



## Sacraments 24/36: The Tri-partite Theory of Holy Orders

Now for a review of the super-deep theology of the Sacraments. Each sacrament has a 3 part theology of its effects. This tri-partite theory is shown as:

- *Sacramentum Tantum* What the Sacramental Rite itself looks like.
- *Res Tantum* What the immediate result of the Sacrament is, the grace given and its ultimate meaning.
- *Res et Sacramentum* What the abiding, everlasting purpose of the Sacrament is.

The purpose of the Sacrament of Holy Orders is to continue the visible ministry of Christ in the Church on behalf and at the service of the People of God. In Holy Orders, the *Sacramentum Tantum* is the Ritual of the Sacrament (both the Matter and the Form): the Laying on of Hands and the Prayer of Ordination over a male candidate. The *Res Tantum* immediately brings holiness to the man and, if he remains open to it, the grace to preach a homily, and the ability to offer spiritual gifts for sanctification. The *Res et Sacramentum* in Holy Orders contains a non-repeatable character. Along with Baptism and Confirmation, Holy Orders can never be given again. This can be confusing because there are 3 degrees within the Sacrament Holy Orders, but no one degree can be repeated.

The three degrees, or levels, of the Sacrament of Holy Orders are: Deacon, Priest, Bishop. To be a bishop, one must first have been a deacon and a priest. Before my priesthood ordination, I was a deacon for a year. And by the nature of the sacraments, I still retain my deacon role. I am still a servant and I still wait at the table of the Lord. Each of the 3 degrees has an increase in job responsibilities:

**Deacon:** Proclaim the Gospel and preach a Homily at Mass, witness Marriage vows (outside of Mass), ordinary minister of Baptism (outside of Mass), lead burial rituals, ordinary minister of Holy Communion.

**Priest:** In addition to the preceding; witness marriage vows within Mass, Baptism during Mass, preside at Mass and confect the Eucharist, hear confessions, anoint the sick, can be delegated by bishop to perform Confirmations, act as Pastor of a parish.

**Bishop:** In addition to what the priest does; ordinary minister of Confirmation, ordain others as deacons, priests, and bishops, full ordinary jurisdiction over a diocese.

As a Sacramental Character, the permanent mark can never be taken away. If a Priest is removed permanently from the ministry, his permission to perform the sacraments is removed, but not his ability. He should not present himself wearing a Roman collar or call himself "Father." He should never preside at Mass or hear confessions. But...if the plane is crashing, he can *validly* absolve everyone on board in Reconciliation. But it is only in danger of death that he can function as a priest.

-Fr. Kopp

Next Week: Catechism Summary of Holy Orders