

Holy Orders



While the Sacrament of Baptism consecrates people to take part in Christ's holy priesthood, the people of the Church participate in this priesthood in different ways. Some are called by God to participate in the "common priesthood" (the laity), and others are called by God to live out what is called the "ministerial priesthood." While each expression of priesthood is ordered to one another, they also differ essentially, such that the "ministerial priesthood" serves the "common priesthood" in the unfolding of the grace they receive at baptism. It is in this ministerial priesthood that men are called to serve the Church through the Sacrament of Holy Order, a Sacrament which integrates a man into the order of bishops, priests, and deacons, conferring a gift of the Holy Spirit upon them that permits the exercise of a "sacred power" which can come only from Christ himself for the sake of his Church. The laying on of hands by a bishop, along with a prayer of consecration, constitutes the visible sign of this ordination.

In the participation in the ministerial priesthood, for example, a priest receives sacred authority to act in "persona Christi" (in the person of Christ), and has the responsibility of preaching, teaching, shepherding, counseling, and administering the Sacraments for the flock of people entrusted to him. It is in the spirit of Christ that a man who has received Holy Orders ought to act in complete service to the people, not lording anything over them, but laying down his life for them as Christ did.

If you are considering a Religious life in the Capuchin Franciscan Order, please visit the Capuchin website at www.capuchinwest.org.