

# My Understanding of The Eastern Position On Ordination

The Eastern theological position with respect to Orders is that they are derived from Christ, through the Holy Ghost; that it is the Church assembled in His name and presence at the Eucharist, guided by the Holy Ghost, which implements the ordination or consecration. Therefore, the Body of the Church assembled at the Eucharist, at which the Bishop presides, signifies, when the call and intention is announced, whether he who has been presented (taken from his place in the nave) is deemed apt and meet, and that under these circumstances the Holy Ghost guides the Church.

If there is a single dissent, expressed by the voice of anyone present (whether Bishop, Priest, Deacon or the laity) such voice of dissent will cause the Bishop to proceed no further with the Liturgy of ordination.

If there is no voice of dissent, this is accounted as evidence of the divine election, it being assumed that the Church is guided by the Holy Ghost—and, therefore, this is taken to signify that by Divine Providence the man is called to the Office.

Therefore, bringing the candidate from his place among the laity (which together constitutes those of the priesthood to participate in the Eucharist) when the call is given and the intention is announced, is always a most serious act — for it is demanded that anyone moved to speak may do so to safeguard the ministry, since only those clearly called of God should be accepted. A prayer is made which invokes (like in the case of the choice of Matthias) Divine guidance, "whether this person is chosen by God." If the will of the people (all present as a body, without a dissenting voice) is clearly shown in unity (without dissent), this is taken as divine ELECTION by the Church, assembled in the Name of the Blessed, Consubstantial and Undivided Trinity, that it is God's will they shall proceed. It is assumed the Church assembled is guided by the Holy Ghost, and therefore they should proceed in the name of the Blessed Trinity. If there is a single dissent, then it is taken to mean there is doubt — and therefore they cease with this part of the service, but they go on with the Eucharist as in any normal Eucharistic Sacrifice. No pre-

vious designation of a person to be ordained (no matter how it is processed) can dispense with this liturgical call and announcement of the intention and prayer for guidance.

Eastern theologians believe that under these circumstances, since Christ promised His Church guidance, the Church assembled is guided by the Holy Ghost, either to sanction or not such a solemn act it is purposed to perform.

If we believe the Holy Ghost guides the Church in the choice of those called of God, and I do, at what better time than at such a solemn moment, with the Church assembled at the Eucharist, could the Holy Ghost give guidance? Here assembled are Bishops, Priests and all the ranks of the priesthood and the laity. Full participation of every order.

Many is the time thru the ages in Eastern Churches when it has not been clear (when a dissenting voice has spoken, without bias and prejudice), an ordination has ceased. But many a time there has been a majestic silence and the voice of acclaim: "AXIOS, AXIOS, AXIOS!" as though inspired by the Holy Ghost, and the ordination or consecration has proceeded.

To invoke the Holy Ghost for guidance is a solemn act of FAITH. Done in such a sincere and solemn way (intention clearly stated), we believe the Holy Ghost doth work mightily in the channel — the Church assembled — and makes known whether the man is or is not called.

If called of God, a divine ELECTION is assured, and the Holy Ghost will surely move the Church to solemnize the ordination or consecration by the proper form and acts.

If there is no taint of simony, then under these circumstances the ordination or consecration can never be called irregular and invalid — since there is no dissent at the moment, it is assured the Church has been properly and rightly guided by the Holy Spirit.

Under such a solemn call, invoking Divine guidance, if one is ordained or consecrated (without a single dissent), it would be profane to say the ordination or consecration was invalid or irregular.

In every ordination or consecration in an Eastern rite, there is the Epiklesis

or the Invocation of the Holy Ghost "to supply all that is deficient and wanting," which comes after the laying on of hands. Why? Because after every human power has done what it can do, the belief is that the gifts, character and grace of the Order or Office, with the authority, comes from CHRIST the Great High Priest, by the operation of the Holy Ghost. It is this from on high Power of Pentecost (for it is a perpetuation of Pentecost) which BESTOWS the spiritual gifts.

Under such circumstances it is a very serious, profane and sacrilegious charge to say one's ordination is not valid—if after all, Orders come from Christ the High Priest.

In the Western Church there have been disputes many as to whether so and so had the authority to ordain—to consecrate. How can Bishop X presume to have such exceptional insight as to question whether Bishop Y had the authority? After all, Bp. Y's act is being questioned by Bp. X's opinions or private judgment. The point is: Did the Holy Ghost, assumed to be guiding the Church as it was assembled, move the Church to proceed — there being no voice of dissent?

I have refused repeatedly to question the ordination or consecration of any of the numerous bishops. Why should I? The act was done, and I cannot say (without the risk of being profane and sacrilegious) that the Holy Ghost did not guide the Church assembled on the occasion, when in all sincerity, earnestness and pious supplication at the Eucharist, there was the Invocation of the Holy Ghost in all good faith.

In simply refuse to be a party to all these petty disputes about so and so's acts of ordination and consecration.

I have never gotten into these conflicts among the various Independent Catholic Bishops in these constant questionings of this and that one — and do not intend to involve our Church in any of these Western "complications."

As a Church we will be better off to follow the Eastern theological concept. I am not going to question the mighty working of the Holy Ghost in the Church of Christ by the Word and Sacraments. I must assume the Holy Ghost guides the Church, and, since the Bishop is an

organ and spokesman and a channel at every ordination, I have no justifiable cause to interpose any technical objection when it is assumed he acted in good faith, honest and sincere belief, in full reliance upon the Holy Ghost.

If I am to believe that there is clearly a divine Election (which is from above) that is a fulfillment of the Will of Providence, I am not justified ever in saying the Holy Ghost did not guide the Church assembled at such a time and under such circumstances.

Of course, it may well be noted here that Simony is considered such a sin against the Holy Ghost — proof of simony is proof that no ordination or consecration really ever took place, and the act was void *ab initio*. Gifts of the Holy Ghost cannot be purchased by a price as an agreed condition to procure from a Bishop an ordination or consecration. But apart from simony it is difficult to say otherwise.

I have expressed what I understand from able Eastern theologians to be the concept of Ordination, as clearly as I understand their ideas. It is reasonable, and seems to me to be sound.

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