

ORDINATION OF BISHOP - GLOSSARY

Mitre

A bishop wears a mitre, a large pointed hat or head covering, with two short lappets or flaps hanging down over the back. Its name comes from a Greek word meaning turban.

It is worn only in more solemn ceremonies like the Mass and processions and is removed for prayers. It is usually white in colour. It originated in the Byzantine Empire.

This later developed into a crown and is the origin of the papal crown known as the tiara, which comes to a point at the top. The mitre dates back to the 11th century, when it was worn only by the pope. In the 12th century it came to be used also by bishops.

Skull cap, or zucchetto

The zucchetto originated as the Greek pilos and is related to the beret (which was originally a large zucchetto). It was adopted around the time of the Early Middle Ages to keep clerics' heads warm. Its name derives from its resemblance to half a pumpkin. It looks very similar to the Jewish kippah (yarmulke), although its significance is quite different. The zucchetto is always worn beneath the mitre.

This small round cap, worn towards the back of the head, dates to the 13th century and developed to cover the tonsure, the part of the back of the head that was shaved when a man entered the clerical state.

It varies in colour according to the rank of the bishop, with the Pope wearing white, cardinals red and bishops wearing violet. Priests may also wear the skull cap and theirs is black. It can be used at any time but is removed in Mass during the Eucharistic Prayer.

The pectoral cross

The name "pectoral" comes from the Latin word for chest since the cross is worn on a chain hanging down over the bishop's chest. The cross of Christ was the instrument of our redemption and it reminds the bishop of his duty to be generous in sacrificing himself for the flock entrusted to his care.

A bishop's ring

In the ordination ceremony the new bishop is given a ring, which symbolises his spiritual marriage to the Church and his duty to be faithful, in imitation of Christ, the bridegroom of the Church. The ring as an official part of the bishop's insignia was first mentioned early in the seventh century and it came to be of general use in the ninth and 10th centuries. The ring is worn on the fourth finger of the right hand.

Crosier

After the mitre the new bishop is given the crosier, or shepherd's crook, which symbolises his duty to be diligent in watching over the flock entrusted to him. The prayer says: "Receive the crosier, the sign of your pastoral office: and keep watch over the whole flock

in which the Holy Spirit has placed you as bishop to govern the Church of God.” The crosier is first mentioned as part of the bishop’s insignia in the seventh century.

Ordination - what does that mean and what does it involve?

There are three degrees of Holy Orders: bishops, priests and deacons. A man is first ordained a deacon, then a priest and finally a bishop.

Rather than three separate sacraments, the sacrament of Holy Orders is only one, with three degrees.

The degrees of bishop and priest are a participation in the priesthood of Christ, the head of the Church.

The degree of deacon is to help and serve the bishops and priests.

All three degrees are received through the one sacrament of Holy Orders. As a man is ordained deacon, priest and then bishop, should that happen, he is receiving the one sacrament each time in a fuller way, enabling him to carry out more functions and giving him greater responsibilities.

What is an installation?

This is the reception of the bishop in the cathedral church of the diocese (for Bishop Paul, this will be at St Mary’s Pro-Cathedral on Sunday, 4 March). Its principal element is the Eucharistic celebration at which the bishop presides for the first time with the priests, the deacons, and the people of the Diocese taking full and active part.

How is a bishop chosen?

The ultimate decision in appointing bishops rests with the pope, and he is free to select anyone he chooses. Selecting candidates for the role of bishop normally begins at the diocesan level and works its way through a series of consultations and recommendations for nominees put to Rome.

It is a process bound by strict confidentiality and involves a number of important players – the most influential being the apostolic nuncio, the Congregation for Bishops, and the pope. It can be a time-consuming process, often taking eight months or more to complete.

Apostolic nuncio

The pope's representative to both the government and to the Church of a country; a key person in deciding what names are recommended to the Congregation for Bishops for possible episcopal appointment. New Zealand’s Apostolic nuncio is Archbishop Martin Krebs.