

A Look at Ordination & Consecration

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There are many different forms of ordination. The type of ordination that I wish to address in this entry is the type of ordination that is transmitted through apostolic succession by a bishop -- in my case within the Sacramental Christian Movement (also known as the Independent Sacramental Movement), in my case of the Gnostic variety. This is a specific type of ordination and involves a laying on of hands by a bishop and an energy transfer by passing on a lineage of apostolic succession. This succession (allegedly) originated with Jesus Christ and was passed onto his disciples and -via a succession of bishops through the centuries- to eventually reside within the bishop conducting an ordination or consecration in our modern times. This sort of ordination/consecration is special because it contains this energy transfer and that energy transfer does have an effect upon the person being ordained/consecrated.

In a theological sense this energy transfer places an "indelible" characteristic upon the soul or spirit of the individual being ordained, that is a characteristic that cannot be removed. This alteration, conducted sacramentally, is similar to the sacraments of baptism and confirmation because it changes who you become after the ordination takes place. For those individuals who subscribe to the idea of reincarnation I would even hypothesize that the indelible characteristic of ordination is passed onto subsequent incarnations, and because of this a level of responsibility needs to be acknowledged by the potential ordinand. Things to consider:

- ❑ Do I accept this ordination/consecration forever in this lifetime?
- ❑ Do I accept this ordination/consecration forever for all subsequent lifetimes?

You might find yourself, in the future, in a position where you might no longer subscribe to a desire for priestly or apostolic ministry but the status of your spirit or soul is not changed by your willingness to "leave" a sacramentally ordained or consecrated life. It will still be there no matter what your future disposition becomes. This is something very important to consider, and to evaluate in your life.

Something else to consider is the person who is ordaining or consecrating you. The originator of the priesthood/episcopacy is Jesus Christ, however, when an ordination or consecration is conducted those individuals within the succession are also passing something of themselves on to the new ordinand, and this is an important consideration.

Things to consider:

- ❑ Is the person who is about to ordain/consecrate me a person with whom I would normally be "*in communion*" with?
- ❑ How do I view the person ordaining/consecrating me? Do I respect him or her?
- ❑ Would I ordain/consecrate the person who is ordaining/consecrating me if the situation were reversed?

These are important questions to ask yourself because an ordination/consecration is a very powerful energy exchange and the energy passed onto the new deacon, priest or bishop will affect each of us in different ways.

Again, something else to consider is how you plan on coping with the changes that will take place after an ordination or consecration. Instead of looking at this energy exchange as, *"I'm a new priest"* or *"I'm a new bishop"*, think of it as you now being a priestly initiate or episcopal initiate into the sacred mysteries of the priesthood and episcopate. The essence of the priesthood and episcopate is mystical in nature and NOT administrative or jurisdictional -- these are constructs resulting from the priesthood and episcopacy and not directly linked to the mystery of the sacrament. The mystery of the sacrament is about the sacraments themselves and not about anything else. All too often I have seen bishops within the Sacramental Movement focus their attention on the jurisdictional or administrative side of episcopacy. This is not what the sacramental initiation of consecration is about -- it is about the fullness of priestly initiation and the fullness of the sacraments.

Things to consider before ordination and consecration:

- What was my life like before ordination/consecration?
- Am I equipped to deal with a major change in my life?
- Am I ready to deal with the added responsibility that this change will bring upon me?

Things to consider after ordination and consecration:

- How has my life changed since ordination/consecration?
- Do I find myself depressed? What will I do about this depression?
- What is my support network, do they understand ordination/consecration? Do they support my decision? What sort of support do I have from other priests and/or bishops?

Having a support network is important for a new priestly or episcopal initiate. It is important because the effect that it has on an individual is specific and peculiar to each individual. Having had experience with energy transfer and initiations I was somewhat prepared for my episcopal consecration and was able to channel the effect in a positive manner: I left full time employment and went back to school full time, radically changed my lifestyle (had to slim things down) and had to deal with the changes that result from becoming a full time student again. I had a supportive network for my life changes, but not necessarily a supportive network for my decision to get consecrated (although it has gotten **much** better). The effect of my consecration could have been horrific since I was dealing with the recent death of my father a month prior to my consecration and dealing with the depression resulting from that loss. However, being aware of the effects of consecration helped me ride the storm of emotions I was feeling at the time -- both from dealing with death and also from dealing with the death of myself as the old me was replaced by a new "me."

As a final note I want to also point out that consecration is not about wearing purple, wearing a mitre, or other episcopal regalia. All these items are externals and not absolutely necessary for administering the sacraments. Please ask yourself, "*Do I fantasize more about wearing a mitre than imagining myself as a apostolic representative of Christ?*" The deep responsibility of ordination and consecration far outweighs any sort of external or "*episcopal privilege.*"

One more point to consider. In the Sacramental Christian Movement (also known as the Independent Sacramental Movement) the idea of jurisdiction is a construction of our modern sensibilities. It is simply absurd to think "*if I create it they will come.*" Jurisdictions (i.e., new "*denominations*") are created almost every day, and they also die every day. What exists is the episcopacy, the priesthood, and the diaconate. Until there is a renaissance within the sacramental movement and circumstances radically change the situation will be as it is now, which is very fluid. If a priest doesn't like his bishop he or she will simply go someplace else. If a bishop is unhappy with his or her fellow bishops he or she will create his or her own jurisdiction. This is the nature of this movement. It is unfortunate that this is this way, but it is simply the nature of the movement. This is why I view consecration and ordination as an initiatory experience and not simply as admission into a jurisdiction clergy roles. The apostolic succession sees through any jurisdictional lines and does not recognize "*clergy roles*" or "*jurisdictional canon law.*" It acknowledges only correct "matter and form".