

PRIEST

The priest is mentioned several times in the New Testament. Christ chose a number of men and named them apostles (;). By the full authority that was committed to Him, He commanded them to go forth and baptize people everywhere and teach them to observe His commandments. They alone were given the power of forgiving sins or withholding forgiveness. These apostles appointed bishops and priests in the same manner, according to the [sacrament](#) instituted by our Lord, and they, in turn, were succeeded by others in all the apostolic churches of Christendom.

Paul set up Timothy as bishop at Ephesus, exhorting him not to neglect the spiritual gift that he was given under the guidance of prophecy, through the laying-on of hands of the presbytery (1 Tim.. 4:14), and prompted him to confide his own teaching into the hands of other competent and trustworthy men. Likewise, having named Titus **bishop** in Crete, Paul instructed him to carry out his intention in so doing, that is, to set up presbyters in each town.

In the writings of the early fathers there is ample evidence that ever since the apostolic age, the principle of an organized priesthood was closely followed. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch (c. 35-107), wrote to the Ephesians, "I exhort you to study to do all the things with a divine harmony, while your bishop presides . . . and your presbyters . . . along with your deacons, who are most dear to me, and are [en](#)trusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ." Candidates for the priesthood should have a genuine and unmistakable vocation for it, with no motive other than to participate fully and wholeheartedly in the sublime "service of the Spirit".

It is because of this that St. Paul warned Timothy against hastily ordaining unfit persons (1). Among the early fathers who dealt with the subject is [Jerome](#), who grasped the essence of priesthood: "A clergyman . . . must first understand what his name means . . . and must endeavor to be that which he is called. Because the Greek word *cleros* means lot, or

inheritance, the clergy are so called either because they are the [lot](#) of the Lord, or else because the Lord Himself is their lot and portion.” Before ordination, the [congregation](#) testifies his good works, and he should know well the doctrines, be gentle, and charitable. His [marriage](#) must be lawful according to the canon.

The bishop ordains him deacon, if he is not one. The priest is in charge of serving the altar, which includes all the liturgical service, [Eucharist](#), Matrimony, Baptism, confession, and [unction of the sick](#), etc. He is, by definition, one of the elders as [Moses](#) appointed elders to solve problems between the member of the congregation. The priest should instruct his people and educate them with [humility](#) and purity.

GAWDAT GABRA

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