

CHAPTER THREE

THE ORGANISATION OF THE CHURCH

The Orthodox Church as a visible **community received** its proper administration **from** her Founder, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, **Who gave authority** to His **Holy Apostles and Disciples**, and through them to His **Church, to fulfill** the goals and mission of **His Church** in the world. Thus, the members of the Orthodox Church were **classified**, right from the beginning, **as** clergymen and laymen. This differentiation does not create any superiority of the clergy, nor **does it divide** the Body of Christ, in which even the simplest member is in direct communion with Christ. The **Spiritual Authority** given to the **Holy Apostles** and through them to the **Elders of the Church**, (Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons), aims to serve and build up the Church in the **True Faith** (the Orthodox **Faith**) in Christ, to unite the shepherds and the flock, in order that they may be the One and Undivided Body of Christ. And as long as the Holy Apostles **lived**, they practiced this **Spiritual Authority** as being **God-inspired**, direct **Disciples of the Lord**, by **Ordaining Deacons and Presbyters** in the beginning, and then **Bishops** in every city **where** they preached. After the deaths of the **Holy Apostles**, the highest rank in the Orthodox Church remained that of the Bishop, although this rank is not **equated** to that of the **Holy Apostles**.

The Bishops of the Orthodox Church are the direct successors of the **Holy Apostles** and through them, the representatives of Christ within His Church. Through this **Ordination of Bishops** the Apostolic Succession was preserved and passed down from one generation to the other without breaking the line of **Canonical Ordained Bishops** from the Apostles to this very moment. As the **Holy Apostles** were equal among themselves, and no one had received **primacy over the rest** from Christ, likewise in the Orthodox Church all the Bishops have the same authority, rights and duties. **Some** are **honoured** with primacy of **honour, being** first among equals but never **having** primacy of authority over other Bishops. The **Holy Apostles** introduced the system of Councils (Synods), the first taking place in Jerusalem **that dealt** with the **controversy of whether** it was necessary **for** the Gentiles **to** follow the Mosaic Law of circumcision. Henceforth, it is obvious that the highest authority in the Orthodox Church is the Council **of Bishops**, which decides infallibly and with authority on matters **that stem** from controversies of interpretation and expression of **Divine Revelation**, the **Teachings of the Lord and His Holy Apostles**. The **Holy Councils** by **Divine Justice** decide under the supervision of the Holy Spirit, not as representatives or agents of an ecclesiastical body.

1. The Special Order and Ministry Established by the Lord

According to the **Holy Evangelists** our Lord “*appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons.*”¹

The names of the Twelve Apostles are:

1. Simon, to whom Christ gave the name Peter
2. James, the son of Zebedee
3. John, the son of Zebedee

¹ Mark 3:14-15. Cf. Matth. 10:1-4 and Luke 6:12-16.

4. Andrew
 5. Philip
 6. Bartholomew
 7. Matthew
 8. Thomas
 9. James, the son of Alphaeus
 10. Thaddaeus
 11. Simon, the Cananite
 12. Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus, the Son of God
- Judas was replaced after his death and the Ascension of our Lord by Matthias.²

Besides these twelve who composed the close circle, Christ “*appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.*”³

The names of the Seventy Apostles in alphabetical order are:

1. Achaicus⁴
2. Agabus⁵
3. Amplias⁶
4. Ananias⁷
5. Andronicus⁸
6. Apelles⁹
7. Apollos¹⁰
8. Aquila¹¹
9. Archippus¹²
10. Aristarchus¹³
11. Aristobulus¹⁴
12. Artemas¹⁵
13. Asyncritus¹⁶
14. Barnabas¹⁷
15. Caeser.
16. Carpus¹⁸
17. Clement¹⁹

² Acts 1:26.

³ Luke 10:1.

⁴ 1 Corinth. 16:17

⁵ Acts 11:28; 21:10.

⁶ Rom. 16:8

⁷ Acts 9:10-17; 22:12.

⁸ Rom. 16:7.

⁹ Rom. 16:10.

¹⁰ Acts 18:24; 19:1. 1 Corinth. 1:12; 3:4-22; 4:6; 16:12. Tit. 3:13.

¹¹ Acts 18:2, 18, 26. Rom. 16:3. 1 Corinth. 16:16:19. 2 Tim. 4:19.

¹² Col. 4:17. Philem. 2.

¹³ Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2. Col. 4:10. Philem. 24.

¹⁴ Rom. 16:10.

¹⁵ Tit. 3:12.

¹⁶ Rom. 16:14.

¹⁷ Acts 4:36; 9:27; 11-15. 1 Corinth. 9:6. Gal. 2:1, 9, 13. Col. 4:10.

¹⁸ 2 Tim. 4:13.

¹⁹ Phil. 4:3.

18. Cephas
19. Cleopas²⁰
20. Crescens²¹
21. Crispus²²
22. Epaphras²³
23. Epaphroditus²⁴
24. Epaenetus²⁵
25. Erastus²⁶
26. Euodia²⁷
27. Fortunatus²⁸
28. Gaius²⁹
29. Hermas³⁰
30. Hermes³¹
31. Herodion³²
32. James, the brother of the Lord³³
33. Jason³⁴
34. Justus³⁵
35. Linus³⁶
36. Lucius³⁷
37. Luke, the Evangelist³⁸
38. Mark, the Evangelist (called John)³⁹
39. Mark
40. Narcissus⁴⁰
41. Nicanor⁴¹
42. Olympas⁴²
43. Onesimus⁴³
44. Onesiphorus⁴⁴
45. Parmenas⁴⁵

²⁰ Luke 24:18. John 19:25.

²¹ 2 Tim. 4:10.

²² Acts 18:8. 1 Corinth. 1:14.

²³ Col. 1:7; 4:12. Philem. 23.

²⁴ Phil. 2:25; 4:18.

²⁵ Rom. 16:5.

²⁶ Acts 19:22. Rom. 16:23. 2 Tim. 4:20.

²⁷ Phil. 4:2.

²⁸ 1 Corinth. 16:17.

²⁹ Acts 19:29; 20:4. Rom. 16:23. 1 Corinth. 1:14. 3 John 1.

³⁰ Rom. 16:14.

³¹ Rom. 16:14.

³² Rom. 16:11.

³³ Matth. 13:55. Mark 6:3. Acts 12:17; 15:13. James.

³⁴ Acts 17:5-9.

³⁵ Acts 1:23; 18:7. Col. 4:11.

³⁶ 2 Tim. 4:21.

³⁷ Acts 13:1. Rom. 16:21.

³⁸ Col. 4:14. 2 Tim. 4:11. Philem. 24.

³⁹ Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37-39. Col. 4:10. 2 Tim. 4:11. Philem. 24. 1 Peter 5:13.

⁴⁰ Rom. 16:11.

⁴¹ Acts 6:5.

⁴² Rom. 16:15.

⁴³ Col. 4:9. Philem. 10.

⁴⁴ 2 Tim. 1:16; 4:19.

46. Patrobus⁴⁶
47. Philemon⁴⁷
48. Philip, the deacon⁴⁸
49. Philologus⁴⁹
50. Phlegon⁵⁰
51. Prochorus⁵¹
52. Pudens⁵²
53. Quadratus
54. Quartus⁵³
55. Rufus⁵⁴
56. Silas (Silvanus)⁵⁵
57. Simeon, son of Cleophas⁵⁶
58. Sisipater⁵⁷
59. Sosthenes⁵⁸
60. Stachys⁵⁹
61. Stephen, the Archdeacon⁶⁰
62. Tertius⁶¹
63. Thaddaeus⁶²
64. Timon⁶³
65. Timothy⁶⁴
66. Titus⁶⁵
67. Trophimus⁶⁶
68. Tychicus⁶⁷
69. Urbanus⁶⁸
70. Zenas⁶⁹

To the Twelve and to all those who were in the upper room the Lord, for the first time after His Resurrection from the dead, said: *“Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also*

⁴⁵ Acts 6:5.

⁴⁶ Rom. 16:14.

⁴⁷ Philem. 1.

⁴⁸ Acts 6:8; 21:8.

⁴⁹ Rom. 16:15.

⁵⁰ Rom. 16:14.

⁵¹ Acts 6:5.

⁵² 2 Tim. 4:21.

⁵³ Rom. 16:23.

⁵⁴ Mark 15:21. Rom. 16:13.

⁵⁵ Acts 15:22-40; 16:19-40; 17:4-15; 18:5. 2 Corinth. 1:19. 1 Thess. 1:1. 2 Tess. 1:1. 1 Peter 5:12.

⁵⁶ Matth. 13:55. Mark 6:3.

⁵⁷ Rom. 16:21.

⁵⁸ 1 Corinth. 1:1.

⁵⁹ Rom. 16:9.

⁶⁰ Acts 6:5-7:60; 8:2; 11:19; 22:20.

⁶¹ Rom. 16:22.

⁶² Matth. 10:3. Mark 3:18.

⁶³ Acts 6:5.

⁶⁴ Acts 16:1; 17:14, 15; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4. Rom. 16:21. 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy.

⁶⁵ 2 Corinth. 2:13; 7:6-14; 8:6-23; 12:18. Gal. 2:1-3, Titus.

⁶⁶ Acts 20:4; 21:29. 2 Tim. 4:20.

⁶⁷ Acts 20:4. Ephes. 6:21. Col. 4:7. 2 Tim. 4:12. Tit. 3:12.

⁶⁸ Rom. 16:9.

⁶⁹ Tit. 3:13.

send you.”⁷⁰ “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”⁷¹ And before His Ascension into Heaven He gave the Command: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have Commanded you; and lo I Am with you always, even to the end of the age,”⁷² signifying that the Commandment and the Authority given to the Holy Apostles will remain within the Church forever. Because the Holy Apostles would also pass away from this life, St Paul assured that the Lord gave to the Church “some Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for equipping of the Saints for the work of ministry, for edifying of the Body of Christ.”⁷³ “Now all things are of God, Who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him Who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”⁷⁴

The Holy Apostles who received the Command and the Authority of the Ministry within the Church that was established by Divine Right directly from Christ and afterwards was passed down to the hierarchy, believed that “through Him we have received Grace and Apostleship for obedience to the Faith among all nations for His Name,”⁷⁵ as being “servants of Christ and stewards of the Mysteries of God”⁷⁶ and as receiving from Him “the ministry of reconciliation.”⁷⁷ Practising according to the Lord’s Command the Authority that was given to them, they “went out and preached everywhere,”⁷⁸ fixing by the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, laws and orders for the faithful, which referred to the keeping of Mosaic Law,⁷⁹ ecclesiastic worship⁸⁰ and the living together of married couples,⁸¹ etc. They imposed disciplinary authority,^{82 83} performed the Divine Mysteries⁸⁴ and, through the laying on of the hands, bestowed the *charismata* of the Holy Spirit and the authority of ecclesiastic *diakonia*.⁸⁵ Thus, it is witnessed by the ancient practice of the Church that “God has appointed these in the church: first Apostles, second Prophets, third Teachers, after that Miracles, then Gifts of healing, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues”⁸⁶ and gave diverse other Gifts, Ministries and activities.⁸⁷ Right from the beginning a special order was established to practice throughout all future generations the threefold Office of Christ, Who, being the Head of the Church, gives her this Authority.

⁷⁰ John 20:21.

⁷¹ John 20:22-23.

⁷² Matth. 28:19-20.

⁷³ Ephes. 4:11-12.

⁷⁴ 2 Corinth. 5:18-21.

⁷⁵ Rom. 1:5.

⁷⁶ 1 Corinth. 4:1.

⁷⁷ 2 Corinth. 5:18.

⁷⁸ Mark 16:20.

⁷⁹ Acts 15:28.

⁸⁰ 1 Corinth. 14:26-34.

⁸¹ 1 Corinth. 7:2-16.

⁸² 1 Corinth. 5:3-5.

⁸³ 2 Corinth. 13:10.

⁸⁴ Acts 2:41, 42, 46; 20:7. 1 Corinth. 1:14, 17. Acts 8:15.

⁸⁵ Acts 6:6; 14:23. 1 Tim. 1:14. 2 Tim. 1:6.

⁸⁶ 1 Corinth. 13:28.

⁸⁷ 1 Corinth. 12:4, 5, 6.

2. The Equality of the Special Order and Ministry

In the Orthodox Church the Order of Priesthood is not a special **separate** body from that of laymen. This differentiation is by “*the law of equality*” and for the purpose that both the ruler and the subject “*be placed and mixed together, and that which is inferior and that which is superior, to be as one member*” of the same **Body** “*and by the harmony of the Spirit to be reconciled and **joined** in one perfect **Body**, worthy of Christ **Who is our Head**.*”⁸⁸ This union, in one inseparable and unified **Body** of rulers and subjects, is the main goal of the establishment of this special **Order** in the Church. It also gives a special nature to the ecclesiastic authority, creating equality among all the members of the Church, because all are members of the mystical **Body** of Christ.⁸⁹

According to St John Chrysostom, in the Church “*there is neither typhus of the rulers nor servility of the subjects, but a spiritual principal, which overrules this, to seek the most hardworking*” “*and not to seek more **honours**.*” Under no circumstances **must** the subjects, **and** even more **importantly**, the rulers, forget that “*as one house must the Church live, as one **Body** to dispose all; as the Baptism is one.*” And for the rulers and for the **subjects there is “one table,”** at which, with equal rights, both sit, “*and one **Source**”* which waters both, “*and one **Creation** and one **Father**.*”⁹⁰ Determining elsewhere the boundaries of the authority of the **Elders** upon the faithful, he proclaimed what St. Paul said: “*Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.*”⁹¹ He who gives advice speaks from his own experience without enforcing his opinion upon the one who listens but leaves him to be the ruler of his choice of what he has heard. He then urges the rulers to avoid disregarding “*those who advise, **whether** they are from the subjects, or from the poor,*” **nor** to demand those things which they, as rulers, introduce, “*those completely to hold,*” nor to say: “*Why are you calling me for advice, since you do not listen **to** what I say? For these words are not of an advisor but of a tyrant.*”⁹²

All despotic and tyrannical inclinations must be completely avoided as alien to the pure ecclesiastical **Authority** **that** the Lord established. **It** is not only manifested **by** His words **that** **strongly** distinguished between the rulers of the world and the Apostles as rulers in the Church, **proclaiming** that “*whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave.*”⁹³ **It was also dignified** by the example which the Lord Himself **made** by washing the feet of His Apostles⁹⁴ **and thereby** teaching them that in **exercising** their authority, they should be as servants to those **whom** they **would** serve.⁹⁵ And St Paul characterising the nature of **Apostleship** proclaims: “*Let a man so consider us as servants of Christ and stewards of the Mysteries of God*”⁹⁶ and “*ourselves as your bondservants for Jesus’ sake.*”⁹⁷ He also urges all saying:

⁸⁸ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Homily 32*, § 11, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 185. *Ibid*, 2 *Apologetic*, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 35, 409.

⁸⁹ Cf. Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, pp. 263-264.

⁹⁰ St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 18*, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 61, 527-528.

⁹¹ 2 Corinth. 1:24.

⁹² St. John Chrysostom, *To Ephesians*, *Homily 11*, § 5, in Migne, *P.G.*, 62, 87.

⁹³ Matth. 20:26-27.

⁹⁴ John 13:3-12.

⁹⁵ John 13:13-17.

⁹⁶ 1 Corinth. 4:1.

⁹⁷ 2 Corinth. 4:5.

“Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come – all are yours.”⁹⁸ And by the use of the expression “all are yours,” he abolishes the typhus (pride) of the teachers. The Apostles were obliged to the faithful, for they became Teachers and Apostles because of them, **having** received **the** Grace of Apostleship. By using the phrase “stewards of the Mysteries of God,” he **draws** the attention of each one who is in the ecclesiastic *diakonia*, “not to demand as a despot, but to administrate as a good steward. Because the steward is to administrate well the things; and not to act as a despot, but on the contrary to be a despot of his own.” **The** assurance that the Apostles were “servants of Christ” is proclaimed by the Apostle Paul as he is “a minister”⁹⁹ and “a bondservant”¹⁰⁰ to those who accept the Gospel.¹⁰¹

3. The Unity of All in One Body Creates Equality

The union of all in one **Body**, rulers and subjects, and the dependence of all **upon** the one **Divine** Head as the Source of **Life**, creates, as we have mentioned, equality among the members. The differentiation and inequality in the distribution of the *charismata* is a necessary condition to create the one Body of Christ. St Paul, by numbering these *charismata*, placing first the Apostles, second the Prophets, third the Teachers,¹⁰² with whom he joins the shepherds,¹⁰³ declared openly that whatever he said about the *charismata* in his Epistles, have the same **effectiveness on** the administrating order and ecclesiastic instruments within the Church **that** have been entrusted **with its administration**. St Paul stresses the **unequal** distribution of the *charismata*, and that “*there are diversities of Gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of Ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of Activities, but it is the same God Who works all in all.*”¹⁰⁴ The **Source** from **Whom** these *charismata* are **poured forth** is always one and the same: the Holy Spirit **Who** distributes “to each one individually as He **Wills**.”¹⁰⁵

Besides, without this differentiation in the distribution of the *charismata*, it would not **have** been possible to form the one **Body** because, if all had the same *charisma* and all were Apostles or **Prophets** or **Shepherds**, they would all be “one part and not a body.” Now, “because everyone does not have the same charisma, for this reason they are one **Body**. Being a **Body**, all are one and do not differ from one another as being one **Body**.” “This difference” in the *charismata* is **what** “makes the equality” because, if it did not exist, they would not be all one **Body**. “Not being a **Body**, they would not be equal. For the equality is achieved because of the one **Body**. And as in the human body the eye cannot say to the rest of members ‘I have no need of you,’ for the hands need one another, and the feet support one another, and the eyes in agreement have the conception of light,” in a similar manner and in the **Mystical** Body of Christ there can be no **excuse** for those “who have received higher *charismata* to boast against those have received lesser, as though they have no need of

⁹⁸ 1 Corinth. 3:21-22.

⁹⁹ Col. 1:23.

¹⁰⁰ Rom. 1:1.

¹⁰¹ St. John Chrysostom, *To 1 Corinthians*, Homily 10, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 61, 83. Ibid, *To 2 Corinthians*, Homily 8, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 61, 456. Ibid, *To Acts*, Homily 37, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 60, 266. Ibid, *To the Ascension*, Homily 2, § 12, in Migne, *P.G.*, 52, 784.

¹⁰² 1 Corinth. 12:28.

¹⁰³ Ephes. 4:11.

¹⁰⁴ 1 Corinth. 12:4-6.

¹⁰⁵ 1 Corinth. 12:11.

them.” For “*the lesser charisma is necessary, and without it the fullness of the Church is hobbled.*” As in the human body it cannot be said that “*one of the members makes the body by itself*” without being united to the rest of the members, likewise in the Church he who has the *charisma* of being a Bishop cannot **alone** compose the **Body** of the Church.¹⁰⁶

But let us refer to the same words of St Paul: “*For if in fact the body is not one member but many, if the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,’ is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,’ is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you,’ nor again the hand to the feet, ‘I have no need of you.’ No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater **honour**; and our unrepresentable parts have greater modesty, but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the **Body**, having given greater **honour** to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the **Body**, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is **honoured**, all the members rejoice with it.*”¹⁰⁷

All together each individual’s *charisma* must be united to one another in order that in the communion of life, each individual’s *charisma* becomes common **to** the others, and the differences of the *charismata* through the unity of all Gifts, **compose** the one perfect **Body**, and all together **fulfill** the **Body** of Christ.

It is clear that the **Clergy** do not compose a separate Church, **apart** and above the rest of the **Body** of Church. The Church is one and undivided, the one **Mystical Body** of Christ. Our Lord, the God-Man and Saviour, did not call Himself “*Church*,” but in the New Testament He is her “*cornerstone*,” her “*Head*,” whereas the Church is called His “*Body*” and His “*fullness*.” **Neither** is the company of the Twelve Apostles is **ever** called “*Church*.” They are called: “*foundations*,” “*pillars*” and “*Elders*” of the Church **and** even the foundations **and pillars** are parts of the same **Divine Building**.

4. Spiritual and Mystical Priesthood

Besides all the above, under no circumstances should anyone **deny** that the clergymen in the Church consist **of** a special body, having special duties and rights, **being** vested **with** **Divine Justice** **and having** special **Authority**, **as well as being** incorporated within the **Body** of the Church. And as members of the Church they have a special place within the **Body** of the Church, united inseparably to all the members, **under** the same Life-giving **Head** and the same Holy Spirit as the rest of all the members. They have an **honourable role** in the Church, **just** as the eye has in the body.¹⁰⁸ And even the supreme **Elders** of the Orthodox Church, **who**

¹⁰⁶ Zigabinos, *To 1 Corinthians 12:29-30*. Kalogeras, *Maria*, I, p. 320. St. John Chrysostom, *1 Corinthians*, Homily 30, § 3, in Montfaucon, v. 10, p. 319. St. John of Damascus, *To 1 Corinthians*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 95, 672. St. Ecumenius, *To 1 Corinthians*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 118, 821-824. St. Basil, the Great, *Epistle 203*, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 32, 741. St. John Chrysostom, *1 Corinthians*, Homily 31, § 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 61, 257.

¹⁰⁷ 1 Corinth. 12:14-26.

¹⁰⁸ St. John Chrysostom, *To Ephesians 1:23*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 62, 20. St. Ecumenius, in Migne, *P.G.*, 118, 821.

are the Bishops **with** the honourable title of ‘*Patriarch*,’ without ceasing to be rulers, have the same spiritual needs as the **least of the** faithful and must **also** be cleansed and nourished by the Life-giving Mysteries. They do not perform the **Divine** Mysteries in order that only the faithful receive **Life and have** Communion with the **Divine** Grace through them, but that they themselves may receive the saving Grace as equal among all members.

With this meaning in mind, we can speak **of** the general and **Spiritual Priesthood** that each and every faithful **possesses**, without disregarding **the** special and **Mystical Priesthood** that **God has given** to the Church, which is necessary for the perfection of the **Divine** Mysteries and the administration of the **Divine** Ministry in the Body of Christ.

The Priesthood, **according to Orthodox** Tradition, consists of a Mystery **that** transmits a special *charisma* to those who are **Ordained**. **It can never be** said that the **Hierarchy** are practicing the threefold Office of the Lord as simple agents or representatives of the faithful **in the Church** and not as a special **body established** in the Church by **Divine** Authority. Now this does not prevent us from **referring to** all the faithful **as consisting of** a ‘*Holy Priesthood*,’¹⁰⁹ because they have been **Regenerated** in Christ and **due to** their incorporation and union with Him, they participate in His threefold Office. They are being **Called** to be crucified together with Him and to be raised together with Him in the new Life as **Priests**, each one offering everyday **of his own body** the logic and “*spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God*.”¹¹⁰ “*For as many of you as were Baptised into Christ, have put on Christ*.”¹¹¹ “*By vesting Christ, I have being transformed into Christ through Baptism*.”¹¹² Since we have been **Regenerated** through Christ and have become by Grace brothers of Christ, all “*the Christians have their genealogy from the Lord Jesus Christ*.”¹¹³ We are the generation of Christ; we have been sowed by Christ. “*Through Christ, Who was a Priest according to the order of Melchizedek and a calm, just and saving King,*” and “*those who are Regenerated through Baptism partake of these both*.”¹¹⁴

Hence immediately after Baptism, through which we are **Regenerated and have** become the family of Christ, we receive the Mystery of Holy Chrismation. And “*we are called Christians*” “*because we have received Holy Chrismation*,” which in the Old Testament was given to the **Priests** and to the **Kings** as a “*symbol*.” And to the **Kings** and **Prophets** of the Old Testament “*it was typical; but for us is not typical, but truthful, because we have been Chrismated by the Holy Spirit*,” and thus “*we are called Christians confirming through the Regeneration the name*.”¹¹⁵ The same is confirmed by St. Gregory **the Theologian** of Nazianzus who calls Baptism “*Chrism as holy and royal*” because the **Priests** and the **Kings** were “*those who were anointed*.”¹¹⁶

St John Chrysostom gives a more complete report of the results which we receive from the Mystery of **Holy** Chrismation. Interpreting St Paul’s words: “*Now He Who established us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, Who also has sealed us and given us the*

¹⁰⁹ 2 Peter 2:5.

¹¹⁰ 2 Peter 2:5.

¹¹¹ Gal. 3:27.

¹¹² St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily 40, to holy Baptism*, § 10, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 372.

¹¹³ Aristides, *Apology*, ch. XV, § 1. St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *Dialogue*, 116, 117, 1, **B**, v. 3, p. 316.

¹¹⁴ Theophylactus of Bulgaria, *To 1 Peter 2:9*, in Trempelas, *Dogmatique*, v. II, p. 378. Kalogeras, *Maria*, II, p. 533. Didymus the Blind, *To 1 Peter*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 39, 1763.

¹¹⁵ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis Mystagia*, 3, § 6, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 1093.

¹¹⁶ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily 40 to holy Baptism*, § 6, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 364.

*Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee,”*¹¹⁷ he observes: “What is to anoint and seal? The Spirit gives, by which He made both, making **Prophets and Priests and Kings**. For by these the old kind was anointed. But we are not anointed by one, but now with three superior **Offices**. For we shall enjoy kingship and become **Priests offering sacrifices our own bodies; ‘present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God;’**¹¹⁸ and after these we become **Prophets**.¹¹⁹ “But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’^{120,121}

Another opinion, according to which we become partakers of the threefold Office of Christ, is our incorporation into Christ and the reception and vestment of Christ through Baptism. Thus St Augustine proclaims that “we all are **Priests, because we are members of the one Priest.**”¹²²

St John Chrysostom observes that: “In this way you become **King and Priest and Prophet through Baptism; King by throwing down all the evil deeds and slaughtering the sins; Priest by presenting yourself to God and offering as a sacrifice the body and being slaughtered; Prophet by learning about the future things to come and becoming a nation and being sealed.**”¹²³

Our incorporation into the Body of the High and Eternal High Priest makes each faithful a **Priest** of his own body, becoming simultaneously for himself a sacrificer and the sacrificial victim, being crucified together with Christ. Living in the newness of **Life** in Christ, he offers to God a sacrifice of a humble spirit, a living sacrifice, logical and holy.¹²⁴

Origen, interpreting Leviticus, observed that “Everyone who has been anointed with the **Holy Chrism became Priests, as the Divine Paul says to all the Church: ‘You are a royal Priesthood.’ For this reason you approach the Altars. But each one of you carries the whole burnt sacrifice within himself, that you may burn it ceaselessly. For, if I renounce whatever I posses, if I carry my cross and follow Christ, I offer a whole burnt sacrifice upon the Altar of God.**”¹²⁵

St **Isidoros** of Pelusion observed: “Present your bodies a living sacrifice, acceptable to God, your logic sacrifice. For he did not write these things only to the **Priests, but to the whole Church. For he ordered that each member be a Priest.**”¹²⁶

And it is true that only those who have the special **Priesthood** (Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons) have the **Authority** to celebrate and to **offer** the Holy Mysteries. **None** of the laymen **may** give Holy Communion or consecrate the **Holy Chrismation, nor pass** down

¹¹⁷ 2 Corinth. 1:21-22.

¹¹⁸ Rom. 12:1. Rom. 6:13, 19.

¹¹⁹ St. John Chrysostom, *To 2 Corinthians*, Homily 3, § 5, in Migne, *P.G.*, 61, 411.

¹²⁰ Is. 64:4; 65:17.

¹²¹ 1 Corinth. 2:9.

¹²² St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, I, XX, c. X, in migne, *P.L.*, 41, 676. Cf. *Ibid*, *Quaestionum evangeliorum*, 2, 40, in migne 35, 1355. *Ibid*, *Sermo IV*, in migne, *P.L.*, 54, 148.

¹²³ St. John Chrysostom, *To 2 Corinthians*, Homily 3, § 7, in Montfaucon, v. 10, p. 529.

¹²⁴ Cf. St. John Chrysostom, *To Romans*, Homily 20, §§ 1 and 2, in Montfaucon, v. 9, pp. 727 and 728. St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily 2 Apology*, § 45, in Migne, *P.G.*, 35, 497.

¹²⁵ Origen, *Homily to Leviticus*, 9, § 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 12, 508-509.

¹²⁶ St. Isidorus of Pelusion, *Epistle 75*, book III, in Migne, *P.G.*, 78, 781-784.

Priesthood through Ordination, **nor forgive sins, nor perform** any other Holy Mysteries. But this does not prove that the faithful are deprived **of** the general Priesthood.

The Holy Mystery of Priesthood is one, but has three degrees. Having in the one and undivided Priesthood three levels, the ground upon which is based and grows the Mystical Priesthood, is the spiritual or general Priesthood of the faithful, who together with the Clergy compose the royal Priesthood. And the Mystical Priesthood presupposes and has as its **basis**, the Spiritual Priesthood. This is the reason why anyone who is not Baptised cannot be Ordained because he has to **first** enter into the general or Spiritual Priesthood. Consequently, not only do the faithful not compete against those in the special Priesthood, but it is necessary for them to cooperate with them in order to achieve the Work of Salvation.