

The Ordination of Presbyters

commonly known as priests

1 *After MORNING PRAYER a SERMON is preached on the duty, office, and character of presbyters.*

2 *The archdeacon (or his deputy) presents to the bishop those who are to be ordained saying:*

Reverend father in God, I present to you *these persons* to be ordained to the office of presbyter.

The bishop says:

Have you made sure that the *persons* you present *are* suited by *their* knowledge of Scripture and godly way of life to exercise *their* ministry to the honour of God and the good of his church?

The archdeacon:

I have enquired of *them; they have* been examined; and I believe *them* fit for this office.

3 *The bishop addresses the people:*

Good people, we purpose, God willing, to receive today *these persons* into the holy office of the presbyterate. After examination I find *they are* both fit for and called to this office and ministry. But if any of you knows a reason why *any of these persons* should not be received into this holy ministry, come forward in the name of God and make known that reason.

If any objection is alleged against a candidate, the bishop shall postpone that candidate's ordination until he has satisfied himself that the objection alleged is without substance or may be properly disregarded.

4 *The bishop leads in PRAYER. The Litany is read and then the Holy Communion, with this collect and the following Scripture readings:*

Almighty God, giver of all good things, by your Holy Spirit you have appointed various orders of ministry in your church. Look in mercy on

these your *servants* now called to the presbyterate; fill *them* with the truth of your doctrine and clothe *them* with holiness of life, so that by word and example *they* may faithfully serve you in this office to the glory of your name and for the upbuilding of your church through the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

5 *These* SCRIPTURE READINGS *are read:*

Ephesians 4: 7-13

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says:

‘When he ascended on high he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.’

(What does ‘he ascended’ mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

and

either *Matthew 9: 36-38*

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’

or *John 10: 1-16*

‘I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The

watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognise a stranger's voice.' Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them.

Therefore Jesus said again, 'I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me - just as the Father knows me and I know the Father - and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.'

6 *The bishop addresses those to be ordained:*

You have heard, *brothers*, both beforehand in private and now in the sermon and Scripture readings, just how great and important is the office to which you have been called. I bid you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ never to forget this and to remember what you are called to do. You are called to be *messengers*, *watchmen* and *stewards* of the Lord. You are to teach and warn, to feed and nurture the Lord's family and to seek for Christ's sheep scattered abroad among the disobedient peoples of this world so that they may be eternally saved through Christ.

Have it always printed on your memory just how great a treasure is committed to your charge. The church and congregation whom you serve are Christ's spouse and body. They are his sheep, which he

purchased with his death and for whom he shed his blood. You know what a great fault you will be guilty of if any member of his church is hurt or hindered as a result of your negligence and that God will discipline you. Therefore remember what God has called you to do. Never cease your careful and diligent labours until you have done all that you possibly can, according to your duty, to bring all those who are committed to your charge, to a knowledge of God, unity in the faith, and maturity in Christ so that no place is given to erroneous beliefs or wrong behaviour.

Since this office and ministry is both excellent and difficult, you will appreciate that you ought to be thankful to God for your call and that you need carefully to apply yourself to your duties and study. You must take care not to offend nor to cause others to sin. Only God can give you the desire and ability to do these things. You need therefore to pray earnestly for his Holy Spirit. And because there is no other way of leading men to salvation except by teaching the Holy Scriptures, you must read and learn them and order your *lives* and those of your *family* according to them. For the same reason you must forsake all those worldly cares and concerns that hinder you from doing your duty.

We are persuaded that you have carefully considered these things, and that you are clearly determined by God's grace to give *yourselves* wholeheartedly to this office and ministry to which God has been pleased to call you. Therefore continually pray to God the Father by the mediation of our only Saviour Jesus Christ for the heavenly assistance of the Holy Spirit so that through daily reading and meditation on the Scriptures, you will grow in your ministry, endeavour to sanctify and shape your *lives* and those of your *families* according to the rule and teaching of Christ and be wholesome and godly *examples* for the people to follow. And now, so that the congregation of Christ's people gathered here may be assured of your determination to do these things and so that your public commitment to them may strengthen your resolve to do your duty, you shall plainly answer these questions which I, in the name of God and his church, now put to you:

Bishop Do you believe that you are truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ and the order of the Church of England, to the order and ministry of presbyter?

Answer **I do.**

Bishop Are you persuaded that the holy Scriptures contain all doctrine that is necessary for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? And are you determined to teach the people committed to your charge from those Scriptures, and to teach nothing as required or necessary for eternal salvation except that which you are persuaded can be proved by the Scriptures?

Answer **I am persuaded, and will do so, by God's grace.**

Bishop Will you carefully and faithfully minister the doctrine and sacraments, and the discipline of Christ, as the Lord has commanded, and as this church has received them, according to the commandments of God? And will you teach the people committed to your care to keep and observe them carefully?

Answer **I will, with the Lord's help.**

Bishop Will you be ready and careful to banish and drive away all wrong and strange doctrines that are contrary to God's Word and will you do this by means of public and private warning and exhortation, to the sick no less than to the well, whenever necessity requires it?

Answer **I will, with the Lord's help.**

Bishop Will you be diligent in prayer, in the reading of the holy Scriptures, and in those studies that help you to a fuller knowledge of them, turning away from worldly and unworthy concerns?

Answer **I will, with the Lord's help.**

Bishop Will you strive to live according to the teaching of Christ so that you and your *family* will be good examples to the flock of Christ?

Answer **I will, with the Lord's help.**

Bishop Will you maintain and promote to the best of your ability quietness, peace, and love among all Christians, but especially among those committed to your charge?

Answer **I will, with the Lord's help.**

Bishop Will you reverently obey those over you in the church, gladly and willingly accepting their godly counsel?

Answer **I will, with the Lord's help.**

7 *The bishop stands and says:*

Almighty God, who has given you the will to do all these things, grant you strength and power to perform them so that he may complete the work which he has begun in you through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

8 *A short period of silence is kept during which the congregation PRAY for those to be ordained.*

9 *The candidates kneel, and this hymn COME, HOLY GHOST (Veni Creator Spiritus), or another suitable hymn, is sung.*

**Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
and lighten with celestial fire;
thou the anointing Spirit art,
who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart.**

**Thy blessed unction from above
is comfort, life, and fire of love;
enable with perpetual light
the dullness of our blinded sight.**

**Anoint and cheer our soiled face
with the abundance of thy grace;
keep far our foes, give peace at home:
where thou art guide no ill can come.**

**Teach us to know the Father, Son,
and thee, of both, to be but One;
that through the ages all along
this may be our endless song:**

**Praise to thy eternal merit,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

10 *The bishop says:*

Let us pray.

Almighty God and heavenly Father, by your infinite love and goodness you have given us your only beloved Son Jesus Christ to be our redeemer and the author of eternal life. After he had secured our redemption he ascended into heaven and sent into the world his apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers and pastors, by whose

ministry he gathered a great flock in all parts of the world to proclaim the praise of your holy name. For these great benefits, and because you have called *these* your *servants* to the same office and ministry appointed for the salvation of mankind, we give you heartfelt thanks. We praise and worship you. And we humbly pray that we and all who call upon your name may be continually thankful for these and all your benefits, that we may daily increase in faith and the knowledge of you and your Son by the Holy Spirit, and that through *these* your *ministers* and those whom *they* serve your name may be ever glorified and your kingdom enlarged, through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end. **Amen.**

- 11 *The bishops and other ministers present lay their hands on the head of each candidate, kneeling, and the bishop says:*

Receive the Holy Spirit for the office and work of a presbyter in the church of God, now committed to you by the laying on of our hands. The sins you forgive, they are forgiven; the sins you retain, they are retained. And be a faithful minister of the word of God, and of his holy sacraments in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The bishop, giving to each candidate a Bible, says:

Take authority to preach the word of God, and to minister the holy sacraments in the congregation in which you are lawfully appointed.

- 12 *The NICENE CREED is said and the bishop proceeds with Holy Communion.*

- 13 *After Holy Communion and before the blessing these PRAYERS are said:*

Most merciful Father, we ask you to send upon *these* your *servants* your heavenly blessing. May *they* be clothed with righteousness and may your word spoken by *them* be so successful that it is never spoken in vain. Grant also that we may have grace to hear and receive the proclamation of your holy Word and that in all our words and deeds we may seek your glory and the increase of your kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Go before us, O Lord, with your most gracious favour and further us with your continual help so that in all our works, begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name and at the end by your mercy obtain eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

14 *The bishop says this BLESSING:*

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**