

## ORDINATIO SACERDOTALIS

Most Christian Churches have an ordained ministry. The ministry is trained to counsel the flock, give it sacraments such as baptism and communion and preach the word of the Church which they arrogantly like to call the word of God. In Protestantism, the ministry is often thought of just as a service but in Catholicism the ministry of the Catholic priest is so much more. The priest must be a man who is ordained by a bishop who has the magic power to make him a priest and give him the power to turn bread and wine into Jesus and forgive sins and save the dying from Hell by rubbing ointment on them.

Pope John Paul II in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, an apostolic letter dated May 22nd 1994, stated that the Church does not have the power to ordain women to the priesthood and declared that the faithful must once and for all hold that this is the case. He wrote that the rule that women cannot be made priests is not a disciplinary rule or one that can be revoked but something stronger. It is saying that a woman cannot be validly ordained either because she doesn't have a male body or because she is intellectually inferior to men and under no circumstances is it possible.

This fulfils all the criterion for papal infallibility as given in Vatican 1, an ecumenical council of the Church. The Church holds that the teaching of such councils is without error.

Yet there different approaches to the infallibility of the statement.

Some say the pope used his power to teach without error.

Some say he didn't but just declared this teaching infallible on other grounds.

Some say he did both. This answer makes the most sense. When the pope proclaims a doctrine infallible and uses his infallibility, he is merely RECOGNISING that the teaching is already infallible. A teaching is infallible before the pope proclaims it as infallible. That is why infallibility is described as the pope defining a doctrine in faith or morals to be held by the whole Church. Defining means making known.

Those who deny the statement's infallibility say that it cannot be infallible because of Canon 749:3. This Canon decrees that only clearly infallible teachings are infallible. These people say the pope did not make it clear enough that it was infallible so it was not.

A reply to them issued in October 1995 says that the declaration was based on the word of God and was infallible as far as the teaching authority of the Church goes. Some have objected to this on the grounds that the reply was issued by the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith which was not infallible. But the reply must have been made under the guidance of the pope. If it had been wrong and issued by mistake the pope would have said so. The pope took responsibility for it and was part of the production project.

The doctrine of papal infallibility requires the pope to research before he does an infallible statement and he can do that through others as well as by himself. If he does not do his homework he will not be able to issue a valid infallible statement. His infallibility will not work. The pope can make an infallible statement to the Church through others. A statement like that is infallible from the moment he makes it just as the Immaculate Conception dogma was made infallible before Pius IX proclaimed it at a ceremony in Rome. The ceremony was only the proclamation of an already infallible teaching. This means the pope could infallibly see a doctrine is true as a result of his research and lie about this in public and pretend that he found that the direct opposite of it was infallible truth! Faith in the dogmas of the pope that he proclaimed on his own is really just faith in the pope and not in God. No man has the right to ask for that amount of trust.

Others have argued along the lines of Dominican theology that the pope cannot validly be infallible unless he checks what the Church of the past and the present believed or believes. But many theologians say that this checking is not necessary for a doctrine may take time before it is understood properly. The checking can't be necessary for the Church infallibly said Christ was God at the time of the Arian controversy though most did not believe it. But that is only if you assume that the Church or pope are able to be infallible at all. If you believe in infallibility you have to believe that the Church or pope has to check what the Church believes. Infallibility concentrates on what the beliefs of the early Church implied by its belief or what it believed for infallibility is only invoked to silence the parts of the Church that come to doubt a traditional teaching. So the earliest most accurate teaching is the teaching that is to be accepted. So if most Roman Catholics believe that women can be ordained now that does not give the Church the right to say that this means the ordination of woman is infallibly approved by God. The reason it doesn't have this right is because it is a novelty. Most of the Church that ever existed still

objects to the ordination of women.

Many would give you the following thought. The pope has to discern what the Church should or does believe in order to declare a belief infallible. The pope meets with all his bishops personally and their beliefs would be enough. It is what those who think most and pray most and who are most qualified think that comes first and would give the pope the freedom to say that the dogma that woman cannot be ordained is thereby made infallible by the majority belief of the bishops.

With Fr Peter Chirico S.S. who wrote in *The Furrow* in 1996, I agree that what the pope wrote was an infallible statement and cannot be changed without departing from the faith. To me it proves that the faith is anything but infallible and people should pick and choose from it and perhaps even ordain priests themselves!

The Redemptorist magazine, *Reality*, regards the pope's statement as infallible in the sense that it stated that the ban on women priests was part of the faith and the Church would cease to be the true Church of Christ if it changed that ban. It stated that since the ban was believed in from the start of the Church and was once universally held by the Church that it is infallible. This is official Church teaching. The Church also teaches that the apostles established the priesthood being ordained by Christ themselves so when the early Church opposed female ordination universally it means that the apostles were against it too and the apostles were made infallible in faith and morals by Christ so that they would speak for him and set up his Church.

The fact that women priests would have been needed in the past and were never authorised and the fact that ordination is a sacrament that leads to salvation but was still restricted to men is enough to show that if the Church has the Holy Spirit the Holy Spirit does not approve of women priests. The pope then had strong reasons assuming the Church was true to do what he did.

So the statement is infallible from every possible avenue of infallibility and is one of the most thoroughly and strongly reinforced dogmas of the Church. But it is wrong.

The Church stated in a document in 2010 that the attempted ordination of women and child sex abuse by clerics were grave evils. Some say that the Church equated the two sins and others said that the attempted ordination of women is worse than clerical sex abuse. The truth is that the Church says that valid priests have power to give grace and so discourage sin supernaturally through the sacraments which are the normal means of giving grace. This implies that an invalid priest is worse than a child-abusing one. So ordaining women is the bigger sin. Also, the Church says that to sin is one thing but to repudiate the faith is another and is more serious for the faith tells you what sin is. This means that the person who is a heretic and ordains women is worse than the paedophile priest who sins and repents frequently.