

Holy Trinity Catholic Church
RCIA Class Transcript
Holy Orders and Religious Life
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In tonight's topic, we continue with the teaching on the sacraments. We'll cover the sacrament called Holy Orders. Under this topic, we'll cover quite a few things. We'll talk about bishops, priests, and deacons. We'll talk about why we call priests "Father," why priests don't get married, and why women aren't ordained priests.

The word *order* comes from the old Latin word meaning "a group or a class of people." We know that Christ established all seven of the sacraments. He established the Sacrament of Holy Orders, or the *priesthood*, at the Last Supper. After He said the Consecration, changing the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, He said, "Do this in remembrance of Me." At that moment, the Apostles became priests. They were ordained by Christ at that very moment.

The three main powers of the priesthood, the three greatest things that they do are:

- Say Mass - When they say Mass, they change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ
- Absolve sins in Confession
- Anoint the sick

Let's start here with the *priesthood*, to differentiate it from the *diaconate*. These are the three things that only a priest can do – no one else can do these three things. They can say Mass, and change bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. This power was given to them at the Last Supper. Secondly, they can absolve sin. They can hear Confession. This power was given to them by Christ, on the night of the Resurrection, when He appeared to them, breathed on them, and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven. Whose sins you hold bound are held bound." Then, He gave them the authority to anoint the sick. It says, remember, in the Letter of James, Chapter 5, "If someone is sick, call for the priest of the Church. The priest will come pray over them, anointing them with oil, in the name of the Lord." Those really are the three main things that only a priest or a bishop can do.

One of the other duties of the priest, though, is to preach the Gospel. The priests do preach the Word of God. Jesus told them, before He ascended to Heaven, "Go out into the whole world, and make disciples of all the nations. Baptize them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to observe everything I have commanded you."

We know in Scripture that the Apostles were ordained by Christ. Christ gave them the authority to do these sacraments, at those different times I mentioned – at the Last Supper, and the night of the Resurrection. But then we see, in the Acts of the Apostles, that these Apostles passed on that power to others. We see that Paul and Barnabus, who were not part of the original Twelve Apostles, were ordained by one of the Apostles. It's done through the *Prayer of Ordination*, and the *Laying on of Hands*. They lay the hands on the head of the man to be ordained, and they invoke the Holy Spirit, and since they are ordained as bishops by Christ Himself, they pass on that power to the others. That's called *Apostolic Succession*, how the powers are passed on from Christ to the Apostles, and then to others, like Paul and Barnabus.

We have it in the New Testament, that Saint Paul ordained Timothy. So after Paul was ordained by one of the Twelve Apostles, then he ordained Timothy, by the Laying on of Hands as well. We notice in the Acts of the Apostles that, before the Apostles, once they established a church, in Ephesus or in Asia Minor, or places like that, they would then, before they left, they would appoint bishops, and they would appoint priests (and even deacons are mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles). Paul writes to Timothy, "For this reason I admonish you to stir up the grace, which is in you, by the laying on of my hands." Paul reminds Timothy that he became a priest. He became one of the bishops, because he had the Laying on of Hands from the Apostle Paul.

To become a priest, there are certain qualifications that an individual has to have. First of all, they have to be a baptized man. We'll talk a little bit later about why women are not called to the priesthood. In our day and age, you have to be at least 25 years of age to be a priest. In the past, they could have been a little bit younger, but Canon Law says that you have to be 25 to be ordained a priest now. When I was in the seminary, I was with a fellow who was from the Philippines, and he was 24. He had to get special permission from the Pope to be ordained, because he was younger than age 25.

To be a priest, you have to study – it's usually about eight to ten years of seminary training. The word *seminary* comes from the Latin word meaning "the seed." That's where the seed of one's vocation is nurtured. A seminary is like a college. You go there after high school, or after college. If you go right out of high school, it's usually about eight years to become a priest, eight to ten years. So, it's like becoming a doctor – a doctor of souls. Doctors take care of the body; we take care of the soul. It normally takes about eight years to become a priest. If you go to four years of college, then you can go probably right into the seminary, and only have four or five more years after that. So, eight years after high school, give or take, and then four years after college. You have to make sure that if you do go to a regular college, you have to have enough Philosophy, Theology, Latin, and some other courses. If you major in Political Science, or Chemistry, you probably have to get some more basic courses.

In the seminary, I went to Mount Saint Mary's Seminary, up in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and the courses that they teach you in the seminary are the:

- Bible
- Old Testament
- New Testament
- Seven sacraments (We had an entire semester course just about Baptism, and another course for three months, just about the Eucharist. We're trying to cram all that in one hour or so tonight. You can imagine how much there is to learn if you have an entire course just on Confession.)
- Church History
- Canon Law
- Liturgy
- Sociology
- Psychology
- Counseling

The young man who would be called to the priesthood really prepares during those four years to see if he is *called* by God to become a priest. Nobody ever chooses the priesthood on their own – it has to be a *calling from God*. The young man who enters the seminary should have the right intention of doing this for the right reasons, namely out of love of God, and for the salvation of souls, trying to save his own soul, and trying to get as many people to Heaven and to Christ as possible.

The priest also has to be in good enough health. He has to pass a physical exam before he enters the seminary, as well as a psychological exam to make sure he's not crazy when he enters the seminary. After you complete, let's say, eight years of education, you first become a deacon. Deacons are helpers. In the Acts of the Apostles, it says that, "The Apostles chose seven men to help them in the distribution and taking care of the needs of the poor." Deacons are ordained. When you become a deacon, that's when you make the vow of celibacy, as a deacon. By the time you're a priest, you're already a deacon.

A deacon is usually for a period of one year. For a seminarian, after about seven years, then becomes a deacon, and after one more year, would become a priest. That's called a *transitional deacon*. That means he's on his way to becoming a priest. There's another kind of deacon. It's called a *permanent deacon*. A permanent deacon (some of you are familiar with them, that they could be married men, who then become deacons). They don't then become priests after that, normally. They help out in the parish. Often times, they have a regular job – they could be doctors, or lawyers, or whatever. They feel called to help in the Church. I believe in our diocese you have to be age 35 or above to become a permanent deacon.

Deacons cannot say Mass, hear Confessions, or Anoint the sick. But deacons (both transitional and permanent deacons) can:

- Baptize
- Preach
- Read the Gospel at Mass on Sunday
- Do weddings (They can't do a wedding Mass, but they could do a wedding ceremony without the Mass.)
- Do wake services at funerals (Again, they don't do a Mass, but they can do prayer services at the grave, or in the funeral home.)

Those are the main things that a deacon can do. A transitional deacon, remember, that's for one year, and then they become a priest. A permanent deacon, could be either single or married, and often times are men in their forties, or fifties, or sixties. It does mean that, if a man is single, when he becomes a permanent deacon, he remains single for his entire life. If a married man gets ordained to the diaconate, if his wife dies, he cannot remarry – that's the promise that he makes when he's ordained. That's an interesting point, that the Church could admit married men to Holy Orders (to the diaconate or the priesthood), and they have in the past, but once somebody has been ordained, then they never get married after that. Do you see the difference? That married men can be admitted to the diaconate, but a priest can never get married after he's ordained as a priest, or a deacon.

(A question). A permanent deacon would normally go to about a three-year training, and that would be once a week for three years. If he's married, his wife goes to those classes as well. In our diocese, they're thinking about starting up the permanent diaconate program again. We had about ten years where we didn't ordain any permanent deacons. The diocese will start that up again. The classes are normally held in Arlington. They're taught by theologians and priests. They go once a week, usually for two or three hours. That's their training to be a deacon, to teach them how to baptize, do weddings, do marriage preparation, and marriage counseling. They can also preach homilies.

(A question). Because it absolves sins – that's the key for the Anointing of the Sick. St. James' Letter is clear. He says, "Let them call for the priests of the Church, to anoint the sick." And it says that, "their sins will be forgiven if they are anointed." Anointing of the Sick, if somebody went into a coma, and was dying, and as long as they were properly disposed in their heart (good and open heart), were sorry for their sins, and had the right attitude before slipping into the coma, then the Anointing of the Sick would absolve them of sin. If they had hated God, and shunned God, and didn't want to be forgiven, then the Anointing of the Sick wouldn't have any effect upon them. But, if they had at least a good heart, an open heart, were sorry for their sins, then the Anointing of the Sick would absolve them of sin.

(A question). The Anointing of the Sick is a sacrament that's only in the Catholic Church. The Greek Orthodox, that broke off in the 1500's, or actually about the year 1000, they do have all seven sacraments; and they do have valid sacraments, too. Even though they're not under the Pope, they do have true sacraments.

(A question). It does. You have Baptism. It not only absolves, it washes away Original Sin, and any personal sins that are committed if somebody was baptized as an adult. Every person can baptize - not only priests and deacons. I mentioned last week, even a non-Christian nurse could baptize a baby. They do become God's instrument for the forgiveness of sins in that case. It's not strictly because this forgives sins (that only a priest can do it), because a lay person can baptize; and that baptized person would have their sins washed away.

Remember, whoever baptizes, it's really Christ who baptizes through the person. That's why he says, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The Anointing of the Sick, though, usually includes going to Confession. Usually, if the person is conscious, they would receive the *Last Rites*, which is going to Confession, receiving Anointing, and receiving the Eucharist.

(A question). Yes, when a man becomes a permanent deacon, it's only a Bishop that can ordain a priest or a deacon. With the ordination of priests, though, it's the Laying on of Hands, and then, the Prayer of Ordination, said by the Bishop, and then the priest has the palms of his hands anointed with the sacred oil of Chrism (which is the mixture of oil and perfume, blessed by the Bishop on Holy Thursday). When a deacon is ordained, it's also the Laying on of Hands, but it does not include the anointing with the holy oils. You'll notice that the priest always wears the stole over both shoulders, and the deacon only wears it over the one shoulder, showing he has some authority to do some of the sacraments, but doesn't have the full authority to do all the sacraments.

Bishops are the successors of the Apostles. Every Catholic Bishop that we have was ordained by a previous Bishop, by a previous Bishop, by a previous Bishop, all the way back to the Apostles, who were ordained by Christ. Again, we call this *Apostolic Succession*, succession from the Apostles. It's almost like a power that is passed on from Christ to the Bishops, and to the Apostles, all the way down to the present. Remember, Bishops are the ones who ordain priests and deacons. If there was a break here, then those powers would not be passed on (the power to say Mass, and change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, the power to hear Confession, or to Anoint the Sick). Unfortunately, that did happen at the time of the Protestant break from the Church. What happened was Martin Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and the other reformers broke off from that Apostolic Succession, and they changed their beliefs. For example, they no longer believed that the Mass was the Holy Sacrifice, and they didn't want their ministers called priests anymore – they wanted them called ministers. They

changed the Rite of Ordination. They changed it so drastically that this Apostolic Succession was broken. That would have been around the year 1500.

The ministers of the other religions, they can still baptize. They can still do weddings. You'll notice that there are no Confessions in the Protestant churches. They did away with Confession. The Eucharist, in many of the denominations, instead of them considering it to be the Body and Blood of Christ, they consider it to be like a symbol, or representation. We'll get into that more in the next couple of weeks, when we talk specifically about the Eucharist. They broke off, and don't have that Apostolic Succession anymore, which was a very sad thing for Christianity.

(A question). Probably both. I would imagine that they were protesting against Catholic beliefs. Often times, it was about the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, or the priestly power to absolve sin in Confession, and they were basically throwing off any vestiges of Catholicism for a number of different reasons. And so, because of that, they changed their Mass from the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, to more like a Communion Service, or like a Community Prayer Service, with maybe bread and wine, or bread and grape juice. They changed the whole dimension from the sacrifice that only a priest can offer, to more or less, a Communion Service, where passing around bread reminding you of Jesus and Jesus' love, which is, of course, a very beautiful ceremony. But, unfortunately, since the Apostolic Succession was broken when they broke away, they would not have their priests ordained by a valid Bishop. They didn't call them priests anymore, they called them ministers instead. They weren't ordained by validly ordained Bishops, and so that broke in the other denominations.

(A question). One of the things I should mention here is that it's only a Bishop that can ordain priests and deacons. Luther was only a priest. A priest doesn't have the ability to ordain other priests – only Bishops can ordain priests or deacons. So when they broke away, then they would not have had validly ordained Bishops to consecrate new priests.

(A question). There have been some. For example, in the Anglican or Episcopal Church, there were some Roman Catholic Bishops that broke away. Some of the Anglicans do have valid Apostolic Succession, but not every Anglican priest or Episcopal priest does have valid Holy Orders. The only way to tell is to really find out from that particular priest who ordained them, and then trace it back, almost like genealogy, trace it back, and see who ordained them, to see if at one time they did come from one of the validly ordained Bishops who did have Apostolic Succession. So, some of the Episcopalians and some Anglicans do have valid Orders. When the Greek Orthodox and the Russian Orthodox broke off, back about the year 1000, they did have, and they did keep, Apostolic Succession. Even though they rejected the Pope, they still had valid Bishops. See, a Bishop can also consecrate other Bishops. In this day and age, and even in the past, when a man was chosen from the priesthood to become a Bishop, they had three

Bishops. Three Bishops, then, prayed together, with the Laying on of Hands, and they consecrated the new Bishop. That's how it's normally done today.

Bishops can do everything a deacon and priest can do. Bishops can baptize, and preach, and do weddings, etc. They can say Mass, hear Confessions, and Anoint the Sick, but Bishops also, again, can ordain Bishops, priests, and deacons. They can also do the Sacrament of Confirmation – they're what's called the *Ordinary Ministers of Confirmation*. I mentioned last week that priests can also be granted the permission from the Bishop to do Confirmations as well, but we're sort of the *Extraordinary Ministers of Confirmation*, whereas Bishops are the Ordinary Ministers of Confirmation.

Let me mention what happens when someone is ordained as a priest, deacon, or Bishop, when they receive the Sacrament of Ordination, or Holy Orders. They do receive an increase in grace, because all the seven sacraments give you grace, which is God's strength and God's help. There's an increase in Sanctifying Grace. They also get Sacramental Graces, which help the person in their particular ministry to be able to do and perform the sacraments. Also, a special mark is imprinted upon the soul of a priest that will last for all eternity. Remember, at Baptism an indelible imprint of Christ is placed upon the soul. In Confirmation, an imprint of Christ and the Holy Spirit is impressed upon the soul, and in Holy Orders. Those are the three sacraments that leave an indelible, lasting change upon the soul, what's called a character, or stamp, or a seal, or an imprint of Christ, remains upon the soul of the priest for all eternity. That's why these sacraments can only be received one time. You only get baptized once. You can only get confirmed once validly, and you can only be ordained into Holy Orders one time.

(A question). To become a Bishop, you would already have to have been a deacon, and to be a priest. They would come from this category of the priesthood. The Bishops, let's say, would choose a priest to become a Bishop, and normally it's at the recommendation of the Pope. The Pope would have a name recommended to him. The Pope then says he is to be ordained a Bishop, and he is then consecrated as a Bishop. During that consecration ceremony, these three Bishops would be there for the prayer and the imposition of hands.

(A question). The Bishops have what we call *The Fullness of Holy Orders*. The deacons are ordained, and they receive Holy Orders – but it's the ordination to the diaconate. When the deacons are ordained by a Bishop, they are ordained as deacons to baptize, and preach, and read the Gospel, and do certain sacraments. When the deacons are then ordained priests, that ordination includes the ability to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, to absolve sins in Confession, and to Anoint the Sick. Then, when the Bishop is consecrated (ordained), then that man who is already a priest is given the authority to do Confirmations and to ordain others. The *Episcopacy*, or being a Bishop, is the fullness of ordination. I guess we can call it three different

degrees, or three different levels, of Holy Orders. That's probably the best way to explain it. Holy Orders is one sacrament. It has three levels, or three degrees.

(A question). No, it means that once a man is ordained, he remains a priest forever. That mark is made upon his soul. If he goes to Heaven, that mark remains. God forbid, if he goes to Hell, that mark remains on his soul for all eternity. In Heaven to his greater glory; in Hell to his greater shame. This has happened, where a man has been ordained. He then left the priesthood, for whatever reason, maybe he needed a sabbatical, and then he comes back – he does not get reordained. Once a priest; always a priest – just like once baptized; always baptized. Let's say if a priest decides to leave the priesthood and get married, he would be living in sin. He is not able to contract a true marriage, if he were to leave the priesthood after he's already been ordained. It would be like a married man, leaving his wife and living with somebody else. It would be like living in adultery is what it would be.

(A question). A Bishop becomes a Bishop of what we call a *diocese*. (There are, I think, 150 dioceses in the United States.) If a diocese is a large diocese, like Baltimore, Washington, or Philadelphia, it's called an *Archdiocese*, which means a bigger diocese. Let's say if our Bishop, Bishop Loverde, who's the Bishop of Arlington, was transferred to Baltimore, he would automatically become an Archbishop, just by being transferred to an Archdiocese. Typically, a huge Archdiocese would have a *Cardinal*. A Cardinal is just a title of honor, given to an Archbishop, for a big diocese. Typically, if somebody was assigned to Washington, they would be called an Archbishop automatically, and then the Pope would probably give them the honorary title of Cardinal. So, Philadelphia has a Cardinal. St. Louis, Boston, New York, Los Angeles, Cincinnati, Chicago – those are all huge Archdioceses that have a certain, I guess, prestige, or antiquity, so they would be called Cardinals. I think there are only seven to ten Cardinals in the United States. It's a title of honor. It's very much like a *monsignor*. What that is, a monsignor is a priest who's given a special title of honor. The word "monsignor" is a French word that means "a member of the papal household." It doesn't give them any more abilities, or any more powers to do any other sacraments. I guess, what a Cardinal is to an Archbishop, a monsignor is to a priest. Usually, a monsignor is a priest in the diocese who's done an exceptionally good job.

In the world, there are about 130 Cardinals. When this Pope dies, all these 130 Cardinals will go to Rome, and they'll be the ones who will pray and select the next Pope. From that standpoint, they have a privilege that Archbishops and Bishops don't have. Archbishops and Bishops don't select the next Pope. Only the Cardinals from around the world – Cardinals from South America, and Africa, and America will go, and it'll be one among them who'll be the next Pope. We know, really, the next Pope will have to be one of these 130 men, who are already living. The next Pope is already living right now; he's a Cardinal

somewhere. When they get together they pray, and they select one from among themselves, to be the next Pope.

(A question). Normally, all the Bishops that we have, obviously at one time were priests. Many of them were Monsignors. Most of them were pastors. Generally, to become a Bishop, you have to have higher degrees, like doctorates in Canon Law or Church History, or a Licentiate degree. But it doesn't always happen. Sometimes, ordinary parish priests are chosen to be Bishops, and they don't really have advanced degrees. Almost every Bishop in America does have advanced degrees in Canon Law, or Scripture, or Theology. It's probably recommended, but not absolutely necessary.

(A question). If he's going to go for a Doctorate degree, that'll certainly help the Church. Any time a priest advances his education, that's good. Usually, I would say most priests do not have ambitions to be Bishops. It's really something that if God chooses you, then you accept it, but it's probably not a good idea to go searching for it, or to go trying for it. That would be my opinion.

(A question). An Archdiocese is usually based upon when they were established, like Baltimore, Philadelphia, or Washington. These dioceses were established hundreds of years ago. It often times has to do with the antiquity of a diocese, and also the population. Places like Chicago, St. Louis, Los Angeles – these are huge populations of Catholics, and so they would be the size of an Archdiocese. It's both square miles, number of Catholics, and as well as how old the diocese is.

(A question). Yes, and in the past, it wasn't absolutely necessary to have been a Cardinal to be the Pope. That's not a requirement. In this day and age, it would be, but not in the past.

(A question). An Archdiocese would either have an Archbishop, but in some Archdioceses, they would be called a Cardinal, given an honorary title of Cardinal. I can think of a case in Baltimore, you had, about 20 years ago, you had Bishop Borders. He was the Archbishop of Baltimore, but he never was made a Cardinal. He always remained an Archbishop. But then Cardinal Keeler came into Baltimore as an Archbishop, and the Pope made him a Cardinal right away.

(A question). Yes, the Bishop would be the one that would choose which among his priests he would make a Monsignor. Then, those names have to be sent to Rome, and the Pope approves that. In our diocese, there haven't been any Monsignors made in probably the last ten years, I guess. I'm not sure if they're going to start that up again or not – I haven't heard.

(A question). Yes, there are Cardinals that are retired, that are not active anymore, or are, I think, over age 75. They do not vote in the next election. It's

only those that are active and under the age of 75, as far as I know, that would vote for the next Pope.

(A question). An *Abbot* (it comes from the Latin word meaning “father”) is the father of a monastery. In Berryville, they have the Trappist monks. In the Religious Order, they have a community, and the Head Superior is called an Abbot.

This would be a good time to tell you the difference between a *religious order* and a *diocesan priest*. There are two kinds of priests. There are what’s called a *diocesan*, or *secular priest*. A diocesan priest is one who works in a diocese, and lives in a diocese. Normally, they’re also called *parish priests*. That’s what I am, a diocesan priest – I’m in the diocese of Arlington. We have in our diocese, 68 parishes, about 200 priests, and I will never be sent outside the diocese. I will always be somewhere in those 68 parishes. If I was a religious order priest, I could be sent to China, or Africa, or South America. That’s a big difference.

A diocese comes under a Bishop, whereas the other kind of priest is called a *religious order priest*. Some of you have heard of Religious Orders – they’d be Jesuits, Franciscans, Dominicans, Benedictines, Augustinians, Salesians – those are all Religious Orders. They come under a Superior. In a monastery for men, it’s called an Abbot. In a monastery (convent) for women (like here), they call it a *Mother Superior*. Or, you can call it an *Abbess*. The difference is that, in a Religious Order, the priests, or brothers, or nuns, take three vows: poverty, chastity, and obedience. The vow of poverty means that they don’t own anything of their own possessions – everything is in the name of the order. The priest, if he’s a religious order priest, like a Jesuit, Franciscan, Dominican, they do not own anything. The car, for example, is owned by the community. The car, he’s allowed to drive it. He wouldn’t have his own bank account. His possessions are not owned by him; they’re all part of the community, and that they share everything. That’s a vow of poverty.

Chastity means celibacy, that they give up being married, and they live a life of purity. Chastity means chaste, or pure. Here it’s referring to celibacy and the virtue of purity.

Obedience means that they’re obedient to their Mother Superior, Abbess, or in the male orders, that would be the Abbot, or the Superior General. The Jesuits in the United States have a Superior General. They make the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Let’s say your religious superior says that, “I want you to go to become a missionary in South Africa.” You say yes. You go. That’s obedience.

A diocesan priest also takes vows. He takes the vows of obedience. In this case, it’s to the Bishop. It means, if he wanted me to start a new parish, or when I was in Fredericksburg, and the Bishop said, “I want to open up a parish in Bristow,

and I'd like you to do it." Then, basically, I said, "Sure, if you want me to, I'd be happy to do it." And so, they sent me out here. I was obedient to the Bishop.

There's the vow, also, of celibacy, which is chastity. We do not get married.

The diocesan priest also has a vow of prayer. These are called the *Liturgy of the Hours*. *Liturgy* means "the worship of God." *Of the Hours* has to do with praying in the morning, praying at noon, praying in the evening, and praying at night. Just like the Muslims pray seven times a day, so we, as priests, pray five times a day: morning prayer, daytime prayer, evening prayer, night prayer, and the Office of Readings. The Liturgy of the Hours is a prayer book that has the Psalms, and other prayers, and hymns. What happens is, when a man becomes ordained a deacon, they begin praying the Liturgy of the Hours. That's the vow that they make. Priests, deacons, and Bishops all pray the Liturgy of the Hours. All the monks and nuns pray the Liturgy of the Hours as well.

If you notice, there's something missing that was over here. That's the vow of poverty. That's really the big difference. The other difference is that they live in community. They have community prayer, where they all pray together, whereas here, we're more or less on our own, living in a rectory, which is where the priests live. I'm by myself at the rectory, except for Jesus. He lives there, in the tabernacle. He's a very good roommate. He never has the radio up too loud or anything. He's a wonderful Person to live with. I live in the rectory, whereas the monks, and nuns and Religious Orders live in a community. They pray their prayers together.

As I mentioned, the one thing that the diocesan priests do not do is take a vow of poverty. For example, I can have a car, or a stereo. I'm allowed to own that. That's a big difference in the two.

I guess the other difference is most of these priests are in parishes, whereas most of these priests are in special assignments, like Jesuits, or Dominicans, or teachers, like at Georgetown, or at Boston College, or Providence colleges or Dominican colleges, for example. Georgetown is a Jesuit college, so many of the Religious Orders are preaching. The Orders of nuns, they do a lot of different things. Like the Benedictines, which is where we are right now, they work with the poor, they work in hospitals, and they work in parishes. They do a lot of other things as well, a lot of beautiful works.

Religious Orders can be male or female. The difference is that nuns (religious sisters) make the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. But nuns and sisters are not ordained to the Holy Orders. Only a man can receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders, as deacons, Bishops, or priests, whereas nuns, and religious sisters, make the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. They become consecrated to God. They become like the bride of Christ. That's what the nuns are, the bride of Christ.

(A question). No, brothers are not ordained. In a religious community, you can have priests or brothers. The priests are ordained; the brothers are not. There are groups like the Irish Christian Brothers; they're teachers, but they're not ordained to the priesthood or the diaconate. They usually remain as brothers. Strictly speaking, the word nun really means "a cloistered sister," whereas a religious sister lives out and about. They can go outside the cloister. They can teach in a school, and be a nurse. But a nun is usually in a monastery, or a convent, and doesn't leave that. Strictly speaking, a nun is that by definition, whereas a religious sister can go out and feed the poor, and help others that way.

(A question). No, you could switch dioceses. One of our priests recently did that. He was in Virginia, but he was friends with the Bishop in Lincoln, Nebraska, so he switched dioceses, more or less, for five years. Then, after five years, they'll reevaluate it, and then he might come back to our diocese. It's called to be *incardinated*. You get incardinated into a diocese. The diocese really does pay for your seminary education. You still pay for your own college education, but the diocese pays for your seminary education, which is the last four years. Because of that, you have an obligation, like the Navy, you have to put in your five years; and after five years you can switch to a different diocese. Most men stay in the same diocese for their whole life.

(A question). Many priests have a financial background. Some of them were accountants before they became priests. Some were lawyers, or even doctors, before they became priests. If they don't have that background, then most of them will get a good bookkeeper, or business manager, somebody who has a degree in accounting. Most parishes now have not only secretaries, they also have business managers and other people working for them that can, more or less, do a lot of the administrative work, and a lot of the financial work. The priest does have to oversee that. Only the pastor can sign the checks, but he could have a bookkeeper that can keep all the accurate records. Every parish is audited. We just got audited a week ago. We passed with flying colors; I'm happy to say. Otherwise, I wouldn't be standing here. We're very blessed. We have an excellent bookkeeper, and business manager, and everything was perfect when we got audited. I think it's a good idea. I would recommend that every parish pastor have a good business manager; otherwise he's not going to have as much time to say the Masses, hear Confessions, or visit the sick.

A day in the life of a priest is always unique, because we have certain prayers. We pray at least an hour a day, usually, because we have to pray the Liturgy of the Hours, so we have at least an hour of prayer, which includes mostly Scripture reading. We say Mass every day. We don't have to say Mass, but it's highly recommended. It's not a sin if we don't, but we should say Mass every day. We do have to pray the Liturgy of the Hours every day. That is required. We might visit the hospital, the sick, the homebound, the shut-ins, take Communion to the

sick, maybe teach a CCD class, prepare couples for marriage, meet with them, do the marriage preparation, sometimes some other counseling, some marriage counseling. Then there are quite a few meetings: Knights of Columbus, Legion of Mary, teaching RCIA, baptismal class, finance council, building committee, architecture committee, and fund raising. There are a few other things that we do. Actually, it's a lot of fun. Then, we have to do all the weddings, all the funerals, all the baptisms, the First Communions, and First Confessions.

We mostly work Saturdays and Sundays. Those are our busiest days. That's normally when we have all the weddings. I had two weddings this past Saturday. I also heard Confessions, had some appointments, and said the vigil Mass. So, Saturday and Sunday are our busiest days. During the week, it's sort of dependent upon how many meetings and other things you have going on. It's very interesting work, because you'll go right from juggling at a birthday party to doing a funeral. There are a lot of emotional highs and lows, a lot of roller coasters. You might be doing a baptism, then going to a wedding, and do a funeral all in the same day. Anointing sick and dying persons, spending a couple of hours in the hospital, and go have dinner with the family - it's an incredible life. It's a beautiful life. It's an amazing gift to be a priest.

(A question). When a priest is young, and newly ordained, usually they like to move them every three or four years. In that way, that young priest can get experience at being with three or four older pastors, and learn what to do, and what not to do. It's almost like an internship. You have three years. But then, after you become a pastor, it's usually six to twelve years in a parish; if you're building, sometimes longer.

(A question). The policy, if you have 2,000 families, you'd probably get two priests. We have 1,100 families right now. They say, usually after you build a structure or a church, then you get another priest. I would imagine that we'll have another priest here in one to two years.

(A question). You have a choice of what diocese you want to belong to. I grew up in Philadelphia. I checked out a Religious Order too, the Oblates of the Virgin Mary. I checked out a few other Religious Orders, but I didn't really feel called to religious life. I felt called to be a parish priest. I felt God was calling me to do the weddings, the funerals, the baptisms, to be in a parish - not to be at a university, working as a professor or a military chaplain. I could have done any of those things, but any young man could do that. As far as what diocese you pick is entirely up to you. I narrowed it down between Philadelphia and Arlington. Philadelphia at that time had 300 parishes, and about 1,000 priests. At that time, Arlington had 50 parishes and about 100 priests. I felt I'd rather go to a smaller diocese. I went to college down here. My mom and dad still live in Philadelphia. I felt that I'd rather be a part of a young, growing diocese that's opening new parishes, rather than closing down inner-city parishes. Virginia is just a wonderful area. Since I went to college down here, I was able to join this diocese. That's

what happens first. You can pick a Religious Order – you can become a Jesuit, Dominican, Franciscan. Or if you don't feel called to religious life, you could become a diocesan priest, and then you can choose whatever diocese. I could have chosen Baltimore, Washington, Philadelphia, any of those. I chose Arlington.

(A question). Every diocese is accepting men to the priesthood. Some of them have certain restrictions. In Arlington, they wouldn't accept anybody who is over 35 years of age, so some of our men would then go to Washington and be ordained in the Washington diocese. Every diocese is looking for vocations and for priests. I think in this day and age, since many parts of the country have a shortage of vocations, then some of them have dropped the age limit. Some religious convents are like that as well. You have to be a certain age. You have to be under, let's say, 40 to join theirs. Other convents accept women who are older – in their 50's and 60's.

(A question). There's what's called the Archdiocese of Military Services. My understanding is that they will have priests who will be ordained for that diocese. Some priests will serve in the Army, some in the Marines, some in the Navy. They become Navy chaplains, or Army chaplains. They come under the Military Archbishop. There's a desperate need, because a huge amount of the military are Catholic, but there are not that many priests in the Chaplaincy program.

(A question). My understanding is that they do. One of my good friends is an Army Ranger. He was a priest, and then he went through Ranger School, which is pretty amazing. He's one of the few priests that was ordained, and then went through Ranger School. Often times, guys are in the military, went through Ranger School, and then later on became a priest. Not everybody has to do that, but they do have to have whatever the Army or Navy requires of chaplains, which is pretty stringent, from what I understand. I admire tremendously these heroic priests and chaplains. Many have given their life for their country and their Faith.

We're going to talk about why priests don't get married. Take a look at this article called "Why Celibacy for Priests." It's an excellent article. I'll just highlight some of the main points. First of all, the priest really is married. He's married to the Church, and to Christ. He's already given his life over to the service of God. It's really an imitation of Christ. Jesus never got married. He always remained celibate. The priest is an *Alter Christus* in Latin, which means "Another Christ." The priest is supposed to be the presence of Christ in the world. Jesus never got married, so the priest, in imitation of Christ, gives up that great gift.

Marriage is a beautiful sacrament. It's very holy. It's a beautiful gift from God. We'll have a whole class coming up about the beauty of the Sacrament of Matrimony. The priest gives up that good of marriage for a higher good, namely to get married in a sense, spiritually to the Church, to go to the service of God. The priest then has the freedom to be able to love God with all of his heart, and

to try to get as many souls to Heaven as possible. The priest becomes a *spiritual father*. That's why we call priests "Father." It's an interesting title, isn't it, because the priest doesn't even get married. He has no children. He's never a "dad," but he's a "Father." He becomes, spiritually, the father of thousands of people – all the people he baptizes, the people he brings into the Church; he becomes the spiritual father. Just like a father gives life; the priest gives life in baptizing. The father feeds his family; the priest feeds his people with the Body of Christ in Holy Communion. The father reconciles; just like the priest hears Confessions and helps to take care of the sick and the dying.

In Heaven, Jesus says, "There is no marriage." Those who are in Heaven, Jesus says, "will live like the Angels," in Luke, Chapter 20, verse 35, that in the Resurrection, we'll all be like the Angels. So, everybody in Heaven will live a celibate life. The priest is already living the heavenly life here on Earth now. St. Paul tells us, in First Corinthians, Chapter 7, "An unmarried man can devote himself to the Lord's affairs." Remember, celibacy is a great gift that God has given to the Church. It's for the purpose of spiritual fruitfulness. It says, "All he needs to worry about is pleasing the Lord. In the same way an unmarried woman, like a young girl, can devote herself to the Lord's affairs. All she need worry about is being holy in body and spirit." The teaching of St. Paul says that celibacy is a great gift from God. It's for the purpose of being more available to the Lord. It is a beautiful gift that the priest can go to the hospital at three in the morning. He can be free to love God and serve God with an undivided heart. Not everybody is called to the priesthood. Not everybody is called to the life of celibacy, but certain men are. Then, they're given that grace to faithfully live that out.

It says in that center section, priests are free then, to spend more time and energy in apostolic labors, something most of them would be unable to do as fully if they had to care for a wife and children. We're in the full-time service of God. We're mystically joined to the Church, our bride. It says we then become spiritual fathers. We become fruitful in bringing about the birth of many spiritual children of God.

At the very end, it talks about how in this day and age, every vocation requires sacrifice. If you're married, you know for a fact that it requires unselfishness, and self-denial, and sacrifice. If you're a mom or a dad, and your baby cries at night, you have to get up. It requires a lot of sacrifice. Every vocation requires sacrifice. The priesthood has certain sacrifices. Married life has certain sacrifices. Both are vocations to get to Heaven. Both are callings to get to Heaven, to be with God forever. If you're married or single, your calling is to become holy, to get to Heaven to be with God. If you're a priest or a nun, your vocation is to get to Heaven and be with God for all eternity.

As I mentioned, once somebody is ordained to Holy Orders, they can never get married after that fact. The Church has allowed married men to become

deacons, and even to become priests. They have become priests in the case of an Episcopalian, or a Protestant minister who was married, and then becomes Catholic, and then becomes a priest in the Catholic Church. They can remain married, keeping their wife and their children, obviously. That has happened. There are probably in America, maybe a couple hundred former Protestant ministers, Anglican and Episcopalian priests, that became Catholic. They were in the ministry. They had wife and children. Then, when they became Catholic, many of them have gotten permission to be ordained, and they can be ordained to the priesthood even if they're married. If their wife passes away, they cannot get married after they get ordained.

Remember that priestly celibacy is what's called a *discipline* of the Church. A discipline can change. It is possible that it could change. It wouldn't affect me, or any other priest who has already made their commitment. Once we get ordained, we make that commitment until death, just like marriage; you make it until death do you part. So, it's a discipline. The teaching is not a matter of infallible doctrine, but it is a matter of Church law or discipline, that could change. It would only affect, in the future if it were ever to change (which I hope it doesn't), I think it's very important to have celibate priests that are available for the people who can serve God with all their whole heart. It is possible that the Church could then open it up to ordain married men to the priesthood on a common basis. I don't think it'll happen. I think it'll remain the way it is, but it could happen. It is within the realm of possibility, since it is just a matter of discipline.

(A question). It seems that in the early Church, like the Apostles, most of them, as far as we know, were not married. We know that Peter was married, because he had a mother-in-law. It never indicates that his wife was still living at the time. She might have already passed away. We don't know. In the early days, the Church did allow married men to become priests. It was probably about the fourth century when it became that the Church law or discipline changed to only admit non-married men to the priesthood. Over in the Orthodox churches, like Greek Orthodox and Russian Orthodox, they do allow married men into their priesthood. In the Roman Catholic Rite, our Western Rite we can call it, they don't, except in rare cases of somebody converting from a Protestant church.

The last topic is whether or not women can be ordained into the priesthood. Take a look at the article "Why are There No Women Priests?" This is not a matter of discipline. This is what we call a matter of *doctrine*. Doctrines do not change. The Church can never change its teaching about the Trinity, the Resurrection, and the Divinity of Christ. For this now, we move from not a matter of discipline, but to a matter of doctrine.

To summarize the main points of the article, first of all, we should realize that men and women are equal in the eyes of God, that they're perfectly equal in dignity. It says in the Bible, "God made them male and female." They're perfectly equal in dignity, but they have different roles in the Church. Remember, the

priesthood is not something anybody chooses – you have to be chosen by God to be a priest. The short answer, the reason why we don't have women priests, is because Christ himself never chose any women for the priesthood. He had many followers that were women, but He only chose men to be His Apostles, and the first Bishops and priests. The Church believes it doesn't have the authority to change that.

The article then goes on to say that people said, "Times were different back then." But now, that should be changed and this explains all the things Jesus did that were counter-cultural, which was a list of ten or twenty things. So, Jesus had no problem of changing, of going in the face of cultural situations. He didn't have any problem with that. He never chose women to be His priests. Certainly, if He had chosen anybody, He would have chosen His own mother, because she was far holier than any of the Apostles, because Mary was, as you know, immaculately conceived. If anybody was worthy to become a priest, it would have been His own mother, Mary, God's greatest creation. But He didn't choose her for the priesthood.

Realize that the Church is not degrading or downplaying the role of women. In fact, the greatest creation of God is a woman; that's the Blessed Mother. And so, we hold Mary up higher than any man ever created, because Mary was the mother of Jesus. It's not a matter of dignity, because men and women are perfectly equal in dignity, they just have different roles. Just like women can become mothers, whereas men can't. Women become religious sisters and nuns. They become the bride of Christ, whereas men can become priests.

There are some other theological reasons too. The fact that Christ was a man, and the fact that when He says, "This is My body. This is the cup of My blood," when He says those words of consecration, there has to be a similarity between Christ and the priest. Remember that when a priest is ordained, he becomes the living presence of Christ, the living representative of Christ. Since Christ was a man, to say those words at the Consecration, one would also have to be a male.

We talked earlier last week about the seven sacraments. How to have the proper sacraments, for Baptism you need water; for Eucharist you need bread and wine; and for the priesthood you need a baptized male. It has to do that, let's say, if I ran out of bread and wine, I couldn't use Coca-Cola and potato chips. It just wouldn't work. The same thing with Ordination. For it to be a true Ordination, it has to be a baptized man. The Church really upholds the great dignity of women. It says they have different roles. I would recommend that if you can, read over this article. I think that would be very helpful.

I would like to make one last comment, having to do with some of the problems or scandals in the Church in recent years. There are some articles that we gave out. I think they're very good. I'd encourage you to read them. Of course, the newspapers really do publicize any problems within the Church, probably for a

couple of reasons. One is that they hold us to a higher standard, which they should. Anybody who's in religion should be held to a higher standard. When a Bishop or a priest does something wrong, it's even more serious than when a regular person does something wrong. Just like if the President does something wrong, that's a lot worse, because he's in the public arena. Presidents and Vice Presidents have to be held to a higher standard, the same thing as with priests and Bishops. That's why it's even worse when there's sin in the priesthood – it does scandalize the lay people; it can turn a lot of people away from God and away from the Church, because they don't distinguish between God's religion and the human beings, that are still weak and sinful, that make up that religion.

Some of the ways to look at the scandals in the Church is to realize that even among the Twelve Apostles, there was a Judas. Keep that in mind; that one out of twelve that were hand-picked by Christ (which is almost ten percent) betrayed Christ and denied Him. Don't let it shake your Faith. Don't let it turn you away from God or the Church, when there are sinful members within the Church, because the Church is made up of both saints and sinners. We have Mother Teresa's, but we also have some great sinners as well. Realize that if there was a Judas among the Apostles hand-picked by Christ, then it shouldn't turn us away from the Church to realize that there are saints and sinners in the Church.

Less than two percent of all the priests have been guilty of terrible sins, which of course is two percent too many. Out of the 50,000 priests in America, it's still less than two percent. Like I said, two percent, even point zero one percent, is too many. Any kind of sin or abuse that has taken place is completely wrong, and needs to be uprooted. The Church is doing that. You'll read the articles of how they have removed any priest already that's been guilty of any sort of sinful behavior. The Church has done a housecleaning in the last couple of years.

Unfortunately, it took that terrible situation up in Boston to sort of break open this. It certainly was terribly wrong. If a Bishop knew that a priest had a problem, that he kept transferring him to other parishes, and just promoting that problem, that was a terrible thing. I'm sure Cardinal Law did the right thing in stepping down, because he had to step down after he had done that. He had lost all his moral authority by doing that. It was a terrible situation.

Thank God there's been a housecleaning. There's been a cleansing. It's been a purification of the Church, and it'll make the Church much stronger. It might make it smaller, maybe not as many priests, but at least the ones, thank God, that we have, we can make sure that these problems don't happen again. They do very good screenings in the seminaries to make sure that nobody who has problems gets through the seminary.

Those are some of the things to keep in mind. Less than two percent of priests have had these kinds of problems. Like I said, even one case is one case too many. I would just say don't let it get in the way of your coming to Jesus, coming

to the sacraments, coming to the Eucharist. Remember, the Church is made up of great saints and sinners, and you're going to have good doctors and bad doctors, good lawyers and bad lawyers, and good politicians and bad politicians. Even in the clergy, you're going to have the good and the bad. Just because priests are not perfect, they're sinners, just like everybody else, but they are called to a higher standard, and have to be held to a higher standard as well.

(A question). One of the questions is "Would allowing married men eliminate those problems?" According to the statistics, for example, more married men are guilty of child abuse than celibate men. I don't know all the reasons for that. Maybe it's because there are a lot more married men than there are celibate men. It's even among other denominations, married Protestant ministers; there have been cases there. They're not as advertised for some reason; the media just goes after the Catholic Church, maybe, since it's the largest Christian Church, considered the most powerful, whatever that means, because it has one billion members. The media tends to be very anti-Catholic. And so, anything just gets in the papers, whereas among rabbis, or Muslim leaders, it's not as publicly put in the papers for other religious groups. There have been problems in all denominations. You're going to have the good and the bad in every denomination. There has been a housecleaning and cleansing. I don't know if allowing the married men to become priests, how that would affect it.

(A question). The priests don't go to Confession to Bishops. They don't go to Confession to their own Bishop. The Bishops aren't allowed to hear Confessions of their own priests, just for that reason. When a priest goes to Confession, they go to Confession to other priests. I think that one of the big problems was, like with Cardinal Law and others, when they knew that a priest had a problem with, say, child abuse, sent a priest to treatment. Back in those days, they thought that was curable. A doctor might have written, "He's fine. He can be back in a parish," and the Bishop or the Cardinal trusted the opinion. Of course, we know that's not the case anymore, that it's an illness, a disease that just can't be cured as far as we know. You just have to remove that person from any kind of contact with young people or children. If a priest were guilty of that, they would have to go to prison like anybody else.

(A question). We can't call the police and say, "There's a guy leaving the Confessional right now; go arrest him." We're not allowed to do that. We would tell the person that they need to turn themselves in. That is something we could not break – that confidentiality. We're there to absolve the sin, if the person is truly repentant. Of course, he would be forgiven. There are certain conditions. The priest might say, "You have to go turn yourself in." The priest could not call the police.

The priest doesn't have to absolve. There are cases where, if the person is not truly repentant, and is not going to change their ways, the priest could say, "I can't absolve you, if you're not going to change your ways." That's what Jesus

says: "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them. Whose sins you retain are retained," which does mean that the priest does have the authority to say yes or no when it comes to that absolving of sins. I'm sure 99% of the time, the person is sincere, they're repentant, and their sins are forgiven. Sometimes a priest might say, "No, you can't go to Confession," or, "If you're not truly sorry, if you're not going to change your ways, you can't be absolved."

(A question). While a priest was a priest, all of those sacraments were valid. The holiness of the priest does not affect the true validity of those sacraments. Even if the priest were to leave later, all the babies were truly baptized, and all the confessions he heard were truly-heard confessions. The one thing to remember about the sacraments is that they work irrespective of the holiness or the sinfulness of the minister. When somebody baptizes a baby, it's not the holiness of the person; it's the holiness of Christ that cleanses the baby of Original Sin. Even if the priest were to say Mass, even if he wasn't in God's grace, that would still be a true valid Mass. If a priest, later on, leaves the priesthood, and gets married, he would be excommunicating himself from the sacraments. He could not go to the sacraments anymore. He would be living in adultery, like a married person who left his wife and was living with somebody. He'd be living in mortal sin. A priest would be the same way.