

2.9.73 10.05 p.m.

13. In this sacramental act ministers receive the promise of divine grace for their work and their sanctification; the priesthood of Christ is presented to them as a model; and the Spirit leaves his indelible mark upon those whom he has chosen and consecrated. As Christ has inseparably united the church with himself for the salvation of the world, and as the call of God to all believers is a call to a life-long commitment to discipleship, so all the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable (cf. Rom. 11:29). For this reason, in both our churches ordination is unrepeatable.

14. In the ordination of a bishop, other bishops lay hands upon him as they request the gift of the Spirit for his ministry and receive him into their ministerial fellowship. Because they are entrusted with the oversight of other churches, their participation in his ordination signifies that this new bishop and his church are within a communion of churches. Moreover, because their churches are rooted in the teaching of the apostles, and because they have themselves been introduced into the episcopal college through ordination, their participation also indicates the historical continuity of this church and its bishop with the original apostolic community. The communion of the churches in faith and holiness, through time and space, is thus symbolised and maintained in the bishop. In all this are comprised the essential features of what is meant by ordination in the apostolic succession.

15. Both presbyters and deacons are ordained by the bishop. In the ordination of a presbyter, the presbyters present join with the bishop in the laying on of hands, thus signifying the shared nature of the commission entrusted to them. Presbyters are joined with the bishop in the ministry of the word and the sacraments; they are given authority to preside at the eucharist and to pronounce absolution. Deacons are associated with bishops and presbyters in the ministry of word and sacrament.