

Take-Home 2 | Until the End of the Age

A Mission Handed On

Teaching, appointment, and the laying on of hands

Keep this sheet for prayer, review, and practice this week.

What We Found

Paul planned for transmission four links deep, and the chain carries more than a message. Timothy received a gift through the laying on of hands and a deposit to guard. Titus was to appoint elders in every town who could teach and correct. The titles elder and bishop overlap in Titus 1, but the work Titus does is a bishop's work, and within a generation the three orders are named. Catholic apostolic succession joins the apostolic faith to the continuing pastoral ministry of the bishops. (2 Timothy 1:6; 2:2; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 1:15-26; CCC 77; 1554-1562.)

Voices of the Church

St. Clement of Rome

Summary: The Apostles knew there would be strife over the office of bishop, so they appointed the men named above. Afterward they gave instructions that, when these died, other approved men should succeed to their ministry. Clement treats orderly succession as part of the apostolic arrangement itself.

First Letter to the Corinthians, 44

St. Irenaeus of Lyons

Summary: The tradition of the Apostles is manifest in every church to anyone who wants to see it. Irenaeus says he can list the bishops the Apostles appointed and their successors down to his own day. A received faith and a recognizable ministry go together in his argument.

Against Heresies, III.3.1

Second Vatican Council

Summary: Episcopal consecration confers the fullness of the sacrament of Orders, the high priesthood. With the office of sanctifying it confers the offices of teaching and governing, which by their nature can be exercised only in hierarchical communion with the head and members of the college.

Lumen Gentium, 21

Ready Response

If someone says: "Elders and bishops are the same in the Bible, so the Catholic hierarchy is a later invention."

You can say: The two words do overlap in Titus 1, and I will not pretend otherwise. But look at what Titus is doing there: appointing ministers in every town on Paul's authority. That is what a bishop does. The role came first and the titles settled soon after, by about the year 107 in Ignatius of Antioch.

Live It This Week

Pray. Pray each day this week for your diocesan bishop and your parish priests, by name.

Learn. Read CCC 1554, 1558, and 1562. Write one sentence on how a bishop's ministry and a priest's ministry are related.

Hand on. Explain one thing from tonight to someone this week, using the passages rather than an analogy.

Scripture Memory

"Guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us."

2 Timothy 1:14 (RSV2CE)

A Personal Response

What responsibility for handing on the faith has already been entrusted to me, and am I guarding it?

Before Next Session

Read: Matthew 16:13-19; John 21:15-17; Luke 22:31-32. Notice each time Jesus speaks to Peter alone.

Catechism: CCC 552-553, 880-882.

In the Catechism this week: 77; 861-862; 1554-1562.