

1. What is the sacrament of Holy Orders?

“Holy Orders is a Sacrament by which bishops, priests, and other ministers of the Church are ordained and receive the power and grace to perform their sacred duties.” (BC). Holy Orders is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time: thus it is the sacrament of apostolic ministry.

2. Canon Law and Sacrament of Holy Orders

By divine institution, some among Christ's faithful are, through the sacrament of Order, marked with an indelible character, and are thus constituted sacred ministers. . . . They are thereby consecrated and deputed so that each according to his own grade, they fulfill, in the person of Christ the Head, the offices of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling, and so they nourish the people of God. (Canon 1008).

3. Why is this sacrament called "ORDERS"?

The word *order* in Roman antiquity designated an established civil body, especially a governing body. *Ordinatio* means incorporation into an *ordo*. In the Church there are established bodies which Tradition, not without a basis in Sacred Scripture,⁴ has since ancient times called *taxeis* (Greek) or *ordines*. And so the liturgy speaks of the *ordo episcoporum*, the *ordo presbyterorum*, the *ordo diaconorum*.

Today the word "*ordination*" is reserved for the sacramental act which integrates a man into the order of bishops, presbyters, or deacons, and goes beyond a simple *election, designation, delegation, or institution* by the community, for it confers a gift of the Holy Spirit that permits the exercise of a "sacred power" which can come only from Christ himself through his Church. Ordination is also called *consecratio*, for it is a setting apart and an investiture by Christ himself for his Church.

Major and Minor Orders

The major orders were the episcopate, priesthood, diaconate, and sub-diaconate. The minor orders were acolyte, porter, lector, and exorcist. Since the subdiaconate was not a sacrament, Paul VI suppressed the subdiaconate in the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church.

4. Degrees of Priesthood

There are three degrees: (1) Episcopate, (2) Presbyterate and (3) Diaconate.

The episcopacy and the presbyterate are the two degrees of ministerial participation in the priesthood of Christ. The diaconate is intended to help and serve them. For this reason the term *sacerdos* in current usage denotes bishops and priests but

not deacons. Yet Catholic doctrine teaches that the degrees of priestly participation (episcopate and presbyterate) and the degree of service (diaconate) are all three conferred by a sacramental act called "ordination," that is, by the sacrament of Holy Orders (CCC 1554). Originally "episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate" referred to secular offices in Greek society. *Episcopos* means "overseer" or "leader"; *presbyter* means "elder" or "adviser"; and *diaconos* means "minister" (as in civil government today we might speak of the minister of finance or the minister of education.)

Episcopate

The episcopate is the **highest form of the sacrament of Orders**. Thus the **Council of Trent defined that bishops are superior to priests**.

This pre-eminence of the bishops refers both to their exercise of authority and to their power of consecration. But their authority depends on their own consecration. Thus **only bishops have the power of ordaining bishops, priests, or deacons**. The common teaching is that the difference between bishops and priests (presbyters) existed from the beginning of the Church through a direct institution by Christ.

"No bishop is permitted to consecrate anyone as bishop unless it is first established that a pontifical mandate has been issued" (Canon 1013). This means that a priest may not be consecrated a bishop unless it is clearly proved that the one to be consecrated has been officially approved by the Holy See for episcopal consecration.

As understood by Christ, the divine mission which He first entrusted to the apostles was to last until the end of time. That is why the apostles were careful to appoint successors in this hierarchical society.

By the laying on of hands these men were ordained to the episcopate so that by the year 100 A. D., there were over one hundred dioceses in existence around the Mediterranean world.

In every case, the ordination to the episcopate began with the apostles ordained by Christ at the Last Supper, so that the episcopal succession of bishops can be literally called the apostolic succession. Every validly ordained bishop in the world today can trace his ordination historically to that first ordination on Holy Thursday night.

What needs to be emphasized is that the power of Episcopal orders is also the foundation of Episcopal authority. The Second Vatican Council could not be clearer:

That divine mission, which was committed by Christ to the apostles, is destined to last until the end of the world (Matthew 28:20), since the gospel which they are charged to hand on, is for the Church, the principle of all its life until the end of time. For that very reason,

the apostles were careful to appoint successors in this hierarchically constituted society... They accordingly designated such men and made the ruling that likewise on their death other proven men should take over their ministry... Thus according to the testimony of St. Irenaeus, the apostolic tradition is manifested and preserved in the whole world by those who were made bishops by the apostles and by their successors down to our own time (Constitution on the Church, III, 20).

The apostolic succession of the bishops is reflected in the prayer of consecration by which priests are ordained to the episcopate. The ordaining prelate, after laying hands on the one to be made bishop, prays: "Now pour out upon this chosen one that power which flows from you, that perfect Spirit which He gave to the apostles, who established the Church in every place as the sanctuary where your name would always be praised and glorified."

In virtue of their ordination, bishops receive the fullness of the sacrament of Order. Only they can confer this sacrament on others. But, as we have seen, their power to teach and rule the People of God depends on their approval by the Bishop of Rome.

Priesthood

In the new Testament, only bishops and priests possess priestly powers. In the Church's language, bishops have the fullness of the priesthood, "the highest priest of the first order." Presbyters (priests) are "simple priests of the second order."

Challenged on the priesthood, the Catholic Church has more than once defended her teaching as revealed by God and therefore the irreversible truth. The most explicit doctrine was taught **by the Council of Trent.**

1. There is a visible and external priesthood in the New Testament. It consists in the power of consecrating and offering the Body and Blood of the Lord, and of remitting and of retaining sins. The priesthood, therefore, is not only an office and simple ministry of preaching.

2. Orders, or holy ordination, is truly and properly a sacrament instituted by Christ our Lord.

3. There is a divinely instituted hierarchy consisting of bishops, priests, and ministers.

4. Bishops are superior to priests and have power to confirm and ordain. The power they have is not common to both them and to priests. Moreover, the orders conferred by them do not depend on the call or consent of the people, nor of the secular power (Council of Trent, July 15, 1563).

Building on these principles of doctrine, the Second Vatican Council stressed the need for priests to cooperate with the bishops. **Together with their bishop, priests form a unique priestly community, although dedicated to a variety of different duties. In each local assembly of the faithful, priests may be said to represent the bishop with whom they are to be associated in all trust and generosity (Constitution of the Church, III, 28).**

Diaconate

The name *deacon* means "servant" or "minister" and it is used in this sense in the Scriptures. Yet the constant tradition of the Catholic church recognizes the office of deacon as a divine institution. The narrative of the martyrdom of St. Stephen (Acts 6:1-6) describes the first beginnings of this office.

Among the duties of deacons in the first centuries of the Church, the following stand out. They were stewards of the Church's funds, and of the alms collected for widows and orphans; they were to help with the care of the poor and the aged; their special duty was to read the gospel; they would also preach to the people; they were especially to bring the Holy Eucharist to the sick in their homes; confer the sacrament of Baptism, and assist the bishop or priest in the celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy.

The exercise of the diaconate enabled those who were to become priests to prepare themselves for their priestly life. But as time went on, there was a gradual decrease in the number of those who wished to remain deacons all their lives, without going on to the priesthood. As a result, the permanent diaconate almost entirely disappeared in the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church.

The Council of Trent proposed the idea of restoring the **permanent diaconate**. **(Explain)** Gradually this idea matured, and the Second Vatican Council officially supported the desire of those bishops who wanted permanent deacons to be ordained "where such would lead to the good of souls."

One provision of the Code of Canon Law recognizes that married men may become permanent deacons: "A candidate for the permanent diaconate who is not married may be admitted to the diaconate only when he has completed at least his twenty-fifth year. If he is married, not until he has completed at least his thirty-fifth year, and then with the consent of his wife" (Canon 1031, 2). According to the Church's tradition, a married deacon who has lost his wife cannot enter a new marriage (Pope Paul VI, *Norms for the Order of Diaconate*, 6).

However, "A candidate for the permanent diaconate who is not married, and likewise a candidate for the priesthood, is not to be admitted to the order of diaconate unless he has, in

the prescribed rite, publicly before God and the Church undertaken the obligation of celibacy, or unless he has taken perpetual vows in a religious institute." (Canon 1037).

Second Vatican Council

In its *Constitution on the Liturgy*, the Second Vatican Council pointed out that, "the liturgy is made up of unchangeable elements divinely instituted and of elements subject to changes." (21). One result was that the centuries-old distinction was dropped between major and minor orders. The major orders were the episcopate, priesthood, diaconate, and sub-diaconate. The minor orders were acolyte, porter, lector, and exorcist.

Two of the minor orders, acolyte and lector, became simple ministries. Only men can assume these ministries. According to Canon Law, "Lay men whose age and talents meet the requirements prescribed by decree of the Episcopal Conference, can be given the stable ministry of lector and of acolyte through the prescribed liturgical rite." (Canon 230).

Among the duties of the acolyte are:

1. To assist the deacon and to minister to the priest in the liturgy, especially at Mass.
2. To distribute Holy Communion as an extraordinary minister, whenever priests or deacons are unable to do so or the number of communicants is so large that the Holy sacrifice would be unduly prolonged.
3. To expose the Blessed Sacrament for the veneration of the faithful, but not to give Benediction.
4. To instruct the faithful in their role at liturgical functions.

Correspondingly, among the duties of the ministry of lector are:

1. To read the Scriptures at liturgical functions, but not the gospel.
2. To announce the intentions of the Prayer of the Faithful at Mass.
3. To direct the singing and participation of the faithful.
4. To instruct the faithful in the worthy reception of the sacraments (Pope Paul VI, *Certain Ministries*, August 15, 1972).

The minor order of "porter" had long become symbolic. Originally the porter not only took care of the church doors, but carried out the functions of the sexton or sacristan of a church. The modern custodian has replaced both porter and sexton.

So, too, the former minor order of "exorcist" has been absorbed in the priesthood. Exorcism is now classified among the sacramentals and covered by the Church's canon law.

No one may lawfully exorcise the possessed without the special and express permission of the local Ordinary... This permission is to be granted by the local Ordinary only to a priest endowed with piety, prudence, and integrity of life (Canon 1172).

5. Biblical basis:

4.1 The priesthood of the Old Covenant:

Although the Chosen People of God was called “*a kingdom of priests and a holy nation*” (*Ex 19:6*; cf. *Isa 61:6*), God chose one of the twelve tribes, that of Levi, and set it apart for liturgical service. Their duty was “*to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.*” (*Heb 5:1*; cf. *Ex 29:1-30*; *Lev 8*). Old Testament priesthood was instituted to proclaim the Word of God and to restore communion with God by sacrifices and prayer. (CCC 1540). It was a prefiguring of the ordained ministry of the New Covenant. Everything that the priesthood of the Old Covenant prefigured finds its fulfillment in Christ Jesus, the “*one mediator between God and men.*” The Christian tradition considers Melchizedek, “*priest of God Most High,*” as a pre-figuration of the priesthood of Christ, the unique “*high priest after the order of Melchizedek*”; “*holy, blameless, unstained,*” “*by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified,*” that is, by the unique sacrifice of the cross. (CCC 1544).

5.2 The priesthood in the New Testament:

Jesus Christ is the only priest in the New Testament. As the High Priest Jesus offered a redemptive sacrifice on Calvary for the atonement of our sins and for the salvation of the world. Christ’s sacrifice is made present on the altars through the ministerial priesthood without diminishing the uniqueness of Christ's priesthood: “*Only Christ is the true priest, the others being only his ministers.*” (CCC 1545). The New Testament speaks about the ordination of priests. In “Mark 3:13-19” Jesus “*calls*” and “*appoints*” the 12 apostles. Acts 6:6; 1 Tim 4:14; 5:22; 2 Tim 1:6 describe “*laying on of hands*” as the “*ordaining*” or commissioning rite of local Christian leaders. Jesus did select some disciples and make them apostles, giving them a special mission in relation to the rest of the community. This apostolic ministry continues in the Church till today right from St. Peter. “*Holy Orders is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles continues to be exercised in the Church.*”

6. Difference between Ministerial and Common Priesthood

The ministerial or hierarchical priesthood of bishops and priests, and the common priesthood of all the faithful differ essentially. **The ministerial priesthood is a *means* by which Christ unceasingly builds up and leads his Church. Through the ordained**

ministry, especially that of bishops and priests, the presence of Christ as head of the Church is made visible in the midst of the community of believers while the common priesthood of the faithful is exercised by the unfolding of baptismal grace --a life of faith, hope, and charity, a life according to the Spirit. Through the ordained ministry, especially that of bishops and priests, the presence of Christ as head of the Church is made visible in the midst of the community of believers. The ministerial priesthood has the task not only of representing Christ - Head of the Church - before the assembly of the faithful, but also of acting in the name of the whole Church when presenting to God the prayer of the Church, and above all when offering the Eucharistic sacrifice(CCC 1552).

7. WHO CAN CONFER THIS SACRAMENT?

1575 Christ himself chose the apostles and gave them a share in his mission and authority. Raised to the Father's right hand, he has not forsaken his flock but he keeps it under his constant protection through the apostles, and guides it still through these same pastors who continue his work today.⁶¹ Thus, it is Christ whose gift it is that some be apostles, others pastors. He continues to act through the bishops.⁶²

1576 Since the sacrament of Holy Orders is the sacrament of the apostolic ministry, it is for the bishops as the successors of the apostles to hand on the "gift of the Spirit,"⁶³ the "apostolic line."⁶⁴ Validly ordained bishops, i.e., those who are in the line of apostolic succession, validly confer the three degrees of the sacrament of Holy Orders.⁶⁵

8. WHO CAN RECEIVE THIS SACRAMENT?

1577 "Only a baptized man (*vir*) validly receives sacred ordination."⁶⁶ The Lord Jesus chose men (*vir*) to form the college of the twelve apostles, and the apostles did the same when they chose collaborators to succeed them in their ministry.⁶⁷ The college of bishops, with whom the priests are united in the priesthood, makes the college of the twelve an ever-present and ever-active reality until Christ's return. The Church recognizes herself to be bound by this choice made by the Lord himself. For this reason the ordination of women is not possible.⁶⁸

1578 No one has a *right* to receive the sacrament of Holy Orders. Indeed no one claims this office for himself; he is called to it by God.⁶⁹ Anyone who thinks he recognizes the signs of God's call to the ordained ministry must humbly submit his desire to the authority of the Church, who has the responsibility and right to call

someone to receive orders. Like every grace this sacrament can be *received* only as an unmerited gift.

1579 All the ordained ministers of the Latin Church, with the exception of permanent deacons, are normally chosen from among men of faith who live a celibate life and who intend to remain *celibate* "for the sake of the kingdom of heaven."⁷⁰ Called to consecrate themselves with undivided heart to the Lord and to "the affairs of the Lord,"⁷¹ they give themselves entirely to God and to men. Celibacy is a sign of this new life to the service of which the Church's minister is consecrated; accepted with joyous heart celibacy radiantly proclaims the Reign of God.⁷²

9. THE EFFECTS OF THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS

The indelible character

1581 This sacrament configures the recipient to Christ by a special grace of the Holy Spirit, so that he may serve as Christ's instrument for his Church. By ordination one is enabled to act as a representative of Christ, Head of the Church, in his triple office of priest, prophet, and king.

1582 As in the case of Baptism and Confirmation this share in Christ's office is granted once for all. The sacrament of Holy Orders, like the other two, confers an *indelible spiritual character* and cannot be repeated or conferred temporarily.⁷⁴

1583 It is true that someone validly ordained can, for grave reasons, be discharged from the obligations and functions linked to ordination, or can be forbidden to exercise them; but he cannot become a layman again in the strict sense,⁷⁵ because the character imprinted by ordination is forever. The vocation and mission received on the day of his ordination mark him permanently.

1584 Since it is ultimately Christ who acts and effects salvation through the ordained minister, the unworthiness of the latter does not prevent Christ from acting.⁷⁶ St. Augustine states this forcefully:

As for the proud minister, he is to be ranked with the devil. Christ's gift is not thereby profaned: what flows through him keeps its purity, and what passes through him remains dear and reaches the fertile earth. . . . The spiritual power of the sacrament is indeed comparable to light: those to be enlightened receive it in its purity, and if it should pass through defiled beings, it is not itself defiled.⁷⁷

10. The grace of the Holy Spirit

1585 The grace of the Holy Spirit proper to this sacrament is configuration to Christ as Priest, Teacher, and Pastor, of whom the ordained is made a minister.

1588 With regard to deacons, "strengthened by sacramental grace they are dedicated to the People of God, in conjunction with the bishop and his body of priests, in the service (*diakonia*) of the liturgy, of the Gospel, and of works of charity."⁸¹

11. THE CELEBRATION OF THIS SACRAMENT

1572 Given the importance that the ordination of a bishop, a priest, or a deacon has for the life of the particular Church, its celebration calls for as many of the faithful as possible to take part. It should take place preferably on Sunday, in the cathedral, with solemnity appropriate to the occasion. All three ordinations, of the bishop, of the priest, and of the deacon, follow the same movement. Their proper place is within the Eucharistic liturgy.

1573 The *essential rite* of the sacrament of Holy Orders for all three degrees consists in the bishop's imposition of hands on the head of the ordinand and in the bishop's specific consecratory prayer asking God for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and his gifts proper to the ministry to which the candidate is being ordained.⁶⁰

1574 As in all the sacraments additional rites surround the celebration. Varying greatly among the different liturgical traditions, these rites have in common the expression of the multiple aspects of sacramental grace. Thus in the Latin Church, the initial rites - presentation and election of the ordinand, instruction by the bishop, examination of the candidate, litany of the saints - attest that the choice of the candidate is made in keeping with the practice of the Church and prepare for the solemn act of consecration, after which several rites symbolically express and complete the mystery accomplished: **for bishop and priest, an anointing with holy chrism, a sign of the special anointing of the Holy Spirit who makes their ministry fruitful; giving the book of the Gospels, the ring, the miter, and the crozier to the bishop as the sign of his apostolic mission to proclaim the Word of God, of his fidelity to the Church, the bride of Christ, and his office as shepherd of the Lord's flock; presentation to the priest of the paten and chalice, "the offering of the holy people" which he is called to present to God; giving the book of the Gospels to the deacon who has just received the mission to proclaim the Gospel of Christ.**

IN BRIEF

1590 St. Paul said to his disciple Timothy: "I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands" (*2 Tim* 1:6), and "If any one aspires to the office of bishop, he desires a noble task." (*1 Tim* 3:1) To Titus he said: "This is why I left you in Crete, that you amend what was defective, and appoint presbyters in every town, as I directed you" (*Titus* 1:5).

1591 The whole Church is a priestly people. Through Baptism all the faithful share in the priesthood of Christ. This participation is called the "common priesthood of the faithful." Based on this common priesthood and ordered to its service, there exists another participation in the mission of Christ: the ministry conferred by the sacrament of Holy Orders, where the task is to serve in the name and in the person of Christ the Head in the midst of the community.

The reasons Latin rite priests can't marry is both theological and canonical.

Theologically, it may be pointed out that priests serve in the place of Christ and therefore, their ministry specially configures them to Christ. As is clear from Scripture, Christ was not married (except in a mystical sense, to the Church). By remaining celibate and devoting themselves to the service of the Church, priests more closely model, configure themselves to, and consecrate themselves to Christ.

As Christ himself makes clear, none of us will be married in heaven (Mt 22:23–30). By remaining unmarried in this life, priests are more closely configured to the final, eschatological state that will be all of ours.

Paul makes it very clear that remaining single allows one's attention to be undivided in serving the Lord (1 Cor 7:32–35). He recommends celibacy to all (1 Cor 7:7) but especially to ministers, who as soldiers of Christ he urges to abstain from "civilian affairs" (2 Tm 2:3–4).

Canonically, priests cannot marry for a number of reasons. First, priests who belong to religious orders take vows of celibacy. Second, while diocesan priests do not take vows, they do make a promise of celibacy.

Third, the Church has established impediments that block the validity of marriages attempted by those who have been ordained. Canon 1087 states: "Persons who are in holy orders invalidly attempt marriage."

This impediment remains as long as the priest has not been dispensed from it, even if he were to attempt a civil marriage, even if he left the Church and joined a non-Catholic sect, and even if he apostatized from the Christian faith altogether. He cannot be validly married after ordination unless he receives a dispensation from the Holy See (CIC 1078 §2, 1).

Characteristics of the People of God

782 The People of God is marked by characteristics that clearly distinguish it from all other religious, ethnic, political, or cultural groups found in history:

- **It is the People of God: God is not the property of any one people. But he acquired a people for himself from those who previously were not a people: "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation."**²⁰²

- **One becomes a *member* of this people not by a physical birth, but by being "born anew," a birth "of water and the Spirit,"²⁰³ that is, by faith in Christ, and Baptism.**

- **This People has for its Head Jesus the Christ (the anointed, the Messiah). Because the same anointing, the Holy Spirit, flows from the head into the body, this is "the messianic people."**

- **"The *status* of this people is that of the dignity and freedom of the sons of God, in whose hearts the Holy Spirit dwells as in a temple."**

- **"Its *law* is the new commandment to love as Christ loved us."²⁰⁴ This is the "new" law of the Holy Spirit.²⁰⁵**

- **Its *mission* is to be salt of the earth and light of the world.²⁰⁶ This people is "a most sure seed of unity, hope, and salvation for the whole human race."**

- **Its *destiny*, finally, "is the Kingdom of God which has been begun by God himself on earth and which must be further extended until it has been brought to perfection by him at the end of time."²⁰⁷**

A priestly, prophetic, and royal people

783 Jesus Christ is the one whom the Father anointed with the Holy Spirit and established as priest, prophet, and king. The whole People of God participates in these three offices of Christ and bears the responsibilities for mission and service that flow from them.²⁰⁸

784 On entering the People of God through faith and Baptism, one receives a share in this people's unique, *priestly* vocation: "Christ the Lord, high priest taken from among men, has made this new people 'a kingdom of priests to God, his Father.' The baptized, by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are *consecrated* to be a spiritual house and a holy priesthood."²⁰⁹

785 "The holy People of God shares also in Christ's *prophetic* office," above all in the supernatural sense of faith that belongs to the whole People, lay and clergy, when it

"unfailingly adheres to this faith . . . once for all delivered to the saints,"²¹⁰ and when it deepens its understanding and becomes Christ's witness in the midst of this world.

786 Finally, the People of God shares in the *royal* office of Christ. He exercises his kingship by drawing all men to himself through his death and Resurrection.²¹¹ Christ, King and Lord of the universe, made himself the servant of all, for he came "not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."²¹² For the Christian, "to reign is to serve him," particularly when serving "the poor and the suffering, in whom the Church recognizes the image of her poor and suffering founder."²¹³ The People of God fulfills its royal dignity by a life in keeping with its vocation to serve with Christ.

THE STORY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Introduction

To examine the Story of God's people in salvation history as revealed in Scripture is to discover the incredible love that God has for us his children, revealed in the mercy He extends to us time and time again when we have refused the gift of his love and friendship.

This brief tour of salvation history will use the lens of the covenant to focus our attention on God's steadfast love and infinite mercy for his children.

John 3:16-17; Luke 15: 11-32

Definitions:

Covenant: Whereas a contract is a legal agreement between parties to exchange goods and/or services, a covenant is a sacred bond that joins the parties in intimate family communion. Legal penalties exist for breaking contracts, but the penalty and curse for breaking covenant oaths is the loss of family communion. In biblical usage a covenant is a sacred family bond.

God uses covenants in salvation history to establish intimate family communion with his family, culminating in the New Covenant worldwide family which is the Catholic Church. The imagery used to express this communion is both familial (Exodus 4:22) and nuptial (Hosea 1-3). Through covenants God unites us to himself as part of his family.

God is Love

Mankind is the crown of creation. God's plan has always been to give himself to us as pure gift, and so He created us in His image so that we would be able to recognize and respond to his love, and enter into the loving communion of the Trinity. From all eternity man has been called into a covenant family relationship with God. God wants to dwell in our midst and make us partakers of his own divine nature, so that we can live as part of God's family forever. The story of our salvation history begins with

God's creation of the universe and of our first parents, and the covenant God established with them.

Covenant with Adam

God created (out of nothing) the universe and the crown of his creation, man, in 7 days. On days 1-3 days God created the structure of the universe – light and darkness, sea and sky, and land. On days 4-6 God created the inhabitants for the structure that He created – sun and moon, fish and birds, and land creatures, including man. God built a house for himself to dwell with his creation, his family, and that house is the universe around us.

Genesis 2: 1-3,

God made man in his image and likeness, with intellect and free will, male and female. God created Adam and Eve and married them to each other, and established his covenant with them as a married couple. The sacredness of man and woman joined unto each other with love and fidelity forever (i.e., marriage) is the first and most basic of God's revelations. Marriage is the primordial sacrament.

Genesis 3: 1-8, 16-19, 23

Even when He had given us everything, and we rejected him, God did not abandon his family. **Genesis 3:15 is called the protoevangelium, or first gospel, because in it God offers us the hope of a savior through the seed of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent. His love and mercy embraced us even after we sinned. This is a constant throughout salvation history.** Adam is a biblical *type* of Christ, in that he as the first born son of creation was to be the mediator of God's covenant blessings to all his descendants. Adam failed in this task because he did not trust in the Father's love. Jesus is the Son of God who entered history to become the first born son of the new creation.

Covenant with Noah

Noah was descended from Adam through his righteous son Seth. The line of Seth carried the promise of God in Genesis 3:15 to restore family communion with his children. God saved Noah through the waters of the flood, and after the waters had receded made a covenant with Noah and his household that He would never destroy the earth again with a flood. The sign of the covenant would be the rainbow. The first covenant was made by God with a married couple, Adam and Eve. This new covenant God made with Noah and his household. Like unto Adam and Eve God commanded Noah and his household "to be fruitful and multiply."

Genesis 6: 14, 18-19, 22; Genesis 8: 15-17, 21; Genesis 9: 1, 8-17

In the aftermath of the flood the human race once again became one big unhappy family torn apart by sin. Noah's son Ham sinned against God and his father Noah and thus Ham's son Canaan was put under Noah's curse. Man grew in his wickedness and pride and the King Nimrod and his subjects decided to build a great tower to the heavens, not to glorify God but to glorify themselves. God remembered his covenant with man, and rather than destroying the wicked as with the flood God instead confused their speech and scattered them to the ends of the earth. Through all this, Noah's son Shem and his household remained faithful to the covenant made with the God and his line carried the promise of blessing to all men made by God in Genesis 3:15.

Bible Outline: Patriarchs

1. God calls Abram out of Ur (modern Iraq)	Genesis 12:1
2. Melchizedek blesses Abraham	Genesis 14:18-20
3. Sodom and Gomorrah	Genesis 18:16-19:38
4. Binding of Isaac	Genesis 22
5. Covenant with Abraham	
3-fold promise	Genesis 12:1-9
1 st covenant (land)	Genesis 15:1-21
2 nd covenant (royal dynasty)	Genesis 17:1-11
3 rd covenant (world-wide blessing)	Genesis 22:1-19
6. Jacob steals blessing	Genesis 27:1-46
7. Jacob wrestles with God, name change to Israel	Genesis 32:22-31
8. Joseph sold into slavery	Genesis 37:12-36
9. Jacob's family moves to Egypt	Genesis 46

Covenant with Abraham

In order to restore the lost family communion that he had promised to all men through Adam, the hope of which was kept alive through Shem's descendants, God called a 75 year old man Abram out of the land of Ur (modern day Iraq) to go to a land that God would show to him. Abram was a descendant of Shem. **Genesis 12: 1-3 is called the acorn of salvation history because it recounts God's promises to Abram including land, that he will make of him a great nation, and that through him all the families of the earth will be blessed. It is from Abram's (soon to have his name changed by God to Abraham) line that Jesus**

Christ would come to establish the new covenant through which all the world (Jew and Gentile) would be restored to family communion with God.

At the last moment God stayed the hand of Abraham that was poised to kill his son. Isaac here is a biblical *type* of Christ, the Lamb of God whom the “Lord would himself provide” to be a pure offering. Christ would carry the wood of the cross up the same mountain (Calvary in Jerusalem is a hill on the Moriah range of hills, see 2 Chronicles 3:1) and be offered as a sacrifice on the altar of the cross for our redemption. God the Father would provide his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, as a sacrificial victim on that mountain to save his human family.

Genesis 22:15-18

Isaac grew and had a son Jacob, and Jacob had twelve sons, who all fathered large families that became the 12 tribes of Israel. They were called the tribes of Israel because God changed Jacob’s name to Israel. This period of salvation history is truly fascinating and inspiring but must be passed over to get to the Passover of the Mosaic covenant. It is enough to say here that God’s covenant family continued to grow and moved to Egypt when a famine overtook the land of Canaan and Jacob and the 12 tribes had to journey there for food. Once there, they were enslaved by the Pharaohs of Egypt and remained there in bondage for 400 years.

Bible Outline: Egypt and Exodus 1700-1280 BC

10. 400 years of slavery	Exodus 1:1-22
11. The burning bush	Exodus 3:1-6:30
12. Ten plagues	Exodus 7:1-11:10
13. Exodus/First Passover (1280 BC)	Exodus 12:1-14:31
14. Red Sea	Exodus 13:17-15:21
15. Manna	Exodus 16
16. Covenant with Moses (Mount Sinai)	Exodus 19:1-31:18
17. Golden calf	Exodus 32:1-35
18. Levitical priesthood	Exodus 32:27-29; Numbers 3
19. Tabernacle	Exodus 25-27, 36-38

Bible Outline: Desert Wanderings 1280-1240 BC

20. 12 spies sent out	Numbers 13:1-33
21. Aaron’s staff	Numbers 17
22. Moses strikes the rock	Numbers 20:1-13
23. Bronze serpent	Numbers 21:4-9

24. Covenant in Moab	Dueteronomy 29:1-29
25. Israel crosses the Jordan	Joshua 1-4

Covenant with Moses

After 400 years of slavery in Egypt the people of Israel cried out to God for deliverance and God remembered his covenant with them. Moses, an adopted prince of Egypt who had fled Egypt after killing an Egyptian master, was chosen by God to deliver his covenant people from bondage. **Moses led the people to Mt. Sinai where God established a covenant with him and the nation of Israel. God wanted to make of his covenant family a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.** To make a long story short, **God remembered his covenant oaths to his chosen people and was a Father to them throughout this period despite their sinfulness, dwelling with them in the ark of the covenant in the Tabernacle, and eventually bringing them out of the desert within sight of the promised land of Canaan.** Here Joshua, Moses' successor, led the people across the Jordan into Canaan and conquered the land for God's chosen people. God set the Judges over the tribes of Israel to rule them which leads us to the Kingdom period of salvation history.

Exodus 32: 3-4, 13-19; Matthew 19:3-9

Bible Outline: Conquest and Judges 1240-1050 BC

21. Fall of Jericho	Joshua 55:13-6:27
22. Covenant renewal	Joshua 8:30-35
23. Southern campaign	Joshua 9-10
24. Northern campaign	Joshua 11
25. Tribal allotment	Joshua 13-21
26. Israel asks for a king	1 Samuel 8:1-22

Bible Outline: Royal Kingdom 1050-930 BC

27. David kills Goliath	1 Samuel 17:1-31
28. Covenant with David	2 Samuel 7:1-29
29. Ark moved to Jerusalem	2 Samuel 6
30. First Temple built (961 BC)	1 Kings 5:1-8:66

Bible Outline: Divided Kingdom 930-722 BC

31. The Kingdom divides	1 Kings 12:16-20
32. Jezebel fights Israel	1 Kings 18-21; 2 Kings 9
33. Hosea marries a prostitute	Hosea 1-3

Bible Outline: Exile 722-540 BC

34. Israel falls to Assyria (722 BC)	2 Kings 17:1-41
35. Foreign possession of Samaria	2 Kings 17
36. Image of the five kingdoms	Daniel 2
37. Judah falls to Babylon (587 BC)	2 Kings 25:1-30
38. First Temple destroyed (587 BC)	2 Kings 25:8-17

Bible Outline: Return from Exile 538-167 BC

39. Zerubbabel rebuilds Temple	Ezra 3:1-6:22
40. Ezra returns and teaches (458 BC)	Ezra 7:1-8:36
41. Esther saves Israel	Esther 1:1-10:3
42. Nehemiah returns, rebuilds Jerusalem walls (444 BC)	Nehemiah 3:1-4:23

Bible Outline: Maccabean Revolt 167-0 BC

43. Antiochus desecrates the Temple (167 BC)	1 Maccabees 4:43
44. Purification of the Temple (Hanukkah – 164 BC)	1 Maccabees 4:36-61

Covenant with David

And so the kingdom of Israel is established fulfilling God’s covenant oath to Abraham that “kings would stem from him” and his descendants. So God had Samuel anoint the first king of Israel, Saul. But Saul was not faithful to God, and God had Samuel anoint David, the son of Jesse, as the new King of Israel. David was a man after God’s own heart, and David was blessed by God and the kingdom of Israel under David defeated all their enemies around them, including the conquest of Jerusalem. When God gave David rest from his enemies around him, and after David brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, than David desired to build a holy dwelling place, a Temple, for God in Jerusalem. But God told his servant David that it would be his son, the son of David, who would build a Temple for God. At this point in salvation history God made a covenant with David and the kingdom of Israel. The covenant oath that God swears to David is that he will make for him and his sons a kingdom that will never end. With this covenant God’s family had grown from a married couple, to a household, to a tribe, to a nation, and now to a kingdom.

David repented and God gave him a son Solomon through whom God would fulfill his covenant oaths to David and Israel. Although David’s life after his grievous sin involved much suffering due to the punishments that his sin triggered, Solomon his son at first ruled well and was renowned for the divine wisdom received from God (see 1 Kings 3: 11-14)

with which he ruled Israel and the nations under Israel. Solomon built a Temple for God in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah (see Genesis 22:2). Solomon ruled wisely and the other surrounding nations came to here the wisdom of God dispensed through Solomon, the son of David.

At this point God's covenant family reached the fullest earthly realization of the promises that God had made to Abraham, Moses and David. But Solomon became corrupted by his 700 foreign wives (treaties with other kingdoms and nations were ratified by the king taking a women from the foreign land in marriage) and began to worship their gods. The 10 northern tribes split off and formed the northern kingdom of Israel. The tribes of Benjamin and Judah formed the southern kingdom of Judah. The northern kingdom continued to practice idolatry despite the repeated warnings of the prophets (e.g. Elijah, Elisha, Hosea, Amos) that God sent to them. In 722 BC God allowed a gentile nation to execute divine judgement on the northern kingdom which was completely destroyed by Assyria (hence we hear of the 10 lost tribes of Israel). The southern kingdom did not last much longer as reform under several righteous kings gave way to increasing idolatry culminating in King Manasseh of the line of David sacrificing thousands of children to the pagan god Molech outside Jerusalem. In 600 BC the gentile kingdom of Babylon began to oppress Judah resulting in the eventual destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 586 BC and the exile of the people of the southern kingdom in Babylon. The temple was destroyed, the sacrifices stopped, and the covenant family of God seemed to be gone forever at this stage of salvation history. But God in his mercy remembered his promises to his covenant family and once again did not abandon them. He sent the people in exile prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel to preach the message of repentance and the hope of restoration to God's chosen people. Cyrus, the Persian king who had conquered Babylon eventually allowed the people in exile to return after 70 years to Jerusalem and to rebuild the Temple.

At this point of salvation history, the people of God had lost their earthly kingdom and all political sovereignty and military power. Having lost all the blessings and promises of the covenant, the people began to realize the consequences of their sinfulness. They began to return to the Lord and worship God according to the law of the covenant. Thus, for the 400 years before the birth of Christ the people began to realize their need for God the Father and his friendship. And yet God through his prophets during this period foreshadowed the new Son of David that was about to enter history, as well as the new covenant that he was to establish that would fully realize the promises of the previous covenants.

Bible Outline: Messianic Fulfillment 0-33 AD

1. Annunciation	Luke 1:26-38
2. Baptism of Jesus	Luke 3:21-22
3. Sermon on the Mount	Luke 6:20-49
4. Wedding at Cana	John 2:1-12
5. Keys to Peter	Matthew 16:13-20
6. Last Supper	Luke 22: 1-38
7. Passion (33 AD)	Luke 22-23
8. Jesus gives his mother to the Church	John 19:25-27
9. Resurrection (33 AD)	Luke 24: 1-12
10. Ascension	Luke 24: 44-53

Bible Outline: Church 33 AD - ?

11. Witness in Jerusalem (33-35 AD):	Acts 1:1-8:4
12. Pentecost (33 AD)	Acts 2:1-13
13. Choosing of the Seven (Diaconate)	Acts 6:1-7
14. Stephen martyred before Choosing of the Seven	Acts 6:8-7:60
15. Witness in Judea and Samaria (35-45 AD):	Acts 8:5-13:1
16. Saul's conversion (33/34 AD)	Acts 9:1-30
17. Cornelius's vision	Acts 10
18. Peter's arrest and deliverance	Acts 12
19. Witness to the ends of the earth (45-62 AD):	Acts 13:1-28:31
20. Paul's three missionary journeys (45-58 AD)	
1 st Journey	Acts 13:1-14:28
2 nd Journey	Acts 15:36-18:22
3 rd Journey	Acts 18:23-21:16
22. Council of Jerusalem (49 AD)	Acts 15
23. John's Apocalypse (68 AD)	Revelation
24. Destruction of Jerusalem Temple (70 AD)	

New Covenant in Christ made with God's worldwide family, the Catholic Church

From the very beginning God sought to dwell amidst his people and God promised through Isaiah (Isaiah 7:14) that a virgin would bear a child and name him Emmanuel, which means God with us. And so in the fullness of time, after God's gradual

preparation of a covenant people to receive him, God sent Jesus Christ into the world, born of the Virgin Mary, to establish the new and everlasting covenant in his body and blood for the salvation of all men.

The gospel of Matthew begins “Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham” (Matthew. 1:1). Matthew 1:1 is not only a summary of salvation history, but also a summary of how the Catholic Church came to be, through her founder and bridegroom, Jesus Christ. As the “son of Abraham,” Jesus is the “universal” or Catholic blessing promised by the Father (Genesis 22:9-18) to all the nations. It is through the Son’s death and resurrection that all the “nations” or Gentiles are able to become adopted sons and daughters in the family of God (Romans 8:14-17). Since Adam’s Fall, God’s plan has been to save and restore his worldwide family through Jesus Christ (Genesis 3:15) so that all may share in his love and friendship.

Genesis 22:15-18; Romans 8:14-15;

As the “son of David,” Jesus is the Messiah-King of the house of David and Israel. It is through the Church, the restored house of David (Amos 9:11-12; Acts 15:15-18), that men and women are to become disciples and thereby sons and daughters of God (Matthew 16:13-20; 28:18-20). God said He founded His “Church,” not “churches” (Matthew 16:18-19) on Peter the “Rock,” to whom He gave special powers as the earthly head of His restored Davidic kingdom. The Bible refers to the Church as Christ’s bride and Christ, as a faithful Groom, is the husband of only one bride or Church, for whom He gave His life (Ephesians 5:21-33). St. Paul affirms elsewhere that Christ’s Church has “one faith” and “one baptism” (Ephesians 4:5), providing further biblical evidence that Our Lord founded one clearly recognizable Church, not many with conflicting doctrines.

Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:5

In the first verse of Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus is described as the son of David who, in turn, is the son of Abraham. Jesus is of the house of Judah, and He is also from Bethlehem, fulfilling the words of Micah 5:2 that such a one would rule Israel. Gabriel reveals to our Blessed Mother that her divine son Jesus would reestablish David’s throne (Luke 1:31-33) and Zechariah praises God for sending Jesus, whom he describes as a horn of salvation in the house of David (Luke 1:69) and the fulfillment of “His holy covenant” made with Abraham (Luke 1:72-73). Simeon recognizes the infant Jesus as the light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of God’s people, Israel (Luke 2:29-32).

Micah 5:1; Luke 1:31-33; Luke 2:29-32

Jesus fulfills the sacrifice prefigured on Mount Moriah by Isaac when He carried the wood of the cross up the hill of Calvary and was sacrificed for the redemption of all men. He also is the realization of what the old covenant Passover sacrifice pointed to since He is the spotless lamb whose shed blood saves men from certain death. Moreover, **communion is established with God and with one another through this new covenant Passover (i.e., Eucharist) by receiving the body and blood of Christ as our spiritual food. Christ pre-presented that once for all sacrifice at the Last Supper where He instituted the Eucharist and ordained his apostles to “do this in memory of me.” That command is fulfilled by the new covenant priests and their successors during the celebration of the Eucharistic that is offered till this day in the Catholic Church.**

John 1:29; John 6: 4, 53-58; Luke 22: 14-15, 19-20

After His resurrection and just prior to His Ascension, Christ’s disciples asked when He would restore the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6-9), whereupon Jesus makes mention again of their ministry extending to all the nations on earth.

Jesus established his visible kingdom, his Church, through the apostles and their successors the bishops. Just as every covenant family in the old covenant had a visible structure (married couple, household, tribe, nation, kingdom), so God’s new covenant people would have a visible structure or hierarchy. Christ founded this hierarchy when he chose his 12 apostles and set up one of them, to have primacy over the others. In the Davidic kingdom, the king had all authority but set up his ministers to help him, including a prime minister who held the keys of the king which was a symbol of the authority of the king. This was more than just an appointment, but was an office that if it fell vacant needed a successor. Christ established Peter as his prime minister of the new kingdom. He changed his name to Rock (i.e., Kephias in Aramaic, Petros in Greek, Peter in English) and told Peter that upon him He would build his Church, and that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. He also gave him the keys of his kingdom so that Peter could exercise Christ’s authority on earth over his Church. So Christ as the son of David through his Church the new kingdom of Israel fulfilled God’s covenant promise to David that his son would rule over his kingdom forever.

Matthew 16:17-19; Isaiah 22:15-22

After his ascension into Heaven, Christ’s Church on earth continued his ministry and spread the gospel to the ends of the earth. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out (Joel 3:1) on the Church and this divine mission to spread the good news of salvation and to provide the means of communion with the Father began in earnest. Throughout the Book of Acts the apostles and their successors witnessed to the truth of Jesus Christ and acted in his authority

and with his power. Peter first exercised his primacy by initiating the process to select a successor for Judas, confirming that there was an apostolic office and apostolic succession. He also gave the first sermon at Pentecost, healed the sick, executed divine judgement on sinful Church members, and even raised a girl from the dead. He received the revelation from God that the gentiles were to be admitted to the Church and at the council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) silenced all debate on this issue when he offered his judgement on this matter.

Acts 1: 15, 20-26; Acts 10: 34-35, 44-48; Acts 15: 6-12

There was no dispute in the early Church about Peter's authority. It was affirmed by extra-biblical sources like Clement of Rome, the fourth pope, and Bishop Ignatius of Antioch, both around the turn of the second century. Later Church observers like Bishop Irenaeus of Lyons (140 A.D. to 202 A.D) also affirmed the pope's primacy. They understood that Jesus founded the Church on Peter, thereby restoring the house of David.

Christ said He would be with His disciples until the end of the world (Matthew 28:20), and He continues to build His Church (Matthew 16:18) through all kinds of trials, internal and external. In the tradition of St. Peter, the first pope, we should confidently share Christ's salvific plan with everyone we encounter: "Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15).

II. THE CHURCH – The People of God

802 Christ Jesus "gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own" (*Titus 2:14*).

803 "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (*1 Pet 2:9*).

804 One enters into the People of God by faith and Baptism. "All men are called to belong to the new People of God" (*LG 13*), so that, in Christ, "men may form one family and one People of God" (*AG 1*).

805 The Church is the Body of Christ. Through the Spirit and his action in the sacraments, above all the Eucharist, Christ, who once was dead and is now risen, establishes the community of believers as his own Body.

806 In the unity of this Body, there is a diversity of members and functions. All members are linked to one another, especially to those who are suffering, to the poor and persecuted.

807 The Church is this Body of which Christ is the head: she lives from him, in him, and for him; he lives with her and in her.

808 The Church is the Bride of Christ: he loved her and handed himself over for her. He has purified her by his blood and made her the fruitful mother of all God's children.

809 The Church is the Temple of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the soul, as it were, of the Mystical Body, the source of its life, of its unity in diversity, and of the riches of its gifts and charisms.

810 "Hence the universal Church is seen to be 'a people brought into unity from the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit'" (LG 4 citing St. Cyprian, *De Dom. orat* 23: PL 4, 553).

Conclusion

The story of salvation is a family history. It is the story of our Father's constant love for his often prodigal children and his infinite mercy that spared us time after time when we rejected him who is the source of all life and love. Throughout history God desired to dwell with us and to make us part of his family. **After long preparation, He entered the world himself, suffered and died, so that we his children could find rest in him and communion with him forever. What is it that constitutes a family? Flesh and blood ties and a shared name. God has given us his name at baptism, and we become his flesh and blood through the Eucharist. All are truly blessed who become members of the Father's family through the grace bestowed upon us in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Catholic Church.**

Luke 22: 14-15, 19-20; Matthew 28: 18-20

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