

**ORDERS FOR
THE ORDINATION OF DEACONS/DEACONESSSES
THE ORDINATION OF PRESBYTERS
THE CONSECRATION OF BISHOPS**

PREFACE

The Church of South India believes that the ministry is a gift of God through Christ to his Church, which he has given for the perfecting of the life and service of all its members (Constitution II.7). The Church as a whole is a priestly body, since it is the body of Christ the great High Priest. Christ shares in its priestly nature. Yet from the beginning God has entrusted particular ministries to particular persons within it, and these have, through the Church, received the commission of Christ. The ordained ministry of the Church of South India consists of Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons/Deaconesses. In accepting this ministry, the Church of South India desires to maintain continuity with the historic ministry of the Church as it has come down to us from early times through the uniting Churches.

An ordination service is the rite by which one of these ministries is conferred. It is an act of God in his Church. The Church of South India believes that in all ordinations and consecrations, the true Ordainer and Consecrator is God, who, in response to the prayers of his Church, and through the words and acts of its representatives, commissions and empowers for the office and work, to which they are called the persons whom it has selected (Constitution 11.1 1; see also II.7).

In the earliest ordination of which we have record; that described in Acts 6:1-6, the following parts appear: election by the people, prayer, and the laying on of apostolic hands. In accordance with this pattern, which is the scriptural authority for what is said in the Constitution (IV.25 and V.5) of the essential elements in ordination services, the same three parts form the basis of the services in this book:

1. The presentation of the candidates to the presiding Bishop, this being the last step in the process of choice of them by the Church;
2. Prayer for those about to be ordained or consecrated, that they may receive the gift of the Holy Spirit for their ministry; and
3. The laying on of hands of at least three Bishops (in an Episcopal consecration), of the Bishop and Presbyters (in an ordination of Presbyters), or of the Bishop (in an ordination of Deacons/ Deaconesses).

To these have been added an examination of the candidates concerning their beliefs and duties, the delivery to them of the instruments of their office (Bible, pastoral staff), and the giving of the right hand of fellowship. These ceremonies, however valuable for their symbolism, are not essential elements in the rites of ordination.

THE ORDINATION OF PRESBYTERS

The service begins with the first part of the order for the Lord's Supper, called the Preparation.

THE PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

The people are seated. A person, duly appointed, presents the candidates and says to the Bishop, seated in his chair:

Reverend Bishop in God, we present to you these persons to be, ordained Presbyters.

Bishop: Let the authority for their ordination be read.

The authorisation of the Diocese for the ordaining of the candidates is read. This shall include a statement of the work to which each candidate has been called.

The Bishop says to the people:

Beloved, these are they whom we intend, God willing, to ordain Presbyters. You have heard that those appointed to inquire about them and examine them believe them to be persons of sound learning and godly life, and believe them to be duly called to serve God in this ministry. We Therefore ask you to declare your assent.

The people stand, and the Bishop says:

We are not sufficient of ourselves; our sufficiency is from God.

Do you trust that these persons are, by God's grace, worthy to be ordained?

We trust that they are worthy. To God be the glory.

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD OF GOD

The Lord be with you:
and also with you.

Let us pray

The people kneel.

Almighty God, giver of all good things, who by your one Spirit have appointed a diversity of ministries in your Church: mercifully behold these your servants now called to the office of Presbyter; and so replenish them with the truth of your Gospel, adorn them with innocence of life, and fill them with the power of your Holy Spirit, that both by word and good example, they may faithfully and joyfully serve you, to the glory of your name and the building up of your Church; through the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, world without end. **AMEN**

THE LESSONS

Old Testament: Ezekiel 33:1-9
Psalm 99 or a hymn/lyric
Epistle: I Peter 5:1-11
Gospel: John 10:1-16
(or any other suitable texts may be used)

The Sermon

The Nicene Creed

Hymn

THE EXAMINATION

The candidates stand The people are seated The Bishop is seated in his chair and says:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord and Head of the Church, who, being ascended on high, has given gifts to people for the building up of his Body, we are assembled here to ordain you Presbyters by prayer and the laying on of hands.

In this act of ordination we believe that it is **God** who gives you grace and authority for the office and work to which you are called, and that he does so in answer to the prayers of his Church and through the actions and words of his appointed ministers. We act and speak as part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, and in the faith, which we have now with united voice declared in the words of the creed.

Presbyters are called to work together with their Bishop, their fellow-presbyters and the people of God. They are to be pastors, teachers and servants in the places to which they shall be sent. It is their work to share the Gospel of Christ with all people; to proclaim the Word of the Lord, to call hearers to repentance; to assure them of God's mercy. They are to baptize and prepare the baptized for confirmation. They are to teach and encourage, both by word and example, the people entrusted to their charge, building them

up in our most holy faith. They are to lead them in prayer and worship; to preside at the celebration of the Lord's Supper. They are to minister to the sick, and prepare the dying for their death. They must set the Good Shepherd always before them as the pattern of their calling, caring for the people committed to their charge.

Presbyters are called to equip the people of God in mission; to educate and call the Church to participate in the transforming and liberating mission of God in Christ, and to challenge the people of God to be a sign and sacrament of the reign of God with justice, peace and integrity of the whole creation.

A Presbyter is the visible sign of unity among the people of God in a local congregation, calling them to closer ecumenical fellowship, communion, caring and sharing for the sake of the Gospel, striving to facilitate harmony among persons of all faiths in the neighbourhood, and thereby challenge the people of God to become agents of transformation and channels of grace and peace in their living contexts. .

In order that we may know your mind and purpose, and that you may be strengthened in your resolve to fulfil your ministry, you must make the declarations we now put to you.

Are you confident that you are truly called by God to the office and work of a Presbyter in his Church?

I am confident that I am so called.

Are zeal for the glory of God, love for our Lord Jesus Christ, and a desire for the salvation of people so far as you know your own heart, your chief motives for entering into this ministry?

So far as I know my own heart, they are.

Do you accept the Holy Scriptures as containing all things necessary for salvation, and as the supreme and decisive standard of faith?

I do so accept them.

Do you accept the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds as witnessing to and safeguarding the faith that is set forth in the Scriptures?

I do so accept them.

Will you be diligent in the reading of the holy Scriptures and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same? **I will, the Lord being my helper.**

Will you endeavour to lead a prayerful and disciplined life and so to guide your family that both you and your family may be worthy examples to the flock of Christ?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

Will you, with the help of the Holy Spirit, continually stir up the gift of God that is in you, so as to make Christ known to all people?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

Will you faithfully teach and preach the Word of God to the people committed to your charge, and minister the Sacraments as commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

Will you be faithful *watchmen/women* and shepherds of the flock? Will you endeavour to maintain peace and love among them, to bring sinners to repentance, and to declare to them God's forgiveness?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

Will you, for Christ's sake, be faithful in visiting the sick, in caring for the poor and needy, and in helping the oppressed?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

Will you help your people to be good stewards of the manifold gifts of God, that every member may be equipped for the work of ministering, and the whole

Body built up in love?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

Will you diligently work to equip the local congregations in mission to show the love of Jesus to the community around them?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

Will you endeavour whole-heartedly to nurture the people of God through worship, preaching, Christian education and pastoral care to build and nurture fellowship among the congregations, deepen spirituality and empower them to be fruitful instruments in mission?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

Will you educate and empower the congregation in *diakonia*, mission in Christ's way, and exhort the people of God to seek to engage themselves in the service of the people with love and compassion?

I will, the **Lord being my helper.**

Will you continually stir up the people of God to an active involvement through participation in the work of the kingdom of God in order to seek a just, reconciling society in Christ?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

Will you strive to create awareness among the people of God that Christian faith demands commitment to environmental issues and ecological concerns, and thereby care for God's creation and the practice of responsible

stewardship?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

Will you promote unity, peace, harmony and love among all people, and especially among those whom you serve?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

You believe that you are called to exercise this ministry within the Church of South India; will you accept its discipline and submit yourselves as children in the Gospel to those whom this Church shall appoint to have the rule over you?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

All kneel, those to be ordained kneeling before the Bishop, who stands and says:

The almighty God, our heavenly Father, who has given you the will to do all these things, grant you also the grace to perform them. Faithful is he who has called you, who also will do it. AMEN

THE ORDINATION

The Bishop sits. The candidates continue to kneel.

The Bishop calls the people to silent prayer.

The presbyters who are taking part in the laying on of hands come forward and stand around the Bishop and the candidates.

The hymn inviting the presence of the Holy Spirit such as 'Come, Holy Ghost' is sung. kneeling.

The Bishop, standing together with the presbyters, says:

We praise and glorify you, most merciful Father, because to fulfil your plan for the salvation of the human race you have raised up in every land a holy people, a royal priesthood, a universal Church. In your great love you have given Jesus Christ, your only Son, to be the Apostle and High Priest of our faith, and the Shepherd and Guardian of our life, and the author of eternal salvation.

We praise and glorify you that he took on himself our human nature and by dying for us destroyed the power of death he has overcome death; and that, having ascended into heaven, he has given his manifold gifts of grace abundantly, making some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers; to equip your people for the work of ministry and to build up his body, the Church.

And now we give you thanks that you have called these your servants, whom we ordain in your name, to share this ministry entrusted to your Church.

The Bishop lays his hand upon the head of each person to be ordained in turn, the presbyters also laying on their right hands; and the Bishop repeats the following words:

SEND DOWN YOUR HOLY SPIRIT UPON YOUR SERVANT WHOM WE, IN YOUR NAME, AND IN OBEDIENCE TO YOUR MOST BLESSED . WILL, DO NOW ORDAIN PRESBYTER IN YOUR CHURCH.

The people each time repeat: **AMEN**

And the Bishop continues, praying for all those ordained:

Almighty and gracious God, give to these your servants fullness of your grace .and power to fulfil the priestly ministry within the royal priesthood of your people. Make them to be true pastors, watching over those who are committed to their care, gathering the scattered, bringing back the wandering and seeking for the lost. Strengthen them to proclaim with boldness the Gospel of your salvation. Give them the grace to offer with all your people spiritual sacrifices acceptable to you, and to minister the Sacraments of the New Covenant. May they grow in wisdom and discretion, that they may rightly counsel those in doubt and declare to those that are penitent the forgiveness of their sins. Give them wisdom and discipline to work faithfully with all their fellow servants in Christ, that the world may come to know your glory and your love. And at the last, with all your true and faithful servants, bring them to eternal joy; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who with you, Father, and with the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, and is worthy of all honour, glory and blessing, now and always.
AMEN

THE GIVING OF THE BIBLE

The Bishop delivers to each one a Bible, saying:

Take this, a token of the authority that you have received to preach the Word of God and to minister the sacraments in the congregations to which you shall be appointed.

WELCOME INTO PRESBYTERATE

The Bishop gives to each one the right hand of fellowship and says:

We give you the right hand of fellowship, and receive you to take part with us in this ministry.

All stand.

The Bishop says:

We declare that are Presbyters in the Church of God, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All answer in a loud voice
Amen, Thanks be to God.

A doxology is sung by all

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him all creatures here below;
Praise him above, you heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.**

*The order for the Lord's Supper continues at the **INTERCESSION**. The Second litany may be used, with the addition of the following petitions after that for our bishops and all other ministers:*

INTERCESSION

For your servants who through the ages have served humanity in your name, and for those who have now been ordained Presbyters in your Church, and for all ministers, that they may show forth Christ in their life and service; that they and all your people may come to fullness of life in Christ; that they may be instruments of your love and peace.

Let us pray to the Lord;

Lord, have mercy

For those who have now been ordained Presbyters in your Church, and for all ministers, that they may discern your work and purpose; that they may stand up for what is just and true; that they may not fear to lead where others falter. Let us pray to the Lord;

Lord, have mercy

For those who have now been ordained Presbyters in your Church, and for all ministers, that they may receive the spirit of wisdom, understanding and faith and all the gifts of your Spirit; that will strengthen and uphold them even in times of weakness; and despair.

Let us pray to the Lord;

Lord, have mercy

For those who have now been ordained Presbyters in your Church, and for all ministers, that their life be directed by your Word and Spirit; that their homes be blessed with your presence and that they may be kept faithful to the end. Let us pray to the Lord;

Lord, have mercy

After the intercessory litany is said, the Bishop says:

Almighty God, you have promised to hear the prayers of those who ask in your Son's name; grant that these things, for which we have asked in faith, may be granted to us according to your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN