

Holy Orders and Matrimony

**“Let us love one another,
because love is of God.”**

(1 John 4:7)

+ Leader: Jesus said, “I am among you as the one who serves” (Luke 22:27). Jesus calls all people to love and serve one another. Let us pray for all who follow this call.

Reader 1: For our Holy Father, Pope (name the pope), that he may find joy and support as he leads the Church in the way of Christ, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 2: For our bishop, (name the bishop), and all priests and deacons, that they may lead, teach, and serve us with the help of the Holy Spirit, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 3: For those in vowed religious life and for all those who follow Christ in the single life, that they may live in faithful

and joyful witness to the love of Christ, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 4: For those serving the Lord as married people, that they may love and care for their families, their communities, the Church, and the world through their mutual commitment to God and each other, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 5: For all of us, that we may discover how best to follow Jesus and serve others by using our gifts and talents, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: We ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ, the one who serves.

All: Amen.



The BiG Question:

What does God call me to do with my life?



Discover the person you will become. What do you think your life will be like when you are twenty-five years old?

Name:

Age:

All
about
my life



In what ways, if any, does your future self reflect the person you are right now?

In this chapter

we learn about the Sacraments at the Service of Communion: Matrimony and Holy Orders. Through this chapter, we hope



to understand that those who receive Matrimony and Holy Orders are called to love and serve Christ and the Church in a particular way



to respect the sacredness of the sacramental commitments involved in marriage and ordained ministry



to serve others as God calls us, right here, right now.

God calls people to serve him in various ways. Below, a man and a woman preparing to serve God in married life and a man preparing to serve God in ordained ministry share answers to some questions you might have about these sacramental commitments.



Interview with a man and a woman preparing for marriage

1. Have you always felt called to be married?

Yes. Not everyone's experience is the same, but, for us personally, growing up in large, supportive families gave us the hope of one

day meeting the right person, getting married, starting a family, and sharing God's love with each other.

2. How did you meet each other? What helped you to discern your call to marriage? We met when a mutual friend arranged a blind date between us. What helped us to discern our call was probably our great love for each other. We felt the need to spend the rest of our lives together.

3. Matrimony is one of the Sacraments at the Service of Communion. In what ways do you expect service to be a part of your marriage commitment? We expect service to have an important role in our marriage. Together we'll be there for our family and friends, and we'll take care of each other and help each other with our everyday needs. And, since we hope to start a family, we expect to take care of the children we hope to have.

4. What do you think the greatest challenge of married life will be? What do you think the greatest gift of married life will be? It will be a challenge to get accustomed to each other's daily habits and routines. The greatest gift of our marriage, we hope, will be one day seeing what a beautiful life and family we have.

5. What qualities do you think are important for married people to have? Faith in God, trust, respect, loyalty, motivation, and compassion. We'll need to constantly remind ourselves of the importance of these qualities, which can help to keep a great marriage going.

6. Overall, what experiences do you think your future as a married couple will hold? We think our future will hold lots of love. We look forward to supporting each other in our daily lives and, hopefully, having a family of our own.

Interview with a man preparing for the priesthood



1. Have you always felt called to the priesthood? No. As a young person I was not sure in what direction God would lead me.

2. What helped you to discern your call to the priesthood? During college, I was inspired by a pastor at a parish off campus. He was what I thought a priest should be, kind and able to help others to be the best they can be. I began to volunteer in the parish, and, through serving others, I felt called to the priesthood. It was a gradual process.

3. Holy Orders is one of the Sacraments at the Service of Communion. In what ways do you expect service to be a part of your life as a priest? I want to be a true pastor. I am looking forward to serving God and the people of my future parish.

4. What do you think the greatest challenge of the priesthood will be? What do you think the greatest gift of the priesthood will be? I think the greatest challenge will be scheduling my time so that I can be available to as many people as possible. The greatest gift will be sharing Christ with others in the sacraments and through my service.

5. What qualities do you think are important for priests to have? The ability to listen is one quality a priest must have. A priest must also be compassionate and an example to the parish community of trying to live as Jesus did.

6. Overall, what experiences do you think your future as a priest will hold? I hope my future will hold many experiences of serving the Church by being a true shepherd to my parish.

Activity What new insights do these interviews give you about Matrimony and Holy Orders? Share your ideas.

"Whatever you are, be a good one" is a quotation widely attributed to the sixteenth U.S. president, Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865).

Matrimony is a Sacrament at the Service of Communion.

Through the Sacraments of Christian Initiation we become disciples of Christ and members of the Catholic Church. We are all called to holiness. We are called to share God's love and spread God's Kingdom in this life, preparing for eternal life and the fulfillment of the Kingdom. Yet there are two sacraments, Holy Orders and Matrimony, in which Church members are called to a specific mission of service to others. Thus, Holy Orders and Matrimony are called the Sacraments at the Service of Communion.

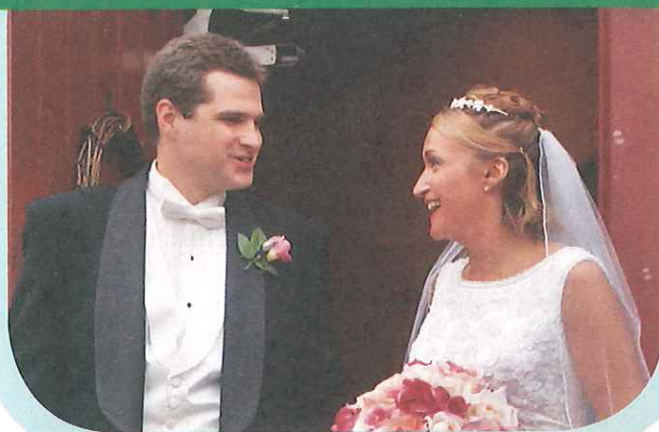
Through the Sacrament of Matrimony, a baptized man and woman enter a lifelong commitment to live as faithful and loving partners. They also promise to lovingly accept children as a gift from God. Being made in God's image, men and women share the same human dignity, and God gives them a part in his plan for continuing the human family. In the Old Testament we read that God blesses the love of man and woman for one another, saying, "Be fertile and multiply" (Genesis 1:28). He tells them that "a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body" (Genesis 2:24).

So, from the beginning, God called men and women to commit to one another in a life-giving love, one that imitates God's covenant of faithfulness and commitment to them. Their love is a sign of God's love for all his people. And their marriage covenant is modeled on Christ's love for the Church, sometimes called the Bride of Christ. Christ's love for the Church is permanent and unconditional. Thus, a married couple's love for each other is also to be permanent and unconditional.

The married couple becomes one in their service for others. The love that they share for God and for each other is shown in the fruits of their lives together—openness to others, lifelong sacrifice, and

charity, or love, which is a gift from God that enables us to love him and to love our neighbor. The married couple's expression of their love includes

Faith Word
charity



the procreation of new life and the moral and spiritual education of their children. "In this sense the fundamental task of marriage and family is to be at the service of life." (CCC, 1653)

Activity Did you realize that Matrimony is a sacrament of service to Christ and the Church? Explain your answer.



The Rite of Marriage

The celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony, or the Rite of Marriage, often takes place within the Mass. The Scripture readings proclaimed during the Liturgy of the Word may be selected in advance by the couple themselves. After the reading of the Gospel, the Rite of Marriage begins as the deacon or priest asks the couple three important questions: Are they free to give themselves in marriage? Will they love and honor each other for the rest of their lives? Will they lovingly accept children from God and raise them in the faith? After answering these questions, the bride and groom exchange vows of love and *fidelity*, or faithfulness.

The deacon or priest asks God to strengthen their union. The rings are then blessed, and the couple exchanges them as a sign of their love and fidelity. The whole assembly prays the Prayer of the Faithful, and, if Mass is being celebrated, the Liturgy of the Eucharist follows. After the Lord's Prayer, the priest faces the couple and prays a special prayer, the Nuptial Blessing, which asks for God's blessing upon the marriage. As a sign of their union with Jesus, the source of their love, the bride and the groom, if they are Catholic, each receive Holy Communion.

What can you do in your life now to show your union with Jesus?

In Matrimony, couples receive grace for lifelong love and service.

Throughout his public ministry, Jesus' words and actions upheld the importance and the sanctity of marriage. He said, "What God has joined together, no human being must separate" (Matthew 19:6). And in John's Gospel we find that Jesus even performed the first miracle of his public ministry at a wedding feast. In doing so, he confirmed the goodness of marriage, upheld it as a covenant not to be broken, and forever established it as a sacrament.

In all the other sacraments, Jesus offers God's grace through an ordained minister who celebrates the sacrament. But in the Sacrament of Matrimony, the bride and groom confer the sacrament on each other, and Jesus acts through them and through their promise to always love and be true to each other. The priest or deacon, however, is the official witness of the sacrament on behalf of the Church. He blesses the union of the man and woman whom God has joined together. The whole Church celebrates that Jesus' love is made present through the love of this newly married couple and that their love is blessed and strengthened by the grace of this sacrament.

Being human, all married couples can encounter difficulties in their relationship. Yet, as the *Catechism*, quoting the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, states, "Christian spouses are fortified and, as it were, consecrated for the duties and dignity of their state by a special sacrament" (1535). In the Sacrament of Matrimony, Jesus Christ remains with the couple in their lives

as they live and work. He shares his love with them so that they can love and forgive each other. And he supports and strengthens them to live as loyal and trustworthy partners. The grace that they receive through this sacrament strengthens them, helping them to overcome their difficulties.

Through all of life's problems and challenges, God continues to offer the couple his healing if they call upon him. They can also turn to their family and parish community for prayer and support. And they should frequently celebrate the Sacraments of Eucharist and Penance, asking for the help of

the Holy Spirit in making decisions that both honor and protect their marriage and their families, and strengthen them to remain loyal to their marriage promises and to each other.

"The fundamental task of marriage and family is to be at the service of life."

(CCC, 1653)

When married couples share the goodness of their love with others, their own love for each other and for Christ grows. They are strengthened to serve God and the Church—the People of God. Not only as faithful Christians, but also as faithful spouses, they are to share the Good News of Christ and give witness to their faith. Living by the vows that they make in the Sacrament of Matrimony, couples can do this every day. At home, at work, and in their local community, couples can live out their fidelity to God and each other. With God's help, they can live out the commitment that they made in this sacrament of service.

Activity Think of one married couple you know of who, with God's help, shares the Good News of Christ and gives witness to their faith. How do they do this?



Jesus called his Apostles to continue his work.

In what ways do you share the work of Jesus?

Throughout his public ministry, Jesus Christ taught his followers that they too could share in God's love and spread God's Kingdom. And many people followed Jesus as disciples. Once Jesus went to a mountain where he spent all night praying to his Father. "When day came, he called his disciples to himself, and from them he chose Twelve, whom he also named apostles." (Luke 6:13) Jesus shared his ministry with the Twelve Apostles in a special way, speaking to them about God his Father, teaching them about the Kingdom of God, and showing them ways to bring God's love to all people. He then sent the Apostles out to "proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal [the sick]" (Luke 9:2).

After his Death and Resurrection, the Risen Christ returned to his Apostles and gave them the authority to continue his work. He commissioned them, saying, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit" (John 20:21-22). Through these words and actions Jesus entrusted the Apostles with his own work. They would minister to his community, lead them in worship, and baptize, heal, and forgive in his name. And the Holy Spirit guided them to continue this mission, inviting people to share in God's Kingdom.

Everywhere they went, the Apostles gathered believers into local Church communities. With the help of each local Church, they chose leaders and ministers for the community. The Apostles laid hands on those chosen and commissioned them. In this way the Apostles handed on what Christ had given them: the Gift of the Holy Spirit and the authority to carry out the mission of Jesus Christ.

These local leaders served their communities in various ways. They were responsible for the worship within the community, assisted in caring for those who were sick or in need, and led the community by preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ and sharing the teachings of the Apostles. These leaders, eventually known as bishops, continued the Apostles' work in their local communities and acted on behalf

of the Apostles. Other local leaders who worked with the bishops became known as *presbyters*, or priests. And those who assisted in the worship and service of the community were called deacons.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, the bishops, the successors of the Apostles, also shared Jesus' authority by commissioning others to continue the ministry of the Apostles. This was done by the laying on of hands and by a special prayer to the Holy Spirit. The Church still does this today in the Sacrament of Holy Orders. In this sacrament, through the laying on of hands and the Prayer of Consecration, those receiving Holy Orders are "*consecrated* in Christ's name 'to feed the Church by the word and the grace of God'" (CCC, 1535). So, the leadership of the Church throughout history can be traced back to the Apostles, and thus to Jesus Christ!

Activity How do bishops, priests, and deacons work together to continue the ministry of the Apostles? How can you help to support their ministries?



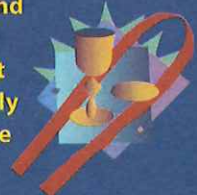
Signs of service

At ordination:

Deacons receive a stole, which is to be worn across the left shoulder and fastened at the right, a sign of ministry, and the Book of the Gospels, a sign of preaching the Good News.



Priests have their stoles placed around the neck and down over the chest, and have their palms anointed so that they can make the People of God holy through the sacraments. They receive a chalice and a paten, signs that they may celebrate the Eucharist to offer the sacrifice of the Lord.



Bishops' heads are anointed, and they receive a miter, or pointed hat, a sign of the office of bishop; a ring, a sign of faithfulness to Christ and the Church; and a pastoral staff, a sign of a bishop's role as shepherd of Christ's flock.



Look for these signs of service at Mass or the other sacraments.

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Those called to Holy Orders are consecrated to the service of others.

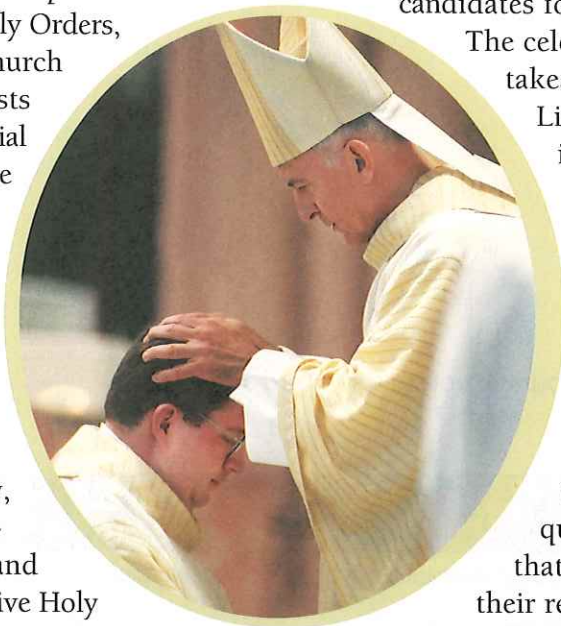
Through Baptism and Confirmation we are consecrated to the common priesthood of the faithful.

Yet there is a distinct *ministerial priesthood*.

Through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, men who are called by the Church are ordained: Ordained priests and bishops form the ministerial priesthood, and men who are ordained as deacons become part of the ministry of service to the Church.

Baptized men who have been accepted as candidates for Holy Orders spend several years at a seminary, a place where they pray, study, and prepare for their particular ministry. As in Baptism and Confirmation, those who receive Holy Orders are forever sealed with a sacramental character. This configures them to Christ and marks them as forever in the service of Christ and the Church. Thus, the Sacrament of Holy Orders cannot be repeated.

Through Holy Orders, a **deacon** shares in Christ's mission by assisting bishops and priests in the service of the Church. Some men, single or married, become permanent deacons, remaining deacons for life. Other men remain unmarried and become deacons as a step toward the priesthood. Having been ordained into the *diaconate* as deacons, they continue on to be ordained into the *presbyterate*, becoming priests. A **priest** is ordained to preach the Gospel and serve the faithful, especially celebrating the Eucharist and the other sacraments. A priest who becomes a bishop is ordained into the *episcopate*. To become a bishop, a priest must be chosen for episcopal consecration by the pope, with the advice of other bishops and Church members. A **bishop** receives the fullness of the Sacrament of Holy Orders and continues the Apostles' mission of leadership and service.



In the Sacrament of Holy Orders men are "consecrated in Christ's name"
(CCC, 1535).

Thus, in the sacramental act called ordination, bishops, priests, and deacons receive one or more of the three degrees of orders: *episcopate*, *presbyterate*, and *diaconate*. A bishop always ordains a newly chosen bishop, or bishop-elect, as well as candidates for the priesthood and diaconate.

The celebration of Holy Orders always takes place during the Mass. The

Liturgy of the Word includes readings about ministry and service.

After the Gospel is read, those to be ordained are presented to the bishop celebrant. He speaks to the people about the roles these men will have in the Church, about their responsibilities to teach, to lead, and to worship. He also speaks directly to those being ordained, questioning them to make sure that they understand and accept their responsibilities to lead and serve in Jesus' name.

The bishop celebrant invites the whole assembly to pray that God will bless those to be ordained. Then, in complete silence, he lays his hands over the head of those to be ordained.

At the ordination of a priest, other priests present also lay their hands upon the candidate as a sign of their unity and service to the diocese. At the ordination of a bishop-elect, other bishops present lay their hands upon him as a sign of their unity in service to the Church. Then the bishop celebrant prays the Prayer of Consecration, which is different for each of the degrees of orders, and extends his hands over each man. By the power of the Holy Spirit, each man is ordained to continue Jesus' ministry in a particular service in the Church.

Faith Words

deacon
priest
bishop

Activity In many parishes in your diocese there are permanent deacons. Find out what they do in their ministry of service.

RESPONDING...

Recognizing Our Faith

Recall the question at the beginning of this chapter: *What does God call me to do with my life?* Name three things in this chapter that you learned about Matrimony and Holy Orders.

1.

2.

3.

Would these things encourage you to serve God and others through one of these sacraments?

Living Our Faith

Become more aware and appreciative of clergy and married couples who are truly living lives of service to the Church.

Pope Francis

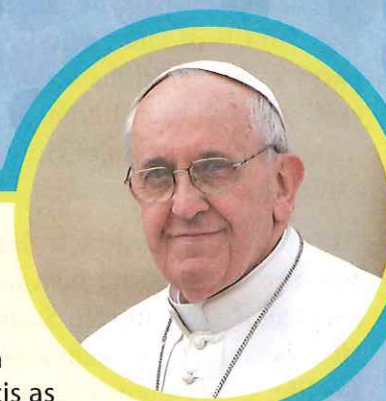
At 7:06 p.m. on March 13, 2013, bells rang out at St. Peter's Basilica. A new pope had been elected! Jorge Mario Bergoglio, a cardinal from Argentina, was the new pope. He chose Francis as his papal name, after Saint Francis of Assisi. Like his namesake, Pope Francis believes that a humble lifestyle helps us to follow Christ's example of love and mercy.

Partners in FAITH

Pope Francis has focused attention on the needs of the poor. He has also worked to strengthen the faith of Catholics. In July 2013 he traveled to Brazil to celebrate World Youth Day, an event attended by millions. Other international visits include trips to Israel, Jordan, and Palestine; the Philippines; and a September 2015 visit to the United States.

Pope Francis reminds us that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ, called to care for one another. This message can be summed up in his call to young people at World Youth Day in 2013: "Go, do not be afraid, and serve."

How can you respond to this call?



Visit religion.sadlierconnect.com.

Putting Faith to Work

Talk about what you have learned in this chapter:



We understand that those who receive Matrimony and Holy Orders are called to love and serve Christ and the Church in a particular way.



We respect the sacredness of the sacramental commitments involved in marriage and ordained ministry.

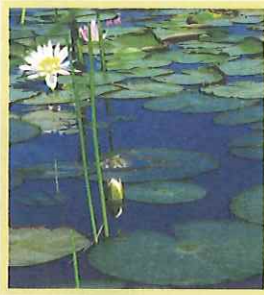


We serve others as God calls us, right here, right now.

Decide on ways to live out what you have learned.



ENCOUNTERING GOD'S WORD



“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another. . . . And over all these put on love.”

(Colossians 3:12–14)



READ the quotation from Scripture.



REFLECT on the following:

In these words from Saint Paul, compassion, kindness, humility, and other qualities are written about as things we can “put on” as we do clothing. And, we are told, over all of these, we must put on love. How does this quotation help you to understand your call to love God and others?



SHARE your reflections with a partner.



DECIDE to share this love that Saint Paul talks about with all those in your life.

Underline the correct answer.

- Through the Sacrament of (**Christian Initiation/Matrimony/Holy Orders**) a baptized man and woman enter a lifelong commitment to live as faithful and loving partners.
- A (**bishop/priest/deacon**) receives the fullness of the Sacrament of Holy Orders and continues the Apostles’ mission of leadership and service.
- Through Holy Orders, a (**man and woman preparing for marriage/presbyter/deacon**) shares in Christ’s mission by assisting bishops and priests in the service of the Church.
- A (**bishop/priest/deacon**) is consecrated to preach the Gospel and serve the faithful, especially through the Eucharist and other sacraments.

Complete the following.

- In the Sacrament of Matrimony the _____ and _____ confer the sacrament on each other.
- During the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, in the sacramental act called _____, bishops, priests, and deacons receive one or more of the three degrees of orders.
- The three degrees of orders in the Sacrament of Holy Orders are _____, _____, and _____.
- The marriage covenant is modeled on Christ’s love for the _____, the Bride of Christ.

9–10. ESSAY: Why are Holy Orders and Matrimony called the Sacraments at the Service of Communion?

Sharing Faith with Your Family

Discuss the following with your family:

- Matrimony is a Sacrament at the Service of Communion.
- In Matrimony, a man and a woman receive grace for lifelong love and service.
- Jesus called his Apostles to continue his work.
- Those called to Holy Orders are consecrated to the service of others.

Everyone is called to love and service. Together make a checklist of ways that each person or group of persons in a family can love and serve in a parish, in a diocese, and in the Church. Live out your love and service this week.



The Worship Connection

At Mass this week, notice the actions of the priest and deacon in the liturgy. Think about what each of their responsibilities and functions are in helping the community with prayer and worship.

More to Explore

Explore the Internet for Catholic missions that include as missionaries both priests and married couples.

Catholic Social Teaching ☒ Checklist

Theme of Catholic Social Teaching:

Solidarity of the Human Family

How it relates to Chapter 18: Just as married couples love, serve, and nurture their families, all Catholics are called to love, serve, and build up the *human family*—all people throughout the world from all racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds, who share our human dignity.

How can you do this?

☐ At home:

☐ At school/work:

☐ In the parish:

☐ In the community:

Check off each action after it has been completed.