

The ministry of the Church is the ministry of Christ, its chief shepherd and high priest. The ordained ministry is Christ's gift to his Church, and in their life and ministry, bishops, priests and deacons are called to speak in Christ's name and build up the Church of which he is the head. In this way the whole body of the Church is ordered in faithful response to the Lord's summons to share his work.

This ordering of the Church's ministry has been shaped under the guidance of the Holy Spirit through the processes of human history, and the Church of England has maintained the threefold order of bishop, priest and deacon. Within that threefold order, bishops are ordained in historic succession (that is, in intended continuity from the apostles themselves). This is a sign of the Church's care for continuity in the whole of its life and mission, and reinforces its determination to manifest the abiding characteristics of the Church of the apostles. This is not to deny that other Christian traditions have an authentic concern for apostolicity or that they intend to express apostolic continuity in other ways, but some such sign of apostolic continuity is required for the full, visible unity of the Church.

Holy Orders help shape the Church around Christ's incarnation and work of redemption, handed on in the apostolic charge. The ministry of deacons is focused in being heralds of the kingdom and in bringing before the servant Church the needs of the world. The ministry of priests (who continue to exercise diaconal ministry) is focused in calling the Church to enter into Christ's self-offering to the Father, drawing God's people into a life transformed and sanctified. The ministry of bishops (as they embody the ministry of both deacon and priest) is focused in the apostolic responsibility of proclaiming and guarding the faith, of presiding at the sacraments, of leading the Church's prayer and of handing on its ministry, as they share with their fellow bishops in their apostolic mission.

The Church's ordained ministry is apostolic; that is, it is sent to enable the Church to fulfil its vocation to mission, to witness to the resurrection and to preach the good news of salvation in all the world. It keeps the Church faithful to the teaching of the apostles, and finds fresh ways to proclaim and express that apostolic faith as it has been handed on in each generation.

The Church's ordained ministry is catholic, that is, universal in time and space. The Church of England speaks of ordination to the office and work of bishop, priest or deacon in the Church of God. When an ordained priest presides at the Eucharist and at Baptism, pronounces God's absolution and blesses God's people in his name, and when bishops confirm and ordain in a particular place, these are actions not only of a particular local Christian community, but of the whole Church.

The Church's ordained ministry is holy, set apart for its particular calling. The holiness of life that is required of the Church's ministers is 'a wholesome example' of godly life to the flock of Christ. The Church is so ordered that the Holy Spirit may sanctify our sinful lives and direct our faltering steps, as we are being made ready to come into God's presence.

The Church's ordained ministry is one; one with the Church of the apostolic age; one in faith and doctrine; and one in continuous ministry

wherever it has been established. In Christ we are all baptized into one body, and the diversity of gifts of the many members of that body is recognized as essential both in building up the body and in ministering to God’s people in his name. The Church’s ordained ministry articulates and serves the Church’s unity.

In each of these aspects of the Church’s ministry, Christ’s mission is the fundamental and unifying reality. Christ’s ministry and mission turn the Church outwards towards the world that God so loved that he sent his only Son. And they prepare the Church for that goal and end of all things, when Christ himself will present to the Father a world made perfect by his work, when all his people share in the joyful communion of love that binds the Father and the Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

The Oaths and the Declaration of Assent

¶ The Oath of Allegiance

I, A B, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Charles III, his heirs and successors, according to law: So help me God.

For the circumstances in which this oath is not required to be taken or may be dispensed with, and for the solemn affirmation which may in certain circumstances replace it, see Canon C 13.

¶ The Oath of Canonical Obedience

I, A B, do swear by Almighty God that I will pay true and canonical obedience to the Lord Bishop of C and his successors in all things lawful and honest: So help me God.

For the solemn affirmation which may in certain circumstances replace this oath, see Canon C 14. For the oath of due obedience to the archbishop and to the metropolitan church of the Province taken by those who are to be consecrated bishop, see [here](#).

¶ The Declaration of Assent

Preface

The Church of England is part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim

afresh in each generation. Led by the Holy Spirit, it has borne witness to Christian truth in its historic formularies, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, *The Book of Common Prayer* and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons. In the declaration you are about to make, will you affirm your loyalty to this inheritance of faith as your inspiration and guidance under God in bringing the grace and truth of Christ to this generation and making Him known to those in your care?

Declaration of Assent

I, *A B*, do so affirm, and accordingly declare my belief in the faith which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds and to which the historic formularies of the Church of England bear witness; and in public prayer and administration of the sacraments, I will use only the forms of service which are authorized or allowed by Canon.

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