

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Holy Orders

Catechist Preparation

Clarifying the Essentials

Jesus Christ, the eternal High Priest, fashions a priestly people for God, his heavenly Father.

- ◆ Ordained bishops and priests serve in the name and Person of Christ, the Head of the Church. (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] 1591.)
- ◆ Christ chose men as his Apostles, and the Apostles, in turn, also chose men as their collaborators in apostolic ministry; thus the Church herself is bound by this choice and does not ordain women. (See CCC 1577.)

Ordination of a bishop, priest, or deacon does not preserve these men from all human weakness, error, or even sin.

- ◆ When a sacrament is celebrated according to the rites of the Church, the power of Christ acts through it, independent of the personal holiness or sinfulness of the presiding minister. (See CCC 1128.)
- ◆ An ordained minister's actions can impact the apostolic fruitfulness of the Church. (See CCC 1550.)

Why Is This Important?

Through the special gift of the Holy Spirit, ordained ministry enables bishops, priests, and deacons to exercise a sacred power in the name and with the authority of Christ for the service of the People of God.

*We bishops, then,
are the servants of the householder,
the stewards of the Master . . .*

SAINT FULGENTIUS

Doctrinal Session Guide

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Have the space set with chairs, and provide a focal point with a candle, Bible, stole, and the consecrated oil, Sacred Chrism. Provide name tags, and have some refreshments available.

Welcome

Greet the participants as they arrive, and take time for introductions as the session begins. Then begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Engage

Invite the group to reflect on the story presented in Insight. Then have them share their response to the story, and explore the For Reflection questions together. If possible, invite a priest or deacon to share the story of their call to Holy Orders, what their ministry involves, and what it means to them to be ordained. Allow some time for questions.

Teach

Summarize or invite the group to read Church Teaching. Then discuss the following:

- ◆ All the baptized participate in the priesthood of Jesus. Baptism is the Sacrament that conveys priesthood to all believers.
- ◆ Men enter into ministerial priesthood through the Sacrament of Holy Orders. This sacrament refers to the three degrees of the sacrament: bishop, priest, and deacon.
- ◆ Those called to Orders serve in the name and Person of Christ, the Head of the Church.

Apply

Encourage the participants to pray in a special way for all the ordained ministers of the Church, who have responded to God's invitation to Holy Orders that they will continue to be good and faithful ministers of the Gospel.

Pray

Lead the group in a spontaneous prayer for all ordained ministers of the Church: bishops, priests, and deacons.