

HUMANISTIC CATHOLIC CHURCH

THE HUMANISTIC CATHOLIC ORDINAL

Rubrical Edition for Deacons, Priests, and Bishops

Traditional Form, Humanistic Substance

This Ordinal preserves the Catholic external form of ordination while interpreting ministry through human dignity, community, reason, ethical responsibility, sacramental memory, and pastoral service. It is written for a Humanistic Catholic body: Catholic in form, humanistic in meaning.

Office	Deacon, Priest, Bishop
Use	Ordinations, formation, records, and ceremonial governance
Rubrics	Printed in red italics and to be followed unless pastoral necessity requires adaptation
Authority	For use by authorization of the Presiding Bishop

Primate See: Ketchikan, Alaska
Presiding Bishop: Bishop Robert Horwath

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All texts are original to this edition. They do not reproduce the Roman Pontifical or other copyrighted ritual books. Traditional Catholic terms are retained as ceremonial vocabulary, but the official interpretation is non-theistic.

When this book is used at the altar or cathedral chair, the presiding minister should mark the rite with ribbons before the liturgy begins.

The Theology of Humanistic Catholic Holy Orders

1. Catholic Form, Humanistic Meaning

Holy Orders is the rite by which the Church sets apart deacons, priests, and bishops for service, ritual leadership, teaching, pastoral care, governance, and preservation of the Church's ceremonial life.

The rite retains the external Catholic grammar: presentation, election, questioning, promise, litany, laying on of hands, consecratory prayer, vesting, handing over of symbols, kiss or sign of peace, and participation in the table rite.

2. No Supernatural Ontology

Ordination is not understood as a supernatural change of essence. It is an ecclesiastical act of recognition, appointment, authorization, public promise, and communal trust.

3. Meaning of the Laying on of Hands

The laying on of hands signifies continuity, recognition, accountability, and entrusting a person to a public office of service. It does not transmit supernatural power.

4. Ministry as Service

The ordained are servants of ritual, memory, dignity, and human care. No cleric owns the sacraments or stands above the human family.

At all ordinations the presider shall avoid language of deity, supernatural vocation, supernatural grace, angelic assistance, divine command, or metaphysical change.

The Three Orders of Ministry

Deacon

A deacon is ordained for service, proclamation, charity, assistance at the altar, pastoral outreach, care for the vulnerable, and the public witness of compassion.

Priest

A priest is ordained to preside at the Mass and sacraments, preach, teach, reconcile, anoint, bless, pastor, form communities, and guard the ceremonial life of a parish or mission.

Bishop

A bishop is consecrated for oversight, unity, ordination, governance, doctrine, ceremonial authorization, pastoral leadership, and institutional continuity.

Order	Primary Sign	Primary Work
Deacon	Book of service / stole	Service, charity, proclamation, assistance
Priest	Chalice and paten	Mass, sacraments, teaching, pastoral care
Bishop	Book, ring, mitre, crozier	Oversight, ordination, unity, governance

The diaconate, priesthood, and episcopate may be conferred within Mass or in a solemn liturgy of the Word and Table according to pastoral necessity.

Eligibility, Discernment, and Formation

General Requirements

Candidates should show emotional stability, moral seriousness, commitment to non-theistic Humanistic Catholic identity, respect for Catholic external form, willingness to serve, and ability to safeguard vulnerable persons.

Deacon

A deacon candidate should demonstrate maturity, reliability, compassion, and willingness to assist in service, outreach, records, liturgy, and pastoral care.

Priest

A priest candidate should show capacity to preside reverently, teach clearly, listen pastorally, protect confidentiality, keep records, and organize a parish, mission, or online community.

Bishop

A bishop candidate should show theological clarity, governance ability, liturgical competence, pastoral maturity, and loyalty to the Church's identity: Catholic form, humanistic meaning.

Safeguarding

No candidate may be advanced when credible safeguarding concerns remain unresolved. The protection of persons is prior to ceremonial advancement.

The examiner should keep written notes of interviews, background checks where applicable, formation review, and the bishop's decree of admission.

Vesture, Insignia, and Liturgical Colors

Vesture is ceremonial language. It signifies office, role, and order. It does not imply supernatural status.

Ordination Vesture

Minister	Vesture
Candidate for Deacon	Alb; stole may be placed during rite; dalmatic after ordination if used
Candidate for Priest	Alb and deacon stole; priestly stole and chasuble after ordination
Candidate for Bishop	Alb, stole, chasuble; episcopal insignia after consecration
Presiding Bishop	Alb, stole, chasuble, pectoral cross, ring, mitre, crozier

Liturgical Colors

Color	Use
White / Gold	Ordinations, feasts, weddings, memorials of exemplary lives
Red	Ordinations when emphasizing courage, witness, public service, or reform
Purple / Burgundy	Episcopal governance, penitential seasons, moral repair
Green	Ordinary Time, creation, growth, formation
Black or Violet	Masses for the dead, grief, lament, sober memorials

For the Humanistic Catholic Ordinal, white or gold is the preferred color; red or burgundy may be used by order of the Presiding Bishop.

Calendar for Ordinations

Ordination Days

Ordinations may be celebrated on Sundays, feasts of ministry, parish foundation days, civic memorial days of service, anniversaries of the Church, or days appointed by the Presiding Bishop.

Days Especially Suitable

Day / Season	Use
Foundation Day	Ordinations connected to institutional mission
Season of Renewal	Priestly or diaconal ordinations emphasizing pastoral service
Season of Service	Diaconal ordinations and lay ministry appointments
Season of Memory	Episcopal consecrations and clergy anniversaries
Local Parish Feast	Ordinations for parish and mission service

Ordinations Outside Mass

For pastoral necessity, ordinations may occur within a Liturgy of the Word and Table, online only if the Church's law explicitly permits and the candidate is visibly present by two-way communication. Physical signs should be adapted with clarity.

The date, place, presider, ordinand, order conferred, witnesses, and method of celebration must be recorded.

Registers, Certificates, and Ecclesiastical Acts

Registers

Every ordination must be entered into the official register. The entry should include the full name, date, place, order, presiding bishop, assisting clergy, witnesses, formation status, certificate number, and any limitations or faculties granted.

Letters and Faculties

Ordination grants the order. Faculties specify where and how a cleric may function. A priest or deacon should not exercise ministry outside authorization. A bishop should not ordain or establish missions without mandate where Church law requires it.

Independence Notice

The Humanistic Catholic Church is an independent church body. Its use of Catholic terminology is ceremonial and ecclesiastical. It is not affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church, the Vatican, or any Roman Catholic diocese.

No Civil Legal Advice

This ordinal is an ecclesiastical book. Civil recognition of clergy status, marriage solemnization, corporation sole offices, and multistate operation should be reviewed under applicable law.

Certificates should bear the seal of the Church, the signature of the Presiding Bishop or authorized bishop, and the register number.

Rite of Admission to Candidacy

This rite may be used before formation or immediately before ordination when the candidate has not previously been publicly admitted. It may take place within Mass after the homily.

Presentation

Formation Minister: Bishop, I present N. for admission as a candidate for Holy Orders in the Humanistic Catholic Church.

Bishop: Has this person been prepared, examined, and judged ready to enter public formation?

Formation Minister: After inquiry and consultation, I testify that this person is ready.

Questioning

Bishop: N., do you seek formation for ordained ministry in this Church, Catholic in form and humanistic in meaning?

Candidate: I do.

Bishop: Will you study, serve, protect the vulnerable, keep the Church's non-theistic discipline, and submit to lawful ecclesiastical authority?

Candidate: I will.

Admission

The bishop places a hand upon the candidate's shoulder or extends hands if physical touch is not appropriate.

Bishop: N., we receive you as a candidate for Holy Orders. Walk this path with humility, truth, learning, service, and compassion.

People: We welcome you and will support your formation.

Common Order for Ordination Liturgies

The following structure is used for deacons, priests, and bishops. The proper rite of each order supplies the specific texts.

Step	Ceremonial Action
1	Entrance procession and reverence to the altar
2	Opening acclamation and greeting
3	Rite of moral honesty or penitential act
4	Collect of the day
5	Readings and Gospel-style ethical reading
6	Homily
7	Presentation of the candidate
8	Election by the bishop or mandate of consecration
9	Examination and promises
10	Litany of Human Need and Service
11	Laying on of hands
12	Ordination prayer / consecratory declaration
13	Vesting and handing over of symbols
14	Sign of peace and welcome into order
15	Liturgy of the Table and communion
16	Final blessing and dismissal

The laying on of hands is performed in silence. Words of ordination follow the silence.

Readings for Ordination Liturgies

First Reading - Human Dignity

A community becomes just when service is joined to dignity. Authority is not domination, and office is not privilege. The one entrusted with public responsibility must protect the vulnerable, speak truthfully, and become accountable to the people served.

Second Reading - From the Catechism

Holy Orders sets apart deacons, priests, and bishops for service, ritual leadership, pastoral care, teaching, governance, and preservation of the Church's ceremonial life. Ordination is an ecclesiastical act of recognition, appointment, authorization, and responsibility.

Gospel-style Ethical Reading - Servant Leadership

A dispute arose about greatness. The teacher said: the one who wishes to be great must become servant of all. The honored place belongs not to those who demand rank, but to those who wash feet, share bread, and care for the least visible.

Acclamation

Deacon/Priest: This is the memory of service.

People: May we live what we have heard.

The readings may be replaced by approved readings from the Altar Book, Book of Rites, or Catechism, provided all texts remain non-theistic.

Common Promises for Candidates

The candidate stands before the bishop. The bishop may sit at the chair or stand before the altar. The people sit.

Promise of Identity

Bishop: Will you preserve the identity of the Humanistic Catholic Church: Catholic in external form, humanistic in meaning?

Candidate: I will.

Promise of Service

Bishop: Will you serve the human family with dignity, compassion, truthfulness, and care?

Candidate: I will.

Promise of Safeguarding

Bishop: Will you protect children, elders, the vulnerable, the wounded, and all who seek pastoral care?

Candidate: I will.

Promise of Obedience

Bishop: Will you respect the lawful discipline of this Church and collaborate with your bishop and those appointed over you?

Candidate: I will.

Promise of Ritual Integrity

Bishop: Will you celebrate the rites without adding deity-language or supernatural claims contrary to the Church's doctrine?

Candidate: I will.

Litany of Human Need and Service

The candidate kneels or stands according to ability. The assembly may stand. This litany replaces invocations of angels, saints, or supernatural aid.

Leader: For the hungry, the unhoused, and all who live without security:

People: May our ministry become bread, shelter, and care.

Leader: For the sick, aging, grieving, disabled, and fearful:

People: May our ministry become tenderness and presence.

Leader: For children, elders, prisoners, exiles, survivors, and those harmed by religious power:

People: May our ministry become protection and repair.

Leader: For this candidate, called by the Church to public service:

People: May their ministry be humble, honest, and compassionate.

Leader: For this Church, its Presiding Bishop, clergy, lay ministers, parishes, missions, and online communities:

People: May we preserve traditional form with humanistic substance.

Silence follows. The bishop then proceeds to the laying on of hands.

Ordination of Deacons - Introduction

Meaning of the Diaconate

The deacon is ordained as a public minister of service, proclamation, charity, ritual assistance, pastoral care, records, and advocacy for the vulnerable. The deacon stands at the threshold between table and world.

Functions

Function	Description
Service	Organizes care for the poor, sick, isolated, and excluded
Word	Proclaims readings and Gospel-style ethical memory
Altar	Prepares the table and assists the priest or bishop
Community	Keeps contact with members and supports parish life
Records	Assists registers, certificates, and pastoral documentation

Matter and Form

The central sign is the laying on of hands by the bishop in silence, followed by the ordination prayer and the vesting with the diagonal stole.

The candidate for deacon wears an alb. If already a lay minister, any lay insignia is removed before vesting as deacon.

Ordination of Deacons - Presentation and Election

After the Gospel-style Ethical Reading, the bishop sits. The candidate is called by name and comes forward.

Deacon or Formation Minister: Let N. who is to be ordained deacon come forward.

Candidate: Present.

Presentation

Formation Minister: Bishop, the Church asks you to ordain this person for service as deacon.

Bishop: Do you judge this candidate worthy and prepared?

Formation Minister: After inquiry among the people and those responsible for formation, I testify that this candidate has been found ready for diaconal service.

Election

The bishop addresses the people.

Bishop: Relying on the testimony offered and on the needs of this Church, we elect N. for the Order of Deacon.

People: We welcome this servant of the Church.

Applause may be permitted if local custom allows, but it should not obscure the solemnity of the rite.

Ordination of Deacons - Examination

The candidate stands before the bishop. The bishop questions the candidate in the presence of the people.

Bishop: N., do you seek ordination as deacon for service, compassion, and ritual assistance in this Church?

Candidate: I do.

Bishop: Will you proclaim readings and ethical memory with clarity, avoiding superstition, coercion, and contempt?

Candidate: I will.

Bishop: Will you serve the poor, the sick, the lonely, the grieving, the imprisoned, the excluded, and those wounded by religious harm?

Candidate: I will.

Bishop: Will you assist faithfully at the altar and prepare the table with reverence?

Candidate: I will.

Bishop: Will you keep the confidence of those who seek pastoral help and report danger when safeguarding requires it?

Candidate: I will.

The candidate may place joined hands between the hands of the bishop for the promise of obedience, or bow if touch is not desired.

Ordination of Deacons - Promise and Litany

Promise of Respect and Obedience

Bishop: Do you promise respect and lawful obedience to me and to my successors in this Church?

Candidate: I do.

Bishop: May the Church receive your promise and hold you accountable in compassion and truth.

Litany

The candidate kneels or stands. The litany of human need is sung or said. If the candidate cannot kneel, they remain standing or seated without embarrassment.

Leader: For this candidate, soon to be entrusted with diaconal service:

People: May their hands serve with humility.

Leader: For those at the edges of our communities:

People: May this deacon seek them with compassion.

Leader: For the table of this Church:

People: May it remain open, honest, and welcoming.

Silence is kept after the litany. The bishop stands before the candidate for the laying on of hands.

Ordination of Deacons - Laying on of Hands

The bishop lays hands silently on the head of the candidate. No words are spoken during this action. If touch is not possible, the bishop extends both hands over the candidate and records the adaptation.

Ordination Prayer for a Deacon

Bishop: We gather as a Church of memory, dignity, and service. We set apart N. for the Order of Deacon. Let this person be known as a servant of the table and the streets, a herald of compassion, a keeper of trust, a companion of the wounded, and an assistant in the rites of this Church.

May their words be clear, their hands ready, their conscience awake, their service humble, and their loyalty faithful to this Church: Catholic in external form, humanistic in meaning.

N., receive the Order of Deacon in the Humanistic Catholic Church. Serve with courage, compassion, and truth.

People: Amen.

The newly ordained deacon rises. The bishop may assist the deacon to stand.

Ordination of Deacons - Vesting and Symbols

The deacon is vested with the stole worn diagonally from the left shoulder to the right side. A dalmatic may then be placed upon the deacon.

Vesting Formula

Bishop: Receive the stole of diaconal service. Wear it as a sign that ministry is not domination, but care; not privilege, but responsibility.

Handing of the Book

The bishop places the book of readings, Gospel-style ethical readings, or the Book of Rites into the deacon's hands.

Bishop: Receive the book of memory and wisdom. Proclaim it with clarity. Interpret it with compassion. Let your words lead the people toward dignity and repair.

Handing of Towel or Basin

Where local custom permits, a towel, basin, or symbol of service may be given.

Bishop: Receive this sign of service. Stand with those whose feet are tired, whose bodies are wounded, and whose dignity has been denied.

People: May this deacon serve with compassion.

Ordination of Deacons - Welcome and Peace

The bishop gives the new deacon a sign of peace. Other deacons may do the same. The sign may be a handshake, bow, embrace, or other culturally appropriate gesture.

Bishop: Peace be with you, servant of this Church.

Deacon: And with your spirit.

Acclamation

People: We receive you as deacon. Serve the table, serve the wounded, serve the truth, serve the human family.

The Deacon Assists at the Table

If Mass continues, the new deacon prepares the altar, assists with the cup, may invite the sign of peace, and may dismiss the people.

Optional Address by New Deacon

A brief word of thanks may be offered after the Prayer after Communion, not during the ordination rite itself.

The rite continues with the Liturgy of the Table or, if outside Mass, with a table rite, blessing, and dismissal.

Faculties and Duties of Deacons

Ordinary Faculties

A deacon may proclaim readings, preach when authorized, assist at Mass, prepare the altar, distribute communion, lead blessings assigned to deacons, conduct certain rites of service, assist at marriages where authorized by Church law, and lead outreach ministries.

Limitations

A deacon does not preside at the Eucharistic Prayer, ordain, confirm unless specifically delegated under Church law, or exercise priestly faculties unless later ordained priest.

Record Keeping

The deacon should assist in accurate registers and certificates, especially for baptisms, marriages, funerals, service ministries, outreach, and online participation where authorized.

Pastoral Conduct

The deacon must respect boundaries, confidentiality, safeguarding policies, and the non-theistic identity of the Church. Any abuse of office is subject to discipline.

Faculties may be restricted, expanded, suspended, or revoked by the bishop according to Church law.

Short Form for Ordaining a Deacon

Use only for pastoral necessity. The full rite is preferred.

Essential Elements

Element	Required Text or Action
Presentation	The candidate is presented by name.
Election	The bishop elects the candidate for the diaconate.
Promises	The candidate promises service, safeguarding, ritual integrity, and obedience.
Laying on of Hands	The bishop lays hands silently on the candidate.
Ordination Declaration	N., receive the Order of Deacon in the Humanistic Catholic Church. Serve with courage, compassion, and truth.
Vesting	The stole is placed diagonally; book of service is given.
Record	The ordination is entered into the register.

Short Prayer

We set apart N. as deacon: servant of the table, servant of the wounded, servant of compassion, servant of truth. May their ministry strengthen dignity and belonging.

People: Amen.

Adaptation for Distance or Online Diaconal Ordination

This adaptation may be used only if authorized by the Presiding Bishop or governing canon. It should not be used casually.

Required Conditions

The candidate must be visible and audible by two-way communication. Identity must be verified. Witnesses should be present physically with the candidate where possible. The candidate should have a stole, book, and certificate available.

Laying on of Hands by Extension

The bishop extends hands toward the screen in silence. If a local assisting cleric is present, that cleric may place hands physically while the bishop presides remotely, if authorized.

Vesting

A witness, sponsor, or the candidate places the stole as the bishop says the vesting formula. The action is visible to the bishop and people.

Register Notation

The register must state that the ordination was celebrated by two-way video or hybrid means, identify local witnesses, and note the authorization.

A later in-person reception of the deacon may be celebrated but should not be treated as a second ordination.

Certificate of Ordination to the Diaconate

The certificate may be printed on parchment-style paper with the church seal.

This certifies that N., having been examined, approved, and publicly presented, was ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacon in the Humanistic Catholic Church on [date] at [place].

The ordination was conferred by [Name of Bishop] through the laying on of hands and the ordination declaration of this Church, Catholic in external form and humanistic in meaning.

The deacon is authorized to serve according to the faculties and discipline granted by the bishop and recorded in the register of Holy Orders.

Register Number	
Presiding Bishop	
Witness	
Place	
Seal	

Register Entry

Order: Deacon. Rite used: Full / Short / Online Adapted. Vesting: Stole / Dalmatic. Faculties: attached by decree. Safeguarding clearance: recorded. Notes: any limitations.

Ordination of Priests - Introduction

Meaning of the Priesthood

The priest is ordained to preside at the Humanistic Catholic Mass, administer the sacraments and rites entrusted to priests, preach, teach, counsel, reconcile, anoint, bless, govern parish life, and care for the community.

Priest as Presider of the Table

The priest stands at the altar as servant of the table, not owner of the table. The priest gathers the people for memory, ethical formation, communion, and service.

Priest as Pastor

The priest listens, accompanies, teaches, keeps records, visits the sick, supports the grieving, reconciles conflict, and protects the vulnerable.

A priestly ordination should ordinarily take place within Mass. The candidate should already be ordained deacon unless the Presiding Bishop grants extraordinary provision.

Ordination of Priests - Presentation and Election

After the Gospel-style Ethical Reading, the bishop sits. The candidate is called by name and comes forward.

Deacon: Let N., who is to be ordained priest, come forward.

Candidate: Present.

Presentation

Formation Minister: Bishop, the Church asks you to ordain this deacon to the priesthood.

Bishop: Do you judge this candidate worthy and prepared?

Formation Minister: After inquiry among the people and those responsible for formation, I testify that this candidate has been found ready for priestly ministry.

Election

Bishop: Relying on the testimony offered and on the needs of this Church, we elect N. for the Order of Priest.

People: We welcome this presider and pastor of the Church.

The bishop may briefly explain the priesthood as ritual leadership, pastoral care, teaching, and service.

Ordination of Priests - Examination I

The candidate stands before the bishop. The questions should be asked clearly and not rushed.

Bishop: N., do you seek ordination as priest for the service of this Church and the human family?

Candidate: I do.

Bishop: Will you preside at the Mass and sacraments with dignity, clarity, reverence, and fidelity to the Church's humanistic doctrine?

Candidate: I will.

Bishop: Will you preach and teach in a way that strengthens conscience, compassion, reason, memory, and ethical responsibility?

Candidate: I will.

Bishop: Will you offer reconciliation as truth-telling, accountability, amends, moral repair, and restoration to community?

Candidate: I will.

Bishop: Will you anoint the sick with tenderness and surround the suffering with dignity and presence?

Candidate: I will.

Ordination of Priests - Examination II

Bishop: Will you welcome the excluded, protect the vulnerable, honor the wounded, and avoid spiritual coercion?

Candidate: I will.

Bishop: Will you keep accurate records of sacraments, rites, pastoral acts, and parish membership according to Church law?

Candidate: I will.

Bishop: Will you respect lawful ecclesiastical authority and collaborate with your bishop, brother and sister clergy, deacons, and lay ministers?

Candidate: I will.

Bishop: Will you refrain from adding deity-language, supernatural claims, or doctrines contrary to the identity of this Church?

Candidate: I will.

Promise of Obedience

The candidate places joined hands between the hands of the bishop, or bows if touch is not appropriate.

Bishop: Do you promise respect and lawful obedience to me and my successors?

Candidate: I do.

Ordination of Priests - Litany of Service

The candidate kneels or stands. The litany is sung or said. The people may stand.

Leader: For this candidate, soon to be entrusted with the table of memory:

People: May their hands serve with reverence.

Leader: For those who come hungry for belonging:

People: May this priest open the table with dignity.

Leader: For those who confess harm and seek repair:

People: May this priest guide them with truth and compassion.

Leader: For the sick, grieving, aging, and dying:

People: May this priest be a steady presence.

Leader: For parishes, missions, online communities, and all forms of pastoral care:

People: May this priest build communities of courage and service.

Silence is kept. The bishop stands for the laying on of hands.

Ordination of Priests - Laying on of Hands

The bishop lays hands silently on the head of the candidate. Priests present may also lay hands silently after the bishop, signifying collegial reception into the presbyterate.

Ordination Prayer for a Priest

Bishop: We gather as a Church of memory, dignity, and table fellowship. We set apart N. for the Order of Priest. Let this person preside at the altar as servant of the people, teacher of compassion, guardian of ritual, companion of the wounded, and pastor of the human family.

May their ministry be marked by truth without cruelty, beauty without vanity, authority without domination, and compassion without contempt.

N., receive the Order of Priest in the Humanistic Catholic Church. Preside with dignity, teach with clarity, reconcile with patience, anoint with tenderness, and serve with courage.

People: Amen.

The new priest rises. The bishop may assist the new priest to stand.

Ordination of Priests - Vesting

The priestly stole is placed over both shoulders. The chasuble is then placed upon the newly ordained priest. The vesting may be done by assisting priests or sponsors.

Stole Formula

Bishop: Receive the stole of priestly service. Wear it as a sign that you are bound to the people in truth, compassion, and care.

Chasuble Formula

Bishop: Receive the chasuble of the presider. Let the beauty of the rite never hide the needs of the people. Let ceremony lead to service.

Anointing of Hands Optional

If the Church permits an anointing of hands, oil is used as a sign of tenderness, service, and embodied care. It is not a supernatural consecration.

Bishop: May these hands break bread, hold the wounded, keep trust, and serve the table of shared life.

The bishop may wipe the hands with a linen cloth.

Ordination of Priests - Handing of Symbols

Bread and Cup

The bishop gives the paten with bread and the chalice or cup with wine or grape juice to the new priest.

Bishop: Receive the bread and cup of the people. Know what you do. Remember what you celebrate. Let the table you serve become a sign of shared life, memory, and solidarity.

Book of Rites

The bishop may also give the Mass book, Book of Rites, or pastoral ritual.

Bishop: Receive the book of rites. Celebrate faithfully. Adapt pastorally. Do not obscure the Church's identity. Let every ceremony serve dignity and compassion.

Key or Register Optional

Bishop: Receive this sign of pastoral responsibility. Keep the records of the Church with accuracy, discretion, and care.

The newly ordained priest then receives the sign of peace from the bishop and priests present.

Ordination of Priests - Welcome and Concelebration

Sign of Peace

Bishop: Peace be with you, priest of this Church.

New Priest: And with your spirit.

Priests present may welcome the new priest with a sign of peace. The assembly may acclaim briefly.

Acclamation

People: We receive you as priest. Serve the table, teach the way of compassion, and care for the human family.

First Exercise of Priestly Ministry

If the ordination occurs within Mass, the new priest takes a place near the bishop at the altar. The new priest may join in the Eucharistic Prayer according to local custom or stand with the priests as a sign of the presbyterate.

Communion

The new priest may assist in distributing communion. Care should be taken that the rite remains dignified and not overly prolonged.

Faculties and Duties of Priests

Ordinary Faculties

A priest may preside at Mass, baptize, confirm if delegated or authorized by Church law, hear reconciliation, anoint the sick, witness marriages according to Church and civil requirements, preside at funerals, bless persons and objects, preach, teach, form lay ministers, and govern a parish or mission if appointed.

Limits

A priest may not ordain, consecrate bishops, establish dioceses, alter official liturgical books, or claim independent authority contrary to the bishop. Faculties are exercised under ecclesiastical discipline.

Pastoral Records

The priest must keep parish registers for sacraments, rites, membership, certificates, and pastoral acts. Records are part of the Church's memory and accountability.

Confidentiality and Reporting

Pastoral confidentiality is honored, but safeguarding law and Church policy govern threats, abuse, exploitation, and danger to vulnerable persons.

The bishop should issue a written decree of faculties after ordination or appointment.

Short Form for Ordaining a Priest

Use only for pastoral necessity. The full rite is preferred.

Element	Required Action
Presentation	Candidate is presented as deacon seeking priesthood.
Election	Bishop elects the candidate to priesthood.
Promises	Candidate promises table service, teaching, reconciliation, safeguarding, obedience, and ritual integrity.
Laying on Hands	Bishop lays hands silently; priests may do so silently.
Ordination Declaration	N., receive the Order of Priest in the Humanistic Catholic Church. Preside with dignity, teach with clarity, reconcile with patience, anoint with tenderness, and serve with courage.
Vesting	Priestly stole and chasuble are given.
Symbols	Bread, cup, and book of rites are handed over.

Short Prayer

We set apart N. as priest: servant of the table, keeper of memory, teacher of compassion, pastor of the wounded, and presider of the sacraments. May their ministry be faithful and humane.

People: Amen.

Adaptation for Distance or Online Priestly Ordination

Use only by explicit authorization of the Presiding Bishop or applicable canon.

Conditions

The candidate must be a deacon unless dispensed. The candidate must be visible by two-way video. Local witnesses should be present. Vestments, bread, cup, and book of rites should be ready.

Laying on of Hands

The bishop extends hands toward the candidate in silence. If an authorized local bishop or priest is physically present, they may lay hands according to the mandate.

Vesting

A sponsor or assisting cleric vests the new priest while the bishop says the vesting formula. The candidate may self-vest if alone, with the action visible to the assembly.

Record

The register must state the online or hybrid method, mandate, witnesses, location of candidate, location of bishop, and any later in-person reception.

Online ordination should be followed by pastoral mentoring and review within six months.

Consecration of Bishops - Introduction

Meaning of the Episcopate

A bishop is consecrated for oversight, unity, teaching, governance, ordination, ceremonial authorization, pastoral discipline, and institutional continuity. The bishop is guardian of the Church's public identity and servant of its communities.

Episcopal Authority

Authority is not domination. Episcopal authority exists to protect the vulnerable, maintain doctrine, preserve rites, order clergy, support parishes and missions, keep records, and hold the Church together.

Consecrating Bishop

The Presiding Bishop ordinarily consecrates bishops. Other bishops may assist according to mandate. A written mandate is required where Church law demands it.

Insignia

The ring signifies fidelity to the Church. The mitre signifies public teaching and oversight. The crozier signifies pastoral governance and care. The book signifies doctrine and liturgical authority.

The episcopal consecration should be celebrated with special solemnity, with clergy and people present whenever possible.

Consecration of Bishops - Mandate and Presentation

After the Gospel-style Ethical Reading, the principal consecrating bishop sits. The bishop-elect is presented. The mandate or decree is read aloud.

Presentation

Presenter: Presiding Bishop, the Church presents N. to be consecrated bishop for the service of oversight, unity, and pastoral governance.

Presiding Bishop: Let the mandate be read.

Mandate

Reader: By authority of the Presiding Bishop and according to the discipline of the Humanistic Catholic Church, N. is appointed to the episcopate for [see/mission/office], to serve as bishop in continuity with the doctrine, rites, and governance of this Church.

People: We receive the mandate with solemn attention.

Consent

Presiding Bishop: People of this Church, do you receive N. for the work of episcopal oversight?

People: We receive this bishop-elect and pledge honest support and accountability.

Consecration of Bishops - Examination I

The bishop-elect stands before the Presiding Bishop. The examination should be clear, deliberate, and audible.

Presiding Bishop: N., do you accept election and appointment to the episcopate in the Humanistic Catholic Church?

Bishop-elect: I do.

Presiding Bishop: Will you guard the Church's identity: Catholic in external form, humanistic in meaning?

Bishop-elect: I will.

Presiding Bishop: Will you preserve the Mass, sacraments, rites, blessings, ordinal, calendar, vesture, and ceremonial books according to lawful authority?

Bishop-elect: I will.

Presiding Bishop: Will you teach without superstition, govern without cruelty, and correct without contempt?

Bishop-elect: I will.

Presiding Bishop: Will you ordain only those who are prepared, suitable, safe, and faithful to the Church's doctrine?

Bishop-elect: I will.

Consecration of Bishops - Examination II

Presiding Bishop: Will you protect children, elders, the vulnerable, the wounded, and all who seek pastoral care?

Bishop-elect: I will.

Presiding Bishop: Will you keep clergy accountable, discipline misconduct, and defend the dignity of persons over institutional pride?

Bishop-elect: I will.

Presiding Bishop: Will you support parishes, missions, online communities, clergy, lay ministers, and those who serve without recognition?

Bishop-elect: I will.

Presiding Bishop: Will you act in communion with the Presiding Bishop and never claim authority independent of the Church's lawful order?

Bishop-elect: I will.

Promise of Communion

The bishop-elect may place hands between the hands of the Presiding Bishop or bow.

Bishop-elect: I promise respect, communion, and lawful obedience within this Church.

Consecration of Bishops - Litany of Oversight

The bishop-elect kneels, stands, or sits according to ability. The assembly stands. The litany replaces invocations of supernatural beings.

Leader: For this bishop-elect, entrusted with oversight:

People: May their authority become service.

Leader: For clergy who need guidance, correction, and support:

People: May this bishop govern with truth and compassion.

Leader: For parishes, missions, online communities, and future foundations:

People: May this bishop strengthen unity and belonging.

Leader: For those harmed by religious power:

People: May this bishop protect, listen, and repair.

Leader: For the whole human family:

People: May this ministry serve dignity, justice, and peace.

A substantial silence follows before the laying on of hands.

Consecration of Bishops - Laying on of Hands

The principal consecrating bishop lays hands silently on the head of the bishop-elect. Assisting bishops may do the same in silence. If no assisting bishops are present, priests may stand nearby but do not perform the episcopal laying on unless Church law permits.

Book Over the Head Optional

A book of the Church's rites or catechism may be held open near or above the bishop-elect as a sign that the bishop stands under the doctrine and discipline of the Church. This is a ceremonial sign, not a magical act.

Consecratory Declaration

Presiding Bishop: We gather as a Church of memory, dignity, and order. We set apart N. for the Order of Bishop. Let this person be a guardian of the rites, a teacher of humanistic doctrine, a protector of the vulnerable, a servant of unity, and a steward of the Church's future.

N., receive the Order of Bishop in the Humanistic Catholic Church. Oversee with humility, ordain with care, govern with justice, teach with clarity, and preserve the Church in traditional form and humanistic substance.

People: Amen.

Consecration of Bishops - Vesting and Optional Anointing

The newly consecrated bishop rises. The episcopal vesting begins. If used, oil may be placed on the hands or head as a sign of public responsibility and care, not supernatural power.

Optional Anointing

Presiding Bishop: May your mind be clear, your hands be steady, your conscience be awake, and your oversight be marked by dignity and compassion.

Pectoral Cross

Presiding Bishop: Receive this cross as a sign of public burden, moral courage, and service to the wounded human family.

Ring

Presiding Bishop: Receive this ring as a sign of fidelity to the Church, its people, its doctrine, and its mission.

Mitre

Presiding Bishop: Receive the mitre as a sign of teaching, oversight, and responsibility.

Crozier

Presiding Bishop: Receive the crozier as a sign of pastoral governance. Lead without domination. Correct without contempt. Protect without fear.

Consecration of Bishops - Book, Chair, and Peace

Book of Rites

The Presiding Bishop places the Book of Rites, Ordinal, or Catechism into the hands of the new bishop.

Presiding Bishop: Receive the book of this Church. Guard its doctrine, celebrate its rites, authorize its ministers, and ensure that Catholic form remains joined to humanistic meaning.

Taking the Chair

The new bishop may be led to the cathedra or appointed chair. If the bishop has no territorial see, the bishop may be seated in a chair prepared near the altar.

Presiding Bishop: Take your place among the servants of unity. This chair is not a throne of privilege, but a seat of responsibility.

Sign of Peace

Presiding Bishop: Peace be with you, bishop of this Church.

New Bishop: And with your spirit.

The bishops, priests, deacons, and representatives of the people may offer the sign of peace.

Faculties and Duties of Bishops

Ordinary Episcopal Faculties

A bishop may ordain deacons and priests when authorized, consecrate bishops with mandate, confirm, preside at major rites, establish or supervise parishes and missions according to Church law, discipline clergy, authorize liturgical practice, and govern assigned communities.

Duties

The bishop must teach clearly, preserve non-theistic doctrine, protect the vulnerable, keep records, review clergy, support formation, and ensure that the rites remain dignified and pastorally accessible.

Limits

A bishop may not alter the Church's doctrine, claim affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church, change official books without authority, ordain unsuitable candidates, ignore safeguarding, or act against the lawful authority of the Presiding Bishop.

Corporation Sole and Office

If a bishop holds a corporation sole office, civil and ecclesiastical documents must identify the title, succession, seal, and property responsibilities according to applicable law and Church discipline.

A bishop receives faculties by mandate. The certificate should specify office, jurisdiction, and limitations.

Short Form for Consecrating a Bishop

Use only for necessity or when the full rite must be abbreviated. A written mandate remains required.

Element	Required Action
Mandate	The decree appointing the bishop-elect is read.
Examination	The bishop-elect promises doctrine, governance, safeguarding, ritual integrity, and communion.
Litany	At least a short litany of human need and oversight is said.
Laying on Hands	Principal consecrating bishop lays hands silently; assisting bishops may do the same.
Consecratory Declaration	N., receive the Order of Bishop in the Humanistic Catholic Church. Oversee with humility, ordain with care, govern with justice, teach with clarity, and preserve the Church in traditional form and humanistic substance.
Insignia	Ring, mitre, crozier, and book are given.
Record	Consecration is entered into the episcopal register.

People: Amen.

Adaptation for Distance or Online Episcopal Consecration

This adaptation is extraordinary and requires explicit written authorization by the Presiding Bishop and governing law of the Church.

Conditions

The bishop-elect must be visible and audible by two-way communication. The mandate must be read. At least two credible witnesses should be present with the bishop-elect where possible. Insignia should be prepared locally.

Laying on of Hands

The principal consecrating bishop extends hands toward the bishop-elect in silence. If an authorized assisting bishop is physically present with the bishop-elect, that bishop may perform the physical laying on of hands under mandate.

Vesting and Insignia

A local cleric or witness assists with ring, mitre, crozier, and book. If alone, the bishop-elect may receive the symbols by self-vesting under the presider's words.

Later Reception

A later in-person enthronement, seating, or reception may be celebrated. It is not a second consecration.

The register must preserve the mandate, technological method, witnesses, locations, and the reason for using the adaptation.

Certificate of Episcopal Consecration

The certificate should bear the seal of the Church and, where appropriate, the seal of the Presiding Bishop.

This certifies that N., having been examined, elected or appointed, and publicly presented, was consecrated to the Sacred Order of Bishop in the Humanistic Catholic Church on [date] at [place].

The consecration was conferred by [Name of Principal Consecrating Bishop], with [assisting bishops/witnesses], through the laying on of hands and the consecratory declaration of this Church.

The bishop is authorized to serve according to the mandate, faculties, jurisdiction, and limitations recorded in the episcopal register.

Episcopal Register Number	
Office / See / Mission	
Principal Consecrator	
Assisting Bishops / Witnesses	
Seal	

Register Entry

Order: Bishop. Mandate: attached. Jurisdiction: specified. Insignia given: ring, mitre, crozier, book. Method: full / short / online-adapted. Notes: limitations and succession provisions.

Registers, Decrees, and Letters

Register Template

Field	Entry
Full legal name	
Ecclesiastical name/title	
Order conferred	Deacon / Priest / Bishop
Date and place	
Presiding bishop	
Assisting clergy	
Witnesses	
Mandate or faculty decree	
Certificate number	
Safeguarding notation	
Limitations	

Letter of Good Standing

To whom it may concern: This certifies that N. is a cleric of the Humanistic Catholic Church in the Order of [Deacon/Priest/Bishop], currently in good standing, subject to the faculties and limitations recorded by this Church.

Letter of Faculties

By authority of the bishop, N. is granted faculties to serve in [parish/mission/diocese/online ministry] for [term], according to the doctrine, rubrics, safeguarding norms, and discipline of the Humanistic Catholic Church.

Final Rubrical Index and Promulgation

Essential Ordination Signs

Order	Essential Sign	Words
Deacon	Laying on of hands by bishop	Receive the Order of Deacon... Serve with courage, compassion, and truth.
Priest	Laying on of hands by bishop; priests may join silently	Receive the Order of Priest... Preside with dignity, teach with clarity...
Bishop	Laying on of hands by consecrating bishop with mandate	Receive the Order of Bishop... Oversee with humility...

Non-Theistic Discipline

No rite in this Ordinal may be altered to invoke a supernatural deity, divine power, angels, demons, supernatural grace, metaphysical change, or divine command. All rites are to be interpreted through human dignity, creation, reason, compassion, memory, community, ethical responsibility, and service.

Promulgation

This Humanistic Catholic Ordinal: Rubrical Edition is issued for use in the Humanistic Catholic Church as an official working text for ordinations and related ceremonial acts.

Traditional Form, Humanistic Substance.

Promulgated by	Bishop Robert Horwath, Presiding Bishop
Primate See	Ketchikan, Alaska
Date	_____
Seal	_____