



**St. Mina Coptic Orthodox Church**  
**Pre-Service Training Seminars**



**Lecture 5:**

*THE SACRAMENT OF  
HOLY ORDERS*

**“For God is not the author of  
confusion, but of peace”**  
(1 Corinthians 14:33)



# Overview of the Holy Sacraments

1. The Sacrament of Baptism
2. The Sacrament of Confirmation
3. The Sacrament of Eucharist
4. The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)
5. The Sacrament of Repentance & Confession
6. The Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick
7. The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony





# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ Overview of the Sacrament:

- This sacrament was instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ when He chose the twelve of His followers, and consecrated them for ministry, *“He called His disciples to Him, and from them He chose twelve whom He named apostles”* (Luke 6:13)
- These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them saying: *“Preach saying, ‘the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons”* (Matthew 10:5-8)
- He gave them the authority of absolution and binding: *“Assuredly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven”* (Mat.18:18)





# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ Overview of the Sacrament (Cont.):

- After His resurrection He appeared to them in the upper room in Zion and gave them special abilities when He said, *“Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven, if you retain the sins of any, they are retained”* (John 20:22-23).
- He gave only them the special abilities when He said, *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you”* (Matthew 28:19,20)





# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ Overview of the Sacrament:

### – There are three ranks in Priesthood:

- The order of **Deacons**, Deacons are Servants
- The order of **Priests**, Priests are teachers
- The order of **Bishops**, Bishops are overseers & shepherds

– There is only one archpriest, Christ. The priesthood of Christ is, as it were, made present by all clergy, and especially by the bishop.

– The deacon and the priest derive their priesthood from the bishop, just as the bishop derives his from Christ, and that is why priests and deacons must be in canonical and continuous dependence on the bishop; otherwise their priestly works are not valid.





# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ Overview of the Sacrament:



	Baptism	Confirmation	Eucharist	Holy Orders	Holy Matrimony	Unction of the Sick	Repentance & Confession
Bishop							
Priest							
Deacon							

Legend	
L	Can <b>Lead</b> the Service
A	Can <b>Assist</b> in the Service



# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ Overview of the Sacrament:



	Baptism	Confirmation	Eucharist	Holy Orders	Holy Matrimony	Unction of the Sick	Repentance & Confession
Bishop	L, A	L, A	L, A	L, A	L, A	L, A	L
Priest	L, A	L, A	L, A	-	L, A	L, A	L
Deacon	A	A	A	-	A	A	-

Legend	
L	Can <b>Lead</b> the Service
A	Can <b>Assist</b> in the Service





# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ Overview of the Sacrament:

- The bishop has **the fullness of the priesthood**. This is why he is the only one who can celebrate all seven sacraments.
- The priest celebrates all the sacraments **except ordination**, while the deacon cannot celebrate any of them on his own.
- The deacon is the helper of the priest and bishop in the celebration of the sacraments and in the execution of the responsibilities and practices that originate from the Priesthood.







## The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

### ❖ The order of Deacons:

- ‘Deacon’, pronounced as such in Greek, is a Syrian word meaning ‘servant’. The deacon’s responsibility is to help the priest or bishop perform the religious ministry.
- The first church appointed seven deacons who were full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom to help in service, *“The twelve summoned the multitude of disciples and said: ‘Seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom whom we may appoint over this business’”* (Acts 6:2,3).
- *“When they were chosen, they set them before the apostles and when they had prayed they laid hands on them”* (Acts 6:6).





## The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

### ❖ The order of Deacons:

– The apostles stipulated the following three conditions for nominating deacons:

- 1) They must be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom.
- 2) They should be appointed by the apostles through the laying on of hands with prayers.
- 3) They should carry out certain responsibilities in the church.





## The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

### ❖ The order of Deacons:

- Our teacher St. Paul also specified the requirements of a deacon, in his First Epistle to Timothy (3:8-13)
- “Likewise deacons must be:
  - Reverent
  - not double tongued
  - not given to too much wine(drunkenness)
  - not greedy for money
  - holding the mystery of faith with a pure conscience
  - ruling their children and their houses well
  - should be tested first, and then proved and found blameless, so they can be ordained”

(1 Timothy 3:10)





# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ The order of Deacons:

- Although the rank of deacon is the most junior rank of priesthood, St. Paul praises it saying, “For those who served well as deacons, obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 3:13).





# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders:

### – Ranks of Deacons:

- Epsaltos (hymnist)
- Ognostis (reader)
- Epideacon (sub-deacon)
- Deacon (full deacon)
- Archdeacon (leader of deacons)

### – Ranks of Priests:

- Priest
- Hegomen
- Khoori – Episcopos

### – Ranks of Bishops:

- Bishop, Metropolitan and Patriarch





## The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

### ❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Deacons:

#### 1. **Epsaltos (hymnist):**

- ‘Epsaltos’ is derived from the Coptic word ‘Epsalmos’ meaning Psalm or hymn.
- Hence, ‘Epsaltos’ means ‘hymnist’.
- According to his title, his responsibilities include learning and singing the hymns and praises of the church.
- This rank is mentioned in some of the early Church Canons, “Hymnists also must be blessed by the bishop.”
- The Epsaltos is permitted to wear the tunic without the stole.





# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Deacons:

### 2. **Ognostis (reader):**

- ‘Ognostis’ is Greek word derived from two words : ‘Anagnosma’, meaning ‘reading’, and ‘Tis’, meaning ‘related to’. Thus ‘Ognostis’ means ‘the reader’.
- He must be fluent (English, Arabic and Coptic) in knowing by heart the responses said before and after the Epistle readings, and read the daily readings.
- He must read clearly and without mistakes to enable the congregation to hear and understand.
- The Ognostis wears a white tunic with the stole. He wears the stole







# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Deacons:

### 2. **Ognostis (reader):**

- ‘Stole’ is a Greek word (Patrachelion) meaning ‘grace’, the rank of deacon is a grace which is taken by an individual and carried on his shoulders.
- It hangs on the back like a cross to symbolize that he is sharing in carrying the cross, for the Lord says: “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me” (Matthew 16:24).
- The stole comes around the waist like a belt, as proof of preparation and readiness for service, like John the Baptist who wore a leather belt around his waist.





# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Deacons:

### 3. **Epideacon (subdeacon):**

- A Greek word: 'Epi' meaning 'assistant', and 'Diacon' meaning 'deacon'. 'Epideacon' = 'Assistant Deacon'.
- The Epideacon's Responsibilities :
  - He must keep watch of the church doors to forbid the entry of heretics and false teachers.
  - He is responsible for organizing the seating in the church.
  - He is responsible for lighting the church lamps.
  - He is responsible for keeping in order, the church books, and the priestly and servants vestments.
  - He is responsible for preparing the censors.
  - He is responsible for helping the other deacons, and replacing them if necessary.





# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Deacons:

### 4. **Deacon (full deacon):**

- 'Deacon' in Syrian, or 'Diakon' in Greek and Coptic, mean 'servant'.
- The Responsibilities of a Deacon
  - He is responsible for saying the responses of the litanies prayed by the priest during the raising of incense and Liturgy.
  - He is responsible for maintaining order and quiet in the church, to ensure that the congregation stands with reverence and respect.
  - He is responsible for helping the priest in visiting the church's congregation.





# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Deacons:

### 4. **Deacon (full deacon):**

#### – The Responsibilities of a Deacon (Cont.)

- He is responsible for recording the names of the people who have offered gifts and oblations to the church, so that the priest can remember them during the Litany of oblations. In the Apostolic Canons (Diaskolia), it is written : “The deacons write every day the names of those who have given offerings, whether they are alive or departed, so that they may be remembered during the readings and prayers” (Diaskolia 35)
- He is responsible for cleaning the altar and putting in order the tabernacle. He must ensure the cleanliness of the altar and its coverings, before the priest comes.





# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Deacons:

### 4. **Deacon (full deacon):**

#### – The Responsibilities of a Deacon (Cont.)

- He is permitted to read the Holy Gospel of the divine Liturgy. During the deacon's ordination, the bishop says: "... he is honored to read the Gospel."
- He is permitted, when necessary, to carry the chalice and give the congregation the Precious Blood, by permission from the priest.





## The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Deacons:

### 5. **Archdeacon (leader of deacons):**

- Archdeacon' is a Greek word composed of two parts: 'Arch' meaning 'leader', and 'Diakon' meaning 'deacon'. Hence, 'archdeacon' mean 'the leader of deacons'.
- His responsibilities are the same as the Deacon.







# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Priests:

### 1. Priest:

- This is the first and essential priestly rank.
- Priest means elder and also an intercessor in the holies of God for the congregation.
- He is a presbyter who has the right to administer all the church sacraments except the laying on of hands and appointing priestly ranks, which is the right of a bishop or overseer or someone above him.
- He is a teacher who teaches the people the word of God and leads them to the way of God, virtues, mysteries of the religion, and explains the dogmas and rites and details the word of truth.







# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Priests:

### 1. Priest:

- “For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and people should seek the law from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 2:7).
- He is a father who pastors his children compassionately, visits them with tender care and love as he is zealous for their salvation, as his salvation is related to their salvation,
- “For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 3:8).
- He humbly serves them as a servant to a master as Lord Christ washed the feet of His disciples.





# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Priests:

### 2. **Hegomen:**

- The word 'Hegomen' or 'Egomenos' is derived from the Greek word meaning 'provider' or 'presenter', and the 'Egomenos' is the 'senior' or 'leader' priest in church.
- Hegomen is only a promotional rank from a priest to a hegomen, within the rank of priesthood, and is not considered as a new ordination.





## The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

### ❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Priests:

#### 3. **Khoori - Episcopos:**

- Khoori-episcopos is a Greek word meaning 'bishop' of 'villages' or 'fields'.
- He helps the bishop or metropolitan of the diocese in the service and visitation of the villages.
- The rank of Khoori-episcopos (or the bishop or overseer) came to existence by the end of the third century AD in Asia Minor when the dioceses extended and their division was not preferred, so there existed an utmost need for the presence for the bishop to visit and care for them.





# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Bishops:

### 1. **Bishop:**

- This is the highest rank of priesthood and its owner has the perfection of priesthood and leadership of priesthood.
- The word Episcopos is a Greek word that means overseer or looking from above.
- Bishops are chosen among celibates who were not previously married.
- The bishop is distinguished from the priest by having the perfection of priesthood , and the authority of laying on of hands and ordination of all the ranks of deacons and priesthood in his diocese.





# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Bishops:

### 1. **Bishop:**

#### – Some duties or responsibilities of the bishop:

- Must not lay hands on anyone hastily but carefully after his goodness is testified.
- Does not accept any complaint about a priest or a deacon except from two or three witnesses.
- Judges rightly among his congregation without hypocrisy.
- May reward or punish any deacon or priest in his diocese after he assures his deeds and attitude and service, and after hearing the witnesses and giving him a chance to defend himself.
- Does not absent himself from his diocese except by a permission from the Patriarch and for a period no more than six months.





# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Bishops:

### 1. **Bishop:**

#### – Some duties or responsibilities of the bishop:

- Does not move from his diocese because it is small or due to poverty, draught or small number of congregation, to another richer or larger diocese .
- The bishop does not occupy himself with any worldly work like trade or industry so that he is free to shepherd his congregation.







# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Bishops:

### 2. **Metropolitan:**

- Whatever applies on the bishop from rules, specifications and responsibilities, it also applies on the metropolitans as they have the same bishopric rank.
- “Metropolitan” is derived from the Greek word: Metropolitans which means the mother city or the major city of the diocese. So Metropolitan is the bishop of the progressing Mother City.
- Rank of metropolitan is only a promotion from bishop to metropolitan on the same diocese with the same name.







# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Bishops:

### 3. **Patriarch:**

- Patriarch is a word derived from Greek word “Patriarchies”, composed of two parts: Patria: the tribe & Arches: ruler, so it means ruler of the tribe.
- But the word ‘Pope’ is said to be derived from Greek word Papas, which means father. Others say it is a compound word from father of fathers, then simplified to Pope for ease of pronunciation. It is historically known that this surname is specified for the Pope of Alexandria first, since Pope Yarokloos (the thirteenth Pope) and from Alexandria it conveyed to Rome.





# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Bishops:

### 3. **Patriarch:**

- The Patriarch is the highest rank in the bishopric level and has the highest or greatest ruling of priesthood.
- Patriarch is the leader of the Church, bishops and all metropolitans.
- Patriarch is the successor of the Apostles and first father of the Church.





# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Bishops:

## 3. Patriarch:

- Patriarch is entrusted by Christ for all the congregation and the souls of the flock in his ordination. The archbishop says to him, after he places the rod of pastorate on the altar: “Receive the rod of pastorate from the hand of the Great Shepherd Jesus Christ, the Ever Living Son of God, to shepherd the flock, nourish it by living doctrine as He entrusted you on the soul of His flock, and from your hands their blood will be asked.” So it is a great and difficult responsibility, and needs its carrier to pray a great deal for God to help him to carry it and accomplish its many serious duties.





# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Bishops:

### 3. **Patriarch:**

- The Patriarch is distinguished from the bishop or metropolitan by these two rights: right of ordination of bishops and their promotion, and the right of making the Holy Myron for the whole Church.
- The Great Cathedral is the location of the Patriarchal See where bishops are ordained and promoted by the Patriarch.





# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

## ❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Bishops:

### 3. **Patriarch:**

- Patriarch must be chosen from among scholar, spiritual, capable monks for leadership and rightly defining the word of truth, or from among common bishops who have no dioceses, as the Church Canon forbids transfer of bishop from one diocese to another for whatever reason. His age must not be less than forty years upon his ordination.





# The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)

❖ The ranks of the Holy Orders - Bishops:

## 3. Patriarch:

- Generally, all the ordinations of the deacons & priests are performed in the Holy Liturgy right after the prayer of Reconciliation since their ministry is like ambassadors of Christ calling people to reconcile with God while the ordination of the Bishops (Metropolitan & Patriarch) is performed after the reading of the Acts of the Apostles as the church consider them to be the successors of the Apostles, and their ministry is the continuation of that of the Apostles.

