



Sacramental Orders (Lex Orandi)

Susan K. Wood SCL

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Ordained ministry cannot be understood by itself or only in its relationship with Christ. It must find its identity in relationship to the Church, for it exists to serve and build up the Church. In *Sacramental Orders* Susan Wood places the theology of ordained ministry within its ecclesial foundations, identifying four concepts that shed light on different aspects of ordained ministry and its relationship to the Church: a monarchical and hierarchical concept; a eucharistic, collegial model of ministry representing the communion of particular Churches; the priest, prophet, and king, which structures the concept of the Church as the people of God; and a theology of the Church as a sacrament of Christ and ordained ministry as a sacrament of the Church.

Sacramental Orders is a liturgical and theological study of ordained ministry grounded in the liturgy of the 1990 typical edition of the rites. It addresses the three Orders within the one Sacrament of Order: bishop, presbyter, and deacon. By including each order with this study, the interrelationship between the three becomes more apparent, and the theology of one is allowed to inform the theology of the others. Wood points out that one of the challenges in theologies of ordained ministry today is to distinguish a bishop from a presbyter when both are ordinations to the priesthood and presbyters are assuming a greater ministry of oversight as they pastor more than one parish, and to distinguish deacons from presbyters at a time in church history when deacons are assuming more presbyteral functions.

Sacramental Orders also focuses on the mutual reciprocity in the relationship between liturgical rite and the theology of the sacrament as explained in ecclesial documents. The ordination rites reflect the theology expressed by Vatican II and yet also present a theology of the sacrament embedded in the liturgical texts and actions.

Chapters are "The Ecclesiological Foundations of Ministry," "The Liturgical Rite of the Ordination of a Bishop," "The Sacramentality of Episcopal Consecration," "The Liturgical Rite of the Ordination of Presbyters," "Theology of the Presbyterate," "The Liturgical Rite of the Ordination of Deacons," and "Questions Concerning the Diaconate."

Susan K. Wood, SCL, PhD, is Associate Professor of Theology at St. John's University, Collegeville, MN. She is the author of articles published in *Theological Studies*, *Pro Ecclesia*, *One in Christ*, *Worship*, *Studia liturgica*, *Communio*, and *Studio Canonica*. She is a member of the U.S. Lutheran/Roman Catholic Dialogue.

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