

## HAVE PRIESTS INHERITED SACRAMENTAL (IE MAGIC) POWERS FROM THE APOSTLES?

Roman Catholicism teaches that there are three levels in the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Like the Trinity, there are three roles given by one sacrament!

The Deacon is a male who when he receives the laying on of hands by a bishop gets the authority to perform baptisms and marriages and preach. It is impossible to see how this office can be a sacrament because any layperson can do what the deacon does. The sacrament of Holy Orders is about giving priestly powers. However, the deacon has no such powers.

Yet the Church is forced to be stupid and say the diaconate is a sacrament.

The Catholic Encyclopedia ([www.newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org)) says,

“Although certain theologians such as Cajetan and Durandus, have ventured to doubt whether the Sacrament of Order is received by deacons, it may be said that the decrees of the Council of Trent are now generally held to have decided the point against them. The council not only lays down that order is truly and properly a sacrament but it forbids under anathema (Sess. XXIII, can. ii) that anyone should deny "that there are in the Church other orders both greater and minor as which as by certain steps advance is made to the priesthood", and it insists that the ordaining bishop does not vainly say "receive ye the Holy Ghost", but by that a character is imprinted by the rite of ordination.”

All Catholic theologians have no doubt that the priesthood is certainly a sacrament for therein are given the powers to say mass and absolve sins and give all sacraments apart from the sacrament of Holy Orders.

Some have doubted that the consecration of a priest as a bishop is a sacrament. They would see the ceremony as a non-sacrament but which confers no graces or powers on a priest but just sets him apart to lead the priests. So the bishop is just a priest with a higher rank. The Catholic Encyclopedia says,

“With regard to the episcopate the Council of Trent defines that bishops belong to the divinely instituted hierarchy, that they are superior to priests, and that they have the power of confirming and ordaining which is proper to them (Sess. XXIII, c. iv, can. 6, 7). The superiority of bishops is abundantly attested in Tradition, and we have seen above that the distinction between priests and bishops is of Apostolic origin. Most of the older scholastics were of opinion that the episcopate is not a sacrament; this opinion finds able defenders even now (e.g., Billot, "De sacramentis", II), though the majority of theologians hold it is certain that a bishop's ordination is a sacrament.”

According to the view that Episcopal ordination is not a sacrament, only the bishop has the right to give ordination or confirmation. But this is not saying priests don't have these powers – only that they have no right to use them.

Holy orders or ordination to the priesthood or as a bishop or deacon is a sacrament in Catholic theology. Rome teaches that ordination magically gives the priest the power to give magical sacraments and to represent God and teach for him. Yet the earliest statement on whether the magic powers are limited to the clergy or not is by Tertullian and states that when there are no priests available the layman can baptise and make the offering – that is, offer the Eucharist (page 155, Handbook to the Controversy with Rome, Vol 1). Tertullian saw the clergy just as people appointed to do a job and for the sake of order in the Church and not as a caste with supernatural powers that nobody else had. St Frumentius a few years before 368 AD celebrated the Eucharist despite being a layman (page 155, *ibid*).

Catholic sacramentalism says that God is so unloving that he created the law that only priests can absolve sins and laypeople can only forgive sins by baptising if they are already Christians. God prefers to encourage people to sin and keep them in sin by this law for it causes delay in getting pardon and full protection from sin so that some men may have the honour of removing them regardless of the harm done by this awkward arrangement. The priests are better than God when he does that for them. They are more moral than God for they forgive sin with his power which he would not use without their consent. But he lets people stay in sin though he is well able to absolve them himself.

The sacramental system gives power to the priests.

The Bible does not say that priests forgive sins.

There are no real priests in the Catholic Church. The clergy are called priests because during Mass, Jesus' sacrifice is made present and is offered to God by them on behalf of the living and the dead. Calvary is still happening for all past and

present events are present to the Lord God. So, the sacrifice is present at all times and not just during Mass. But when they do not cause the sacrifice to be present they are not priests in the unique sense. And yet they claim to be priests although everybody who is baptised is considered to be a priest.

Jesus allegedly ordained his disciples at the last supper when he told them to call bread his body and wine his blood in his memory. However the account does not say ordination is necessary or that this was an ordination. Ordination involves laying on of hands and stating what authority is given but Jesus does not do that. Catholics believe the last supper was the passover. In Deuteronomy 16 the man of the house is the one who sacrifices the Passover lamb not the ordained priest. Jesus is supposed to have given us the new Passover in the form of communion. Thus it is probable that a special priesthood is not necessary to celebrate the Passover.

A priest has to kill the victim of sacrifice and offer it. Catholic priests claim to believe that they do not kill Jesus on the altar. So they are not real priests. The word for priest in the New Testament is hierous which means sacrificer or priest (page 110, Papal Sin, Structures of Deceit, Garry Wills, Darton Longman and Todd, London, 2000). In other words, it means ritual and religious killer.

The Church says that Anglican Orders are bogus in accordance with the decree of Leo XIII given in 1897 for there was no intention to make the clergy capable of causing the sacrifice of Christ on the altar or for changing bread and wine into the flesh and blood of Jesus. The Catholic Church is right about this but fails to see that its own clergy are invalid too for the same reason for they traced their orders through men of long ago who were ordained without the rites that the Roman Church says are an essential part of giving the sacrament of order. This was pointed out in the Responsio of the Archbishops of England of 1897 which was an answer to the pope's prejudiced decree (read it on pages 322-325, Documents of the Christian Church). It argued from the ancient records of tradition that there was disagreement about how to give confirmation whether it be by the individual laying on of hands or chrism. It was pointed out that Rome's most ancient ordination manuals did not mention that power to change bread and wine into Jesus or giving the power to offer the sacrifice of the Mass. The early Church did not offer the sacrifice of the Mass for it universally believed that Jesus offered his sacrifice to Satan to get him to let us go back to God. This was what was taught by Irenaeus the second century theologian and spokesman for the Church (page 30-31, Documents of the Christian Church). The idea went unchallenged and was promoted by Origen and accepted as the main theory in the Church (page 274-275, The History of Christianity). It was not until the time of St Anselm of Canterbury that it began to be doubted. He was born in 1033 and died in 1109 AD. He gave origin to the idea that God needed atonement for sin and Jesus paid that atonement. The new idea appeared when he wrote Cur Deus Homo (Why did God become Man?) (page 279, The History of Christianity, Lion, Herts, 1977). Soon after that Rome started to declare that the Mass was the sacrifice of the cross and exactly the same sacrifice.

The priest only turns the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. As for the sacrifice, he offers it but with the people who are priests too. The priest making the sacrifice of Christ present has nothing to do with the offering of it. He can make it present without offering. The offering is as much the job of the priest and the people. So the priest title applies no more to Roman Catholic clergy than anybody else even if they have the unique powers they claim. Leo XIII rejected the validity of Anglican orders all because the word priest in the Anglican ordinals didn't specify that the priest was being made to offer Mass. This shows total stupidity. The priest only consecrates and the people offer mass as much as he does.

Can we offer God the sacrifice of his Son? We can either ask Jesus to offer himself for us or we can offer Jesus directly to God.

The first is the godly approach for it is approaching God through Jesus. It is saying, "I am not worthy so offer yourself for me for I am too sinful to offer you."

The second says, "I am a great person now God for I am offering you your own son. I am a great person for it would be better to ask him to offer himself for that is leaving it up to himself if he wants to be offered and is more humble for me. But I am too good to do that. It would be beneath me."

Would Jesus give himself to me to offer him? No. It's his sacrifice so he has to do the offering. If he offers himself there is no need for me to do it.

The second approach is just using Jesus because we want to be near to God. If you were really humble and concerned about God you would let Jesus do the offering for Christianity is about letting the superior being do his own will. Jesus is not yours to offer for he is a person and not a lump of meat. The Christian doctrine of the cross denies that Jesus degraded himself for you because he was affirming his own dignity by doing good for you.

Suppose you can offer Jesus. He will not want you offering him by prayer. He would want you to live your daily life and sacrifice yourself every day for others as an expression of your desire to offer him to God. In other words, when Jesus did so much for you it would be insulting to offer him in an easy way and by sacrifice you are making your sacrifice of yourself a prayer that offers Jesus to God. It is like a mimed prayer.

The Mass is too easy. It cannot be a sacrifice then. It is blasphemy.

Never does the Bible tell us to offer Christ and never does it say that we are priests except in the sense that we offer our prayers and works to God. When Jesus offered himself what is the point of us offering him? It makes more sense to approve of him offering himself for us and accept what he did for us.

The priests call themselves Father because they think they become the fathers of the grace in our souls when they baptise us. God claims to be the father of graces so he can't be impressed about that. If they are fathers then the person who puts John's sperm into John's wife to help her get pregnant is the father of any child that results. We are the children and they are the parents who can tell us what to do for calling them Father is telling them that they are wiser than us and have authority over us. Why claim to be an adult's father when you are not unless you are going to try and control him or her? Paul was not speaking symbolically when he said that he became the Father of his converts when he led them into belief. He had only a superficial resemblance to being their father.

Jesus said that we are to call nobody on earth our father. Catholics state that if this is literal then we need to get a new name for male parents. But he means that we are not to have spiritual fathers for only God has that role. He meant it when he said that Jewish ministers should not be called Rabbi (Matthew 23:8). Therefore the context requires us to take him literally when he bans his devoted people calling themselves fathers, masters, teachers or Rabbis for they are all equal brothers and he is the master, teacher and rabbi. This means that if there is a New Testament priesthood then we are all priests and should be celebrating the Eucharist.

It may be objected that Jesus did believe in us having leaders as long as the leaders acted like our slaves. But these leaders only act like leaders but are not. They do not boss us about or tell us what to do but they advise us and show by example what we are to do. This eliminates Catholic authoritarianism and infallibilism. The Church might say that all people are equal in themselves but the priesthood is an office that contradicts this equality. The whole reason we hate people saying they are better than others or are some kind of superior human being is because it provokes discrimination. Catholics say terrible things about their priests and that must be the reason they hate them so. Jesus might see the priests as trying to be like some kind of Nazi master race. If he is right then the priesthood was not a good example for Hitler.

The Roman Catholic priest believes he is better than your own father. Your own father gave you life but the priest gave you life with God through the sacraments he offers. The priest is shepherd and father and his flock are his children and his sheep. He then can exercise the authority of a parent or shepherd even over adults without being accused of being a Lord. Parents are not Lords of their children though they control them. The control is necessary for the child needs guidance and it is not about

We are not to put religious leaders before God. Putting leaders before God is exactly what the Catholic Church does for there is no evidence for its dogmas being true. When a priest calls himself Father he is saying that he is going to tell you how to approach God instead of directing you to find out what clicks with you in the God thing or what doesn't. If he were really godly he would call himself way-shower or guide but not the pretentious father.

Jesus said he was the way the truth and the life and no man could get to God but by him. The apostles taught that Jesus was the only name under Heaven by which a man could be saved. Jesus said that anybody who got into the kingdom any other way than him was a robber. The Bible teaches that Jesus is the only way to God.

Why is Jesus the only way to God?

Is it so that we can get easy and fast access to God through him?

It must be for no other reason would justify it. It makes God friendly and welcoming.

How is Jesus the only way to God?

Theologians say he is because he has paid for our sins to God.

Is Jesus the only way to God because he is the only person who can atone for our sin?

The Catholic Church says he is and so that his role doesn't mean he cannot have people who are the only way to him such as priests.

Jesus said, "I am the way". He didn't say, "I will be the way", meaning that he would become the way when he is crucified for sins. He was the way when he spoke. He told people who didn't know of his plan to atone for sin that he was the way

for them and the way they must use NOW. For them, he could be the way only if he was treated as the only spokesman for God and the man who had to put you right with God and the direct line to God. Priests who claim to mediate between Jesus and the people are committing a heresy so great that they are NOT true Christians.

Jesus atoning for sins would not necessarily mean he was the way. He would be merely taking away the sins or the barrier between man and God. The bulldozer that takes down a wall that stops you getting to the Hotel is not the way to the hotel. Jesus being the way means more than him just breaking down a wall but showing you the way and leading you personally. He does it alone. He doesn't use intermediaries.

If you need priests to let you near Jesus then the priests are in effect the only way to God if only that they are the only way to the only way to God. Jesus promised delivery from oppression and the danger of oppression including religious oppression. That was why in God's plan he had to be the only way to God. The priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church denies this. If the priesthood are needed for salvation then clearly what objection could there be to the idea that you need some man's permission to go to Jesus? The Catholic priesthood gives you permission to become baptised and be a Catholic, it gives you permission to go to Heaven after forgiving your sins in confession and need I go on? What objection could there be that you need to go to Lourdes or pray to a certain statue before Jesus can save you? The doctrine of Jesus being the only way is about Jesus being easy access to God for everybody with nobody getting in the way.

The Catholic Church teaches that all are priests but that the ministry of ordained priests is different. It states that the difference is one of essence and not only one in degree (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, nn 11, 30, 31). See Catholicism by Richard P McBrien on page 872. It wouldn't be so bad if if the Church taught that ordained priests were lay priests taken up to a new level. But to make them a different essence is to make them in effect a superior species. Lay priests can offer Mass but they need the ordained priest to celebrate mass for them. The most important thing, the authority to offer resides in both. The difference in essence is hard to see unless the ordained priest is being arbitrarily declared to be a super man, a person with the right to be a snob.

### **Jesus the only priest**

The Bible as Charles Hodge on page 442 of his Systematic Theology Volume 2 says states that a priest is a "A man duly appointed to act for other men in things pertaining to God. The idea which lies at the foundation of the office is, that men, being sinners, have not liberty of access to God. Therefore, one, either having that right in himself, or to whom it is conceded, must be appointed to draw near to God in their behalf. A priest, consequently, from the nature of his office, is a mediator. A priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. His function is to reconcile men to God; to make expiation for their sins; and to present their persons, acknowledgments, and offerings to God. He makes intercession for the people. Not merely as one man may pray for another, but as urging the efficacy of his sacrifice and the authority of his office, as grounds on which his prayers should be answered."

He cites Hebrews 5:1 "Every high priest . . . is ordained for men (ὕπερ ἀνθρώπων, for their benefit and in their place), in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." He refers to "Christ our only Priest." He says "this follows from the nature and design of the office."

He denies that the Old Testament priests were really priests - they were metaphors for Jesus. Hebrews agrees for it denies that their sacrifices for sin could really take away sin.

Hebrews says that Jesus was priest for he had no sin and had access directly to God and offered himself as sacrifice for all sin. Thus there could be no other priest. Catholic priests are not priests.

Zechariah seems to prophesied that in our day, the days of salvation as the text says, that everybody will be priests and sacrifice (14:20,21).

### **Conclusion**

The claims of certain men in the Catholic Church to be priests makes no sense. Their claim is just a heresy. They are not priests. They do not have special powers.