

# Matrimony and Holy Orders

Keep these ideas in mind as you study *Chapter 24*.

❖ All people are called to holiness. Christians receive their call to holiness at Baptism. God recognizes that all of us are different, and he calls us to different ways of living. All vocations are meant to lead us to holiness.

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❖ In a Catholic marriage, a man and woman make a binding covenant of love with each other before God. Jesus raised the natural reality of marriage to the level of a sacrament, the Sacrament of Matrimony.

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❖ The bride and groom act as ministers of the sacrament. They bestow and receive the sacrament during the exchange of vows. The marriage vows that men and women make are lifelong vows. The couple should be faithful to those vows all their lives. The faithfulness, or fidelity, of a married man and woman is symbolized by the rings they give each other.

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❖ Men who serve as bishops, priests, and deacons are ordained through the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

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❖ Deacons are men who assist the bishops and priests in their work. Men must serve as deacons before they become priests. Deacons must be men over 35 years of age, but not all deacons become priests. Many are permanent deacons. Deacons may be married.

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❖ A priest administers the sacraments and has many important duties. His greatest responsibility and privilege is to preside at the Eucharist.

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❖ Bishops are the successors to the Apostles and have the fullness of the priesthood. A bishop cares for a larger area called a diocese.

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❖ Religious make special vows to dedicate their lives to God's service as members of religious communities. Religious make three vows: chastity, poverty, and obedience.

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