

# The Sacrament of Priesthood

## “Laying of hands” or “Ordination”



**“No man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was” (Heb 5:4) and “Let the elders [priests] who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine” (1 Tim 5:17).**

# What is a Sacrament?

- Sacrament in Greek = Mystery
- A Sacrament **combines two elements: one visible, the other invisible – one can be seen, or tasted, or touched**, or heard while the other remains unseen to the eyes of the flesh. There is, **however**, some kind of **relation or significance between the two**.

## **An example for simplification:**

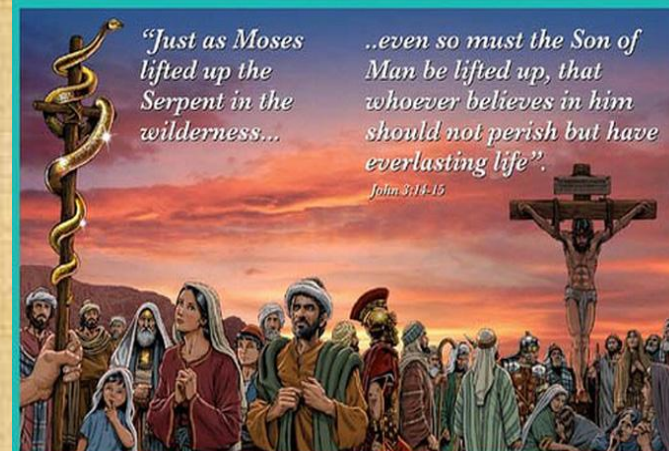
In handshake, there is something seen and felt, namely the clasp of the hands, but there is something mysterious and unseen, namely, the communication of friendship.



# The brazen serpent in the desert (a symbol of faith)

- When the Jewish people were bitten by poisonous serpents, God commanded Moses to make a brazen serpent, and to hang it over the crotch of a tree (**Num 21:8-9**); **all who would look upon that serpent of brass would be healed of the serpent's sting**. This apparently was a rather ridiculous remedy for poison and not everyone looked at it.
- the **Old Testament is fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ who revealed the full mystery of the brazen serpent**.
- The brass serpent looked like the serpent that bit the people, it was actually without any poison.
- As the brazen serpent was lifted by Moses, Jesus, too, would be lifted up on the crotch of a tree, a cross. He would look as if He Himself was filled with the poison of sin, for His body would bear the marks, and the stings, and the piercing of sin; and yet as the brass serpent was without poison so He would be without sin.

As those who looked upon that brass serpent in the desert in faith were healed of the bite of the serpent, so all who would look upon Him on His cross bearing the sins and poisons of the world would also be healed of the poison of the serpent, Satan.



# Lord Jesus Christ - “a great mystery” (1 Tim 3:16)

In Him is

- something divine, something human,
- something eternal, something temporal,
- something invisible, something visible.

The Human Nature of our Blessed Lord had no power to sanctify of and by itself; that is to say, apart from its union with the Divinity, but because of that union, the Humanity of the Lord became the efficient cause of our justification and sanctification and will be until the end of the world.



# Sacraments and Salvation

- If the Lord Jesus Christ is only a memory of someone who lived centuries ago, then it is rather difficult to see that His influence will be any different than that of Socrates or Buddha.

Q: What relation do we have in the twenty-first century to our Lord Jesus Christ? How our Lord Jesus Christ saves ?

A: Sacraments.

- **The Divine life of the Lord is communicated through His Church or His mystical body in exactly the same way that His divine life was communicated when He walked on earth.**
- As He then used His human nature as the instrument of divinity and used material things as means to confer His grace; clay and water in the case of the born blind (Jn 9:11). He now uses other human natures (priests) and material things (water, bread and wine, oil) as instruments for the communication of the same divine life (grace).



# Seven Holy Sacraments of the Church

- 1. Holy Orders (Deacons, Priests and Bishops)
- 2. Baptism
- 3. Confirmation
- 4. Eucharist
- 5. Repentance & Confession
- 6. Anointing of the Sick
- 7. Matrimony

Each of these seven channels is a Sacrament by which the power of the Risen Christ is bestowed on souls by a spiritual and effective contact.

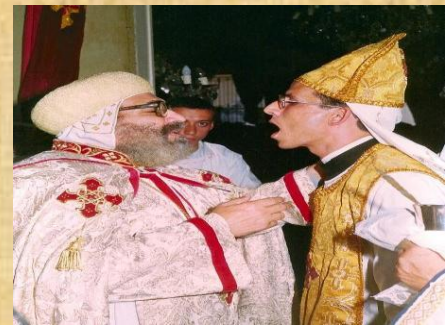
## Three Requirements for a Sacrament

1. Its institution by the Lord Jesus Christ,
2. an outward sign, and
3. the power of conferring the grace purchased for us by the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of the Lord.

# The Sacrament of Priesthood

Instituted by Jesus Christ  
“Laying of hands” or “Ordination”

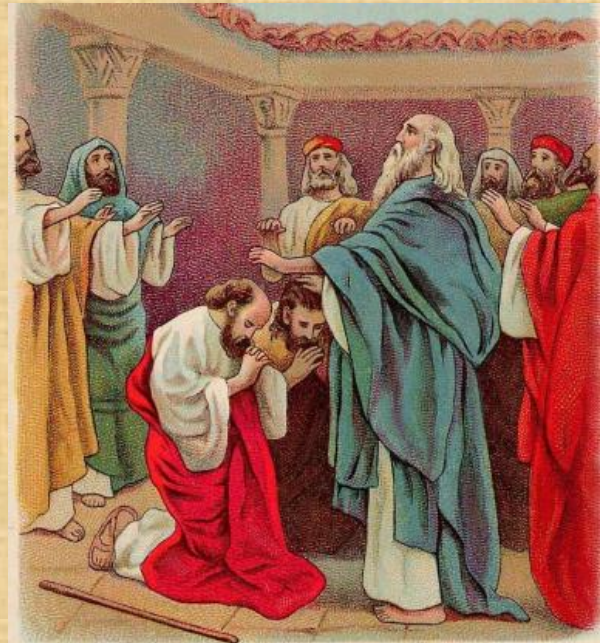
- “He called His disciples to Him, and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles” (Lk 6:13). He gave them the authority of absolution and binding, “He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (Jn 20:22-23).
- The Bishop lays his hand on the elected candidate in order for the Holy Spirit to descend on this person to grant him one of the priestly ranks. As a result, the ordained person is granted the authority to perform the ministry of the Church, whether the Holy Sacraments, teaching or others.



# Honor of Priesthood

## The Priesthood is:

- **A divine choice, call and appointment:** “As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.” **(Acts 13:2-3)**
- **Faithfulness and Stewardship:** “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.” **(Lk 12:42-43)**
- **Consecration or Sanctification:** Lord Jesus Christ said, “for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth” **(Jn 17:19)**. **To sanctify means to consecrate; our Lord has consecrated Himself** for the ministry and redemption. Likewise, all ranks of the Priesthood are consecrated for the ministry according to the example of Lord Jesus Christ, the Great High Priest.





# The Order of Deacons

” But let these also first be proved; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless... Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well” (1 Tim 3:8-9,12).

**The twelve apostles set the** criteria of ordination of the seven deacons as being “of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:3).

**The first Christian martyr** was St. Steven the deacon who saw heaven opened and Lord Jesus standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:56).



**1. Epsaltos (Hymnist, Cantor):** learn and sing Church hymns and praises.

Children are usually ordained in this rank as the Psalm says, “Out of the mouth of babes and infants You have ordained strength” (Ps 8:2), **to attach them** to the Church in order to grow up being nourished by the Orthodox faith and rites.

**2. Anagnostis (Reader, Lector):** (i) His work is the daily readings in Church especially the Holy Epistles, (ii) After the Commemoration of the Saints, readers recite the names of the Patriarchs who passed away, (iii) Readers also can give sermons to the congregation by the permission from the Bishop or Priest, and (iv) Readers are required to receive the Church Psalmody (Praises) and receipt it with the chorus during Liturgy and other occasions.



# The Order of Deacons

3. **Epideacon (Sub-deacon):** His work is to prevent heretics and false teachers from entering the Church, to light the Church's lamps, to maintain the books of the Church, to prepare the censer, to organize the worshipers and to help the deacon and replace him if necessary. These responsibilities are added to the previous ones of the reader.



4. **Deacon (Servant):** His work is to recite all the liturgical responses. In the past no one was allowed to enter to the Sanctuary except the Bishop, Priest and the Deacon or Archdeacon, also kings who were believers and anointed by Chrism. The deacon may carry the chalice and give the congregation from the precious blood of the Lord during communion. He reads the Holy Gospel of the Liturgy and may teach or preach by the permission of the Bishop or Priest. The deacon helps the priest in the service by visiting the congregation, widows and orphans, sick, etc. If he was ordained before marriage, he does not marry. If he had a wife and was ordained then his wife died, he remains without marriage like the case of Priests. If he elects to marry, he loses his rank.

5. **Archdeacon (Leader of Deacons):** The Archdeacon leads all the ranks of deacons, manages their needs, and specifies their deeds.



# The Order of Priests

## 1. Priest, Elder, Presbyter:

- 1<sup>st</sup> and essential priestly rank.
- has the right to administer all the Church Sacraments except the laying of hands and ordination, which is reserved to the Bishop or someone above him.
- teaches the people the word of God, explains to them the dogmas and rites, and leads them to the way of righteousness.

## 2. Hegomen, Senior Priest, Archpriest:

- This is only a promotional rank from a priest and is not considered as a new ordination. If there were more than one priest serving in the same Church, the oldest in ordination or the most active and knowledgeable is promoted to the rank of hegomen. The rest of the priests submit to him and consider him the primary responsible person in the Church.

## 3. Khoori-Episcopos (Bishop of a village):

- assist some Bishops and Metropolitans in the service of their wide dioceses.
- This rank is closer to the Bishopric rank for the candidate is a monk, holds the title of "Anba", his turban is very similar to the Bishop's, has the authority to ordain the various ranks of Deacons, is a member of the Holy Synod, and his name is mentioned like the Bishop in all liturgical prayers and hymns.



# The Order of Bishops

“A bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.” (Titus 1: 7-9)

## 1. Bishop, Overseer, Episcopos:

- This is the highest rank of the Priesthood. Bishops are distinguished from Priests by having the perfection of the Priesthood and the authority to lay their hands and ordain all the diaconry and priestly ranks in their dioceses.

## 2. Metropolitan (Bishop of a large city):

- This is a promotional rank from the Bishop, and the Metropolitan is mentioned before the Bishop in all the Church rites.

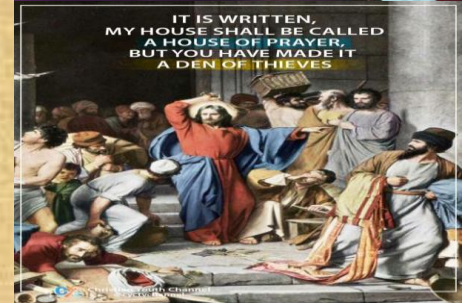
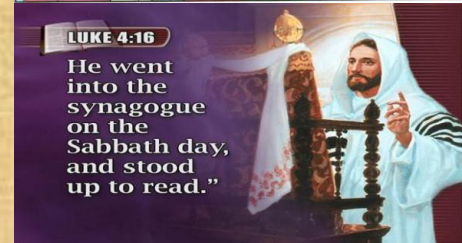
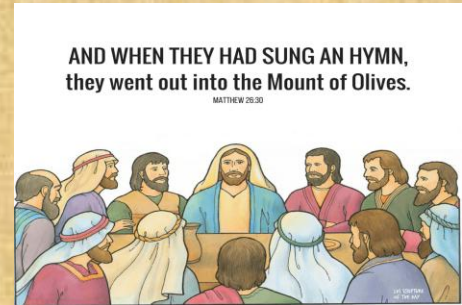
## 3. Patriarch, Pope, Archbishop:

- The Patriarch is the highest rank in the Bishopric level and has the greatest ruling of Priesthood;
- he is the leader of the Church, Bishops and Metropolitans.
- The Patriarch is the successor of our fathers the Apostles and is the symbol of the unity of the Church.
- He has the right to ordain Bishops (at least one Bishop accompany him) and promote them to Metropolitans.
- He also has the right to make the Holy oil (Mayron).
- He heads the sessions of the Holy Synod, which is the highest authority in the Church.



# Jesus practiced certain services that became the essence of the Church ranks that every person may find in Him a good example to follow

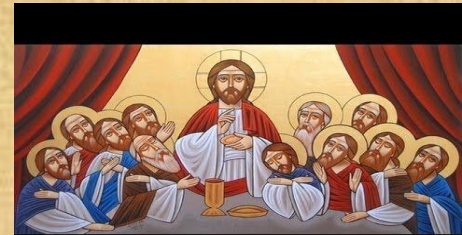
- **a) The Epsaltos:** The person who holds this rank is required to learn and sing the Church hymns. Lord Jesus Christ sang a hymn with His disciples before going to Gethsemane, “And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives” (**Mt 26:30**).
- **b) The Anagnostis:** The most important work of this rank is reading the Holy Scriptures in Church during the Liturgy. Our Lord practiced the work of the reader when He went in the synagogue and stood up to read (**Lk 4:16**).
- **c) The Epideacon:** The most important work is keeping the Church organized. The Lord did the same when He drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple (**Mt 21:12**).
- **d) The Deacon:** One of the duties of the Deacon is to pour water for the priest to wash his hands upon the start of the Liturgy. Our Lord poured water into a basin and washed the disciples’ feet (**Jn 13:5**).



# Lord Jesus Christ & the Ranks of Priesthood

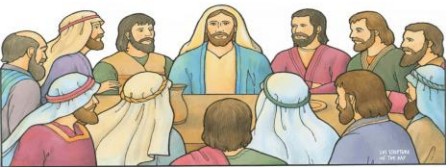
## (Continued)

- **e) The Priest:** The main work of the priest is to sanctify the bread and wine during the Holy Liturgy and to give communion to the congregation. The Lord did the same on Covenant Thursday (**Mk 14:22-26**).
- **f) The Hegomen:** The role of the Hegomen is to provide for the Church services. It is obvious that our Lord did the same for when He said to Judas “What you do, do quickly” (**Jn 13:27**) the disciples thought that since Judas had the money box, the Lord had asked him to buy what they need for the feast or to give to the poor (**Jn 13:29**).
- **g) The Bishop:** The bishop is the shepherd of the flock. St. Peter refers to Lord Jesus as the shepherd and overseer of our souls (**1 Pet 2:25**) and the Lord said about Himself, “I am the good Shepherd” (**Jn 10:14**).
- **h) The Patriarch:** Only the Pope can ordain Bishops and our Lord breathed on His apostles and gave them the authority to bind and loose sins (**Jn 20:22-23**).



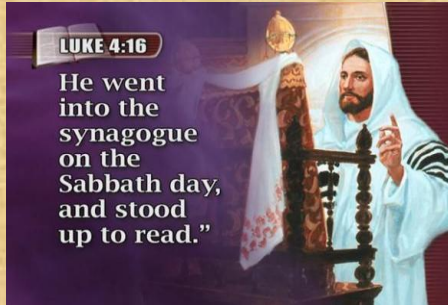
AND WHEN THEY HAD SUNG AN HYMN,  
they went out into the Mount of Olives.

MATTHEW 26:30

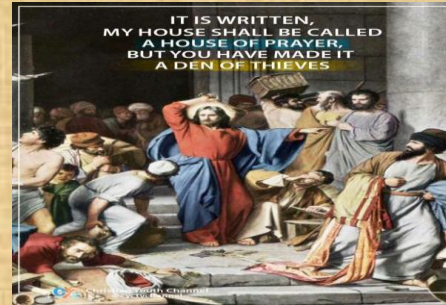


LUKE 4:16

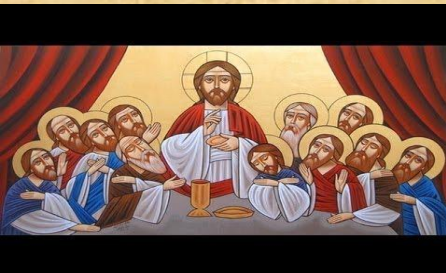
He went  
into the  
synagogue  
on the  
Sabbath day,  
and stood  
up to read."



IT IS WRITTEN,  
MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED  
A HOUSE OF PRAYER,  
BUT YOU HAVE MADE IT  
A DEN OF THIEVES



**As a servant, what is the good example that  
you found in Jesus that you would like to  
follow?**



# The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick

“But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with  
healing in His wings.” (Mal 4:2)



# Two Sacraments for “Healing”

- **spiritual illness:** Sacrament of Repentance & Confession
- **Physical and psychological illness:** Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick



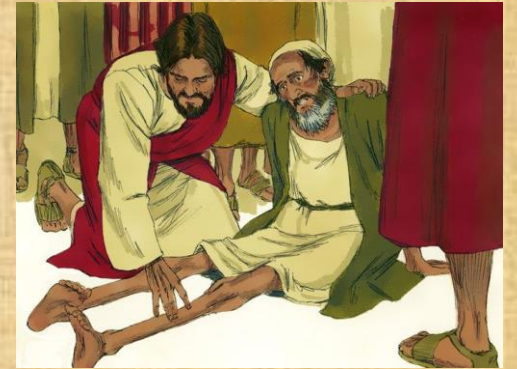
# Institution of the Sacrament by Jesus

## The Lord said:

- “Heal the sick, cleanse the leper.” (Mt 10:8)
- “Whatever city you enter, and they received you ... heal the sick who are there.” (Lk 10:8-9)

## The disciples were instructed by the Lord:

- “Anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.” (Mk 6:13)
- “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders (priests) of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.” (Jam 5:14-16)



# Why do people sometimes receive this Sacrament and yet are not healed?

It could be because of their lack of faith, “He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief” (Mt 13:58) **or** it could be that God in His wisdom sees that this illness is beneficial to the person’s spiritual life as the case with St. Paul who prayed three times to be healed but God said to him, “My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 12:9). We need to understand that in this Sacrament we do not dictate to God what to do but rather ask for his mercies.

# Why does the Church perform this Sacrament to the whole congregation on the last Friday of the Lent?

During the Holy Week of Pascha, the Church does not perform this Sacrament and therefore performs it and anoints the entire congregation on the last Friday of the Lent. Moreover, many are weak from fasting and this anointing helps them to continue with the scheduled prayers and food abstinence of the Pascha.

