

Appointment of a Superior to a Religious Order

Words to be said are in this style: All: say these words.

Instructions are in italics.

The charter of the Religious Order is read.

The superior-elect acknowledges that they obey the requirements of the Religious Order and any conditions of belonging to the order, and they will lead the members of the order in humility and in love. All bishops present should co-consecrate. Mass will be celebrated by the Consecrator and a priest only or alternatively by the consecrator and new superior only.

[If applicable] The insignia being presented to the new superior of the order should be blessed by the co-consecrating or assisting bishop just prior to the service. The insignia should be blessed in full view of the assembling congregation.

This service order may be used in conjunction with other services, such as in a synod or Principal Service setting. Mass should be celebrated immediately following this service.

Introductory Rites

A deacon (or sub-deacon) and priest who are members of the order shall process to the altar and light the candles and tend the altar during the entrance song. The priest (or senior representative of the order) welcomes the people and then says:

Priest: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Priest: I will go unto the altar of God: even unto the God of my joy and gladness.

Senior member of the order: Most Reverend Bishop [*name*], the members of our/the Religious Order, the [*name of order*], a part of the Old Catholic Apostolic Church pray that you will raise this our brother/sister (s) here present to be the Superior of our order, for the time being.

Consecrator: Do you have the consent of the membership?

Senior member of the order: We have.

Consecrator: Let it be read.

(or if it was already approved by the members of the order, the consecrator shall acknowledge this aloud).

The Consent of the membership is now read, by the senior member of the order.

The Consecrating Bishop is seated before the altar, and the superior-elect is brought forward and kneels facing the consecrator.

Homily

The consecrating bishop begins the homily, the first part directed toward the members of the order:

Consecrator: Dearly beloved, carefully consider to what sort of rank in the [name of order] our brother(s) (sister(s)) are about to be appointed. Our Lord Jesus Christ, sent by the Father so that He might ransom the human race, Himself sent into the world twelve apostles who, filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, would preach the Gospel, and, gathering all nations into one sheepfold, would sanctify and govern them. Now so that members of this religious order might continue to the end of time in following Our Lord through the Charism of [name of order's spiritual patron], the gift of the Holy Spirit which they received from Christ, by which the fullness of the sacrament of the Order is conferred.

With a grateful and joyful heart, therefore, receive this our brother(s) (sister) – whom is elected to be superior of the order by imposition of hands. Show him (her) honour as minister of Christ and dispenser of the mysteries of God both inside as well as beyond this religious order, to whom is committed the testimony of truth of the Gospel and indeed the ministration of the Spirit and of justice.

The consecrating bishop continues the homily this time directed to the superior-elect:

Consecrator: In the religious order entrusted to you, be a faithful dispenser, moderator, and guardian of the mysteries of Christ. Chosen by the Father to govern his household, be ever mindful of the good shepherd who knows His sheep and whose sheep know him, and who did not hesitate to lay down his life for his sheep.

Exhort the faithful members of the order you shall lead, that they might labour with you in your Apostolic work; and may you not fail to hear them gladly. Moreover, may you have untiring care for those who have not yet been added to the one sheepfold of Christ, just as if they have been committed to you in the Lord.

Attend, therefore, to the whole flock in which the Holy Spirit places you to guide the [name of religious order]: in the name of the Father – whose image you represent in the church; and in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ – whose office of teacher, priest, and pastor you exercise; and in the name of the Holy Spirit, who gives life to Christ's Church and who strengthens our weakness by His power.

The Consecrator, holding the Book of the Gospels open on his or her lap with both hands, with the lower part of the book turned towards the Elect, accepts from him or her the fulfilment of this oath, with the Elect still kneeling says:

Superior-elect: So help me God and these Holy Gospels of God.

And touching the very text of the Gospels with both hands, then, not before, the Consecrator says:

Consecrator: Thanks be to God.

Then the Consecrator reads to the Elect and to any Assisting Bishops (seated in their places with the mitre) the following examination:

EXAMINATION

Consecrator: An ancient institution of the Holy Church commands that they who are to be overseers of others should be questioned in the presence of the members and their representatives concerning their purpose with regard to the faith to be kept and the office to be discharged. Therefore, dear brother/sister are you resolved to fulfil the office entrusted to us by the Apostles, and which is about to be committed to you through the imposition of our hands, with the grace of the Holy Spirit, inside the [name of religious order]?

Superior-elect: I am.

Consecrator: Are you resolved to preach the Gospel of Christ faithfully and unceasingly in the charism of [name of patron of religious order]?

Superior-elect: I am.

Consecrator: Are you resolved to keep the deposit of faith pure and intact, according to the tradition received from the Apostles, always and everywhere observed in the church?

Superior-elect: I am.

Consecrator: Are you resolved to build the body of Christ, His Church, and to remain in His unity with the wider Old Catholic Apostolic Church whilst leading the religious order of [name of religious order]?

Superior-elect: I am.

Consecrator: Are you resolved to faithfully honour and respect the example of [spiritual patron of the order] as they did the Blessed Apostles?

Superior-elect: I am.

Consecrator: Are you resolved – with your fellow members – to cherish the Holy people of God as a devoted Guardian of them and to direct them on the path of salvation?

Superior-elect: I am.

Consecrator: Do you promise to surrender the charge of this religious order to another at the end of your tenure or when your fellow members petition for a successor in due time?

Superior-elect: I do.

Consecrator: Do you promise to serve The Old Catholic Apostolic Church diligently and in truth, in obedience to Christ and co-operatively with every other servant of this church as you lead the [name of religious order]?

Superior-elect: I so promise.

Consecrator: May Our Lord who has begun a good work in you, God Himself, bring it to completion.

All respond: Amen.

Consecrator: *(standing, with hands joined and facing the people)* says:

O you most beloved by us, let us entreat the benevolence of Almighty God, that, providing for the benefit of the Church, He might grant an abundance of His grace to this elect.

The Imposition of hands and Prayer of Consecration

The elect is helped to their feet and approaches the consecrating bishop, who stands before the altar wearing the mitre; and the elect genuflects and kneels before them.

The people stand.

The consecrating bishop lays hands upon the head of the elect, saying nothing, and breathes upon the top the elects' head. Replacing both hands upon the elects head, the consecrating bishop says:

Consecrator: Receive the Holy Spirit, for the office and serving as a superior of [name of order].

Then approaching in succession, all of the bishops impose hands upon the head of the elect, saying

Assisting Bishop: Receive the Holy Spirit, for the office and serving as a superior of [name of order].

The bishops remain around about the consecrating bishop until the Prayer of Consecration is finished, yet in such a way that the faithful may easily see the proceedings.

Consecrator: God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of mercies and God of all consolation; Who dwells in the highest, yet regards lowly things; Who knows all things before they come to be; You, Who has given rules in Your church, through the word of Your Grace; Who from the beginning did predestine a race of just people from Abraham; Who appointed chiefs and priests, and Who did not abandon Your sanctuary without ministry; Whom it pleased from the beginning of the world to be glorified in these whom you have chosen:

(all bishops together continue...)

Bishops: And now, pour forth upon this elect Your power, which is from You: that governing spirit which You did give to your beloved Son, Jesus Christ; which Himself bestowed upon the holy Apostles, who established the church everywhere as Your sanctuary, to the unfailing glory of Your name.

All: Amen

The Superior of the Religious Order has the devolved but time limited authority, to act as episcopal overseer of the members of the order. The Superior of the Religious Order will notify the Bishop of the Old Catholic Apostolic Church of any admission, or ordination as that member becomes a part of the Old Catholic Apostolic Church in minor orders and may progress in minor and Holy Orders of OCAC if desired.

Please pray for the new Superior, and for the Religious Order, and for the Old Catholic Apostolic Church.

Please also pray for yourself regularly.