

FAITH CHAT

with James & John

Who Are The Successors To The Apostles?

Know This...

Valid participation in the apostolic ministry of bishop, priest, or deacon depends on an unbroken line of succession from the Apostles. Generally speaking, this unbroken line only exists in the Catholic Church and the Orthodox churches. Every recognized Catholic and Orthodox bishop, dating back to the Apostles, has been ordained through the laying on of hands by a successor to the Apostles. No ecclesial Community [Protestant] has maintained this apostolic trail of succession. Catholic and Orthodox

bishops are the successors to the Apostles.



John: The Apostles witnessed our Lord's Resurrection. This aspect of their office cannot be transmitted; but Jesus promised to remain with His Church until the end of time.

James: So the Apostles, through the prompting of the Holy Spirit, appointed their successors and guaranteed that the Gospel would be passed on until Jesus' return.



John: Apostolic succession is the handing on of the authority and preaching of the Apostles to their successors through the laying on of hands.

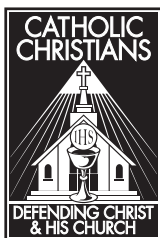
James: The Father sent Jesus. He sent His Apostles. They sent their successors. Who send the bishops.

John: Today this unbroken chain is visible in the Catholic bishops. In communion with the Pope, they teach with the voice and authority of the Apostles.

James: Apostolic succession keeps the true Gospel in the Catholic Church.

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Jesus told the Jews, "Whoever speaks on his own seeks his own glory, but whoever seeks the glory of the One who sent him is truthful, and there is no wrong in him." ^{Jn 7:18} Jesus told the Apostles, "As the Father has sent Me, so I send you." ^{Jn 20:21b} "Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." ^{Mt 28:20}

"Although these [Orthodox] Churches are separated from us, they possess true sacraments, above all—by apostolic succession—the priesthood and the Eucharist." ^{Unitatis Redintegratio, 15} "The ecclesial Communities separated from us lack that fullness of unity with us which should flow from baptism, and we believe that especially because of the lack of the sacrament of orders [Holy Orders through apostolic succession] they have not preserved the genuine and total reality of the Eucharistic mystery." ^{Unitatis Redintegratio, 22}



PAPA SAYS

Peter stood up among the brethren and said, "Judas—who was guide to those who arrested Jesus—was numbered among us, and was allotted his share in this ministry... For it is written in the Book of Psalms... 'His office let another take'... So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us... must become with us a witness to His resurrection.'... And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Mathias. And they prayed and said, 'Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which one of these two thou hast chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside, to go to his own place.' And they had cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Mathias; and he was enrolled with the eleven Apostles." ^{Acts 1:16b-17, 20-21, 23-26}



Paul and Barnabas came before Peter and the Apostles. "Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off." ^{Acts 13:3} And Paul and Barnabas became bishops. Later, Paul ordained Timothy. "Hence, I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands." ^{2Tim 1:6} Timothy ordained other men bishops.

God, our Father; Your Son chose twelve men to form the foundation of His Church. Just as You sent Him to teach us, He sent the Apostles to continue Your teaching. Through Apostolic succession, and with the guidance of Your Spirit, the bishops continue to teach all nations. I pray that the bishops will remain forever faithful to Your Word and that all Christians will find joy in the Gospel. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

