

**Chinese Martyrs Catholic Church**  
**Bible Sharing Program 2019-20**  
**Session #3: Holy Hierarchical Structure of the Church**  
**And its Priestly Ministry (I)**

CSB – Ignatius Catholic Study Bible  
 CCSS – Cath Commentary on Sacred Scriptures  
 CP – Catholic Priesthood, Fr. Thomas Lane  
 SN = Special Notes / NAB = New American Bible  
 SK = Chinese Bible / CCC = Catholic Catechism

<p><b>A</b></p>	<p><b><u>Scope &amp; Focus</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This chapter focuses on the supervisory roles in the Church (3:1-7) and the qualifications of deacons (3:8-13). This is followed by teachings about “the gift given ... through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders” (4:14); that is the sacrament of Holy Orders and succession from the Apostles. We will take this opportunity to explore the Church’s holy hierarchical structure and priestly ministry – how this structure evolves in the early Church; how Scriptures foretell and anticipate the structure and ministry; one that is rooted in Christ and established by the Apostles. We will continue with this theme during our next gathering; then we will focus on Holy Orders and transition from the Apostles.</li> </ul>	<p>1Tim 3:1-16</p>
<p><b>B</b></p>	<p><b><u>The Hierarchical Structure of the Holy Church and its Priestly Ministry</u></b>  <b><u>– How was the hierarchical structure evolved in the early Church?</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Church needs time to establish the current holy hierarchical structure and ministry; however, that doesn’t imply that this model did not exist during the time of Jesus and the Apostles. Scriptures have clearly proven that this model is established by Jesus.</li> <li>When Jesus blesses the Twelve Apostles during the Last Supper, He makes them priests, like Himself. “Priesthood” at that time refers to the “Levitical Priesthood”, therefore, they are not called “priests”.</li> <li>The assistants to the Apostles are called “presbyters” in NT, similar to the Jewish “elders” and the English word “priest”; the Apostles also choose deacons. The non-Jewish Christians began addressing their leaders as “episkopos” (GK) = bishop = overseer; however, their duties are not exactly the same as today’s bishops’.</li> <li>At the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century, the holy hierarchical structure has begun to take shape. By the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> C, the disciples and their successors were commonly seen as priests. According to St. Hippolytus, <i>The Apostolic Tradition</i>, rituals for bishops, priests, and deacons have already existed during the 3<sup>rd</sup> C.</li> </ul>	<p>CP xvii-xix,          Jn 17:17</p> <p>SN1</p> <p>James 5:14          Acts 6:1-7</p> <p>CCSS 73</p>

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C	<p><b><u>From the Firstborn Son to Levitical Priesthood to Jesus, how Scripture has foretold the Church’s hierarchical structure and Priestly ministry</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to the Scriptures, the holy hierarchical structure of the Church and Priestly ministry come from Jesus and the Apostles. Not only does the OT anticipate this structure, God has already foretold this through multiple avenues.</li> </ul>	SN2
D	<p><b><u>Priestly Ministry and Celibacy</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once” – the ministers of the early Church did not have to be celibate; however, why is this a requirement today? Would allowing priests to get married solve the problem of shortages of priests?</li> <li>• Woman Deacons or Deaconesses</li> </ul>	3:2-5  SN3

**SPECIAL NOTES – See Chinese handouts**