late 18th century. In this approach, an elder (or "presbyter") is ordained to word (preaching and teaching), sacrament (administering Baptism and the Lord's Supper), order (administering the life of the church and, in the case of bishops, ordaining others for mission and ministry), and service. A deacon is a person ordained only to word and service.”

“In the United Methodist Church, for instance, seminary graduates are examined and approved by the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and then the Clergy Session. They are accepted as "probationary (provisional) members of the conference." The resident bishop may commission them to full-time ministry as ‘provisional’ ministers. (Before 1996, the graduate was ordained as a transitional deacon at this point, a provisional role since eliminated. The order of deacon is now a separate and distinct clergy order in the United Methodist Church.) After serving the probationary period, of a minimum of two years, the probationer is then examined again and either continued on probation, discontinued altogether, or approved for ordination. Upon final approval by the Clergy Session of the Conference, the probationer becomes a full member of the Conference and is then ordained as an elder or deacon by the resident Bishop. Those ordained as elders are members of the Order of Elders, and those ordained deacons are members of the Order of Deacons.”

“The British Methodist Conference has two distinct orders of presbyter and deacon. It does not have bishops as a separate order of ministry.”

“John Wesley appointed Thomas Coke (above mentioned as bishop) as ‘Superintendent’ his translation of the Greek ‘episcopos’ which is normally translated ‘bishop’ in English. The British Methodist Church has more than 500 Superintendents who are not a separate order of ministry but a role within the order of Presbyters.”

“In British Methodism the roles normally undertaken by bishops are expressed in ordaining presbyters and deacons by the annual Conference through its President (or a past president); in confirmation by all presbyters; in local oversight by Superintendents and in regional oversight by Chairs of District.”

Presbyterian churches

Presbyterian churches, following their Scottish forebears, reject the traditions surrounding overseers and instead identify the offices of bishop (episkopos in Greek) and elder (presbuteros in Greek, from which the term "presbyterian" comes). The two terms seem to be used interchangeably in the Bible (compare Titus 1.5–9 and I Tim. 3.2–7). Their form of church governance is known as presbyterian polity. While there is increasing authority with each level of gathering of elders (‘Session’ over a congregation or parish, then presbytery, then possibly a synod, then the General Assembly), there is no hierarchy of elders. Each elder has an equal vote at the court on which they stand.”

“Elders are usually chosen at their local level, either elected by the congregation and approved by the Session, or appointed directly by the Session. Some churches place limits on the term that the elders serve, while others ordain elders for life.”

“Presbyterians also ordain (by laying on of hands) ministers of Word and Sacrament (sometimes known as 'teaching elders'). These ministers are regarded simply as Presbyters ordained to a different function, but in practice they provide the leadership for local Session.”

“Some Presbyterians identify those appointed (by the laying on of hands) to serve in practical ways (Acts 6.1–7) as deacons (diakonos in Greek, meaning servant). In many congregations, a group of men or women is thus set aside to deal with matters such as congregational fabric and finance, releasing elders for more ‘spiritual’ work. These persons may be known as ‘deacons,’ ‘board members’ or ‘managers’, depending on the local tradition. Unlike elders and minister, they are not usually ‘ordained’ and are often elected by the congregation for a set period of time.

“Other Presbyterians have used an ‘order of deacons’ as full-time servants of the wider Church. Unlike ministers, they do not administer sacraments or routinely preach. The Church of Scotland has recently begun ordaining deacons to this role. Unlike the Episcopalian system, but similar to the United Methodist system described above, the two Presbyterian offices are different in kind rather than in degree, since one need not be a deacon before becoming an elder. Since there is no hierarchy, the two offices do not make up an ‘order’ in the technical sense, but the terminology of holy orders is sometimes still developed.

Congregationalist churches

“Congregationalist churches implement different schemes, but the officers usually have less authority than in the Presbyterian or Episcopalian forms. Some ordain only ministers and rotate

members on an advisory board (sometimes called a board of elders or a board of deacons). Because the positions are by comparison less powerful, there is usually less rigor or fanfare in how officers are ordained.”

Latter Day Saint Movement:

“The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) accepts the legal authority of clergy to perform marriages but does not recognize any other sacraments performed by ministers not ordained to the Latter-day Saint priesthood. Although the Latter-day Saints do claim a doctrine of a certain spiritual ‘apostolic succession,’ it is significantly different from that claimed by Catholics and Protestants since there is no succession or continuity between the first century and the lifetime of Joseph Smith, the founder of the LDS church. Mormons teach that the priesthood was lost in ancient times not to be restored by Christ until the nineteenth century when it was given to Joseph Smith directly.”

“The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has a relatively open priesthood, ordaining nearly all worthy adult males and boys of the age of twelve and older. Latter-day Saint priesthood consists of two divisions: the Melchizedek Priesthood and Aaronic Priesthood. The Melchizedek Priesthood because Melchizedek was such a great high priest. Before his day it was called the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God. But out of respect or reverence to the name of the Supreme Being, to avoid the too frequent repetition of his name, the church, in ancient days, called that priesthood after Melchizedek. The lesser priesthood is an appendage to the Melchizedek Priesthood. It is called the Aaronic Priesthood because it was conferred on Aaron and his sons throughout all their generations. The offices, or ranks, of

the Melchizedek order (in roughly descending order) include apostle, seventy, patriarch, high priest, and elder. The offices of the Aaronic order are bishop, priest, teacher, and deacon. The manner of ordination consists of the laying on of hands by two or more men holding at least the office being conferred while one acts as voice in conferring the priesthood and/or office and usually pronounces a blessing upon the recipient. Teachers and deacons do not have the authority to ordain others to the priesthood. All church members are authorized to teach and preach regardless of priesthood ordination so long as they maintain good standing within the church. The church does not use the term ‘holy orders.’”

Community of Christ

“Community of Christ has a largely volunteer priesthood, and all members of the priesthood are free to marry (as traditionally defined by the Christian community). The priesthood is divided into two orders, the Aaronic priesthood and the Melchisedec priesthood. The Aaronic order consists of the offices of deacon, teacher and priest. The Melchisedec Order consists of the offices of elder (including the specialized office of seventy) and high priest (including the specialized offices of evangelist, bishop, apostle, & prophet). Paid ministers include “appointees” and the general officers of the church, which include some specialized priesthood offices (such as the office of president, reserved for the three top members of the church leadership team). As of 1984, women have been eligible for priesthood, which is conferred through the sacrament of ordination by the laying-on-of-hands. While there is technically no age requirement for any office of priesthood, there is no automatic ordination or progression as in the LDS Church. Young people are occasionally ordained as deacon, and sometimes teacher or priest, but generally most priesthood

members are called following completion of post secondary school education. In March 2007 a woman was ordained for the first time to the office of president.

Ordination of women

“The Roman Catholic Church does not ordain women to any of the orders and has officially declared that it does not have authority to ordain women as priests or bishops. ‘Ordaining’ women as deaconesses is not a possibility in any sacramental sense of the diaconate, for a deaconess is not simply a woman who is a deacon but instead holds a position of lay service. As such, she does not receive the sacrament of holy orders. Many Anglican and Protestant churches ordain women, but in many cases, only to the office of deacon.”

“Various branches of the Orthodox churches, including the Greek Orthodox, currently set aside women as deaconesses. Some churches are internally divided on whether the Scriptures permit the ordination of women. When one considers the relative size of the churches (1.1 billion Roman Catholics, 300 million Orthodox, 590 million Anglicans and Protestants), it is a minority of Christian churches that ordain women. Protestants constitute about 27 percent of Christians worldwide, and most of their churches that do ordain women have only done so within the past century.”

“In some traditions women may be ordained to the same orders as men. In others women are restricted from certain offices. Women may be ordained bishop in the Old Catholic churches and in the Anglican/Episcopal churches in Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Cuba, Brazil, South Africa, Canada, US, Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia. The Church of Ireland had installed Pat Storey in 2013. On 19 September 2013,

Storey was chosen by the House of Bishops to succeed Richard Clarke as Bishop of Meath and Kildare. She was consecrated to the episcopate at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, on 30 November 2013. She is the first woman to be elected as a bishop in the Church of Ireland and the first woman to be an Anglican Communion bishop in Ireland and Great Britain. The Church of England's General Synod voted in 2014 to allow women to be ordained to the episcopate, with Libby Lane being the first woman to be ordained bishop. Continuing Anglican churches of the world do not permit women to be ordained. In some Protestant denominations, women may serve as assistant pastors but not as pastors in charge of congregations. In some denominations, women can be ordained to be an elder or deacon. Some denominations allow for the ordination of women for certain religious orders. Within certain traditions, such as the Anglican and Lutheran, there is a diversity of theology and practice regarding ordination of women.”

“The Roman Catholic Church, in accordance with its understanding of the theological tradition on the issue, and the definitive clarification found in the encyclical letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* (1994) written by Pope John Paul II, officially teaches that it has no authority to ordain women as priests and thus there is no possibility of women becoming priests at any time in the future.”

Ordination of homosexual clergy

“The ordination of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender clergy who are sexually active, and open about it, represents a fiercely contested subject within many mainline Protestant communities. The majority of churches are opposed to such ordinations because they view homosexuality as incompatible with Biblical teaching and traditional Christian practice. Yet

there are an increasing number of Christian congregations and communities that are open to ordaining people who are gay or lesbian. These are liberal Protestant denominations, such as the Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, plus the small Metropolitan Community Church, founded as a church intending to minister primarily to LGBT people, and the Church of Sweden where such clergy may serve in senior clerical positions.”

CONCLUSION:

Granted, these 51 pages, most likely contain more than most people need to know, or perhaps want to know. On the other hand, the material contained here, in our estimation, is what ought to be known by those who are serious about their beliefs; those who claim to love God *and* their neighbor following the “greatest commandment” and hope and pray that the promises of Christ will be theirs, provided they trust in his mercy; recognize his justice; and follow his teachings with humility in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit.

Having completed this mini compilation over a period of a couple of weeks and adding it to what was already known through the years, it is obvious that the differences in Christian denominationalism, the things that keep Christian unity from becoming a reality, are centered primarily on a breakdown of a structural order within the church; by politics, retribution, opposed exegetical conclusions and semantics; just to name a few.

Jesus Christ founded his church at the fullness of time. Planned for humanity from the beginning of time and space, it began

with the “decent” of the Spirit upon the Apostles at Pentecost, one of the first promises Christ kept.

“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.” (John 15: 26)

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28: 19)

This is the power the Apostles were given. Trusting in their ability to invoke the Spirit, they proclaimed the Good News in the name of Jesus Christ to the world. Those who are called to succeed them, to this day, continually minister to him for us.

Pentecost Sunday, the “birthday of the church,” is one of the most ancient feasts celebrated early enough to be mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (20:16) and Saint Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (16:8). It supplants the Jewish feast of Pentecost, which took place 50 days after the Passover and which celebrated the sealing of the Old Covenant on Mount Sinai. The fact that there is one Jesus Christ is stated in 1st Corinthians (8: 6). St. Paul writes:

“Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that ‘all of us possess knowledge.’ Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; but anyone who loves God is known by him.”

“Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that ‘no idol in the world really exists’, and that ‘there is no God but one.’ Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords—yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.”

The first letter to Timothy (2: 5) expresses the same thought:

“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings should be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself a ransom for all—this was attested at the right time.”

Since there is only one Christ there is only one faith offered us as a favor from God by his grace enabling us to share in the life of God through Christ in the Spirit. It is by this grace that we know, love and serve God and others as faithful Christians. As human beings we are all the same in the eyes of God, yet all different from one another as a result of our birth and culture. We have all tasted of the fruit of the tree of good and evil. We have been made free to love and reject love; to follow the will of God, and resist the will of God made known to us by Jesus in the Spirit. With baptism, we become Christians, children of God, and heirs of Heaven as directed by the Lord during his time among us.

In our view, the Apostles creed summarizes what it is to be a faithful christian. Others may feel differently. But, there should be no doubt that the Church founded by Christ will be one.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son Our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontus Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into Hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.

Amen

“I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.” (John 10: 16)

Friday of week 4 of the year

Saint Blaise, Bishop, Martyr

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia.

“Blessed are they who have kept the word with a generous heart, and yield a harvest through perseverance.” (Luke 8: 15)

Alleluia, alleluia.

