

of consecrating the Pope as a bishop had to be performed by someone who was already a bishop.

If the person that is elected to be Pope is not yet a bishop he is consecrated by the Dean of the College of Cardinals, known as the 'Cardinal Bishop of Ostia'.

To symbolize their bond with the papacy cardinals are given a gold ring by the Pope and it is this ring which is normally kissed by Catholics when a cardinal is greeted. There is an image on the outside which is chosen by each pope and the ring also includes the Pope's coat of arms on the inside.

At various times there have been cardinals who had not been ordained as deacons or priests but had only received first tonsure and minor orders and although they were classified as clerics they were in fact laymen and were permitted to marry.

Traditionally there were fourteen Cardinal deacons that derived from the seven deacons in the 'Papal Household' and the seven deacons that supervised the Church's works in the districts of Rome during the early Middle Ages. The number has substantially increased however and as of 2005 there were over fifty recognized titular diaconates although only thirty cardinals were of the order of Deacons.

When celebrating Mass, a cardinal wears the same vestments as a bishop even if he has not been consecrated as a bishop and a

cardinal deacon will on certain occasions wear a deacon's dalmatic as well as an Episcopal miter.

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The College of Cardinals

Cardinals generally have several duties, the most important of which is their role in electing a Pope should the post become vacant due to either death or resignation.

The majority of cardinals oversee a diocese or archdiocese or manage a department of the Roman Curia. Cardinals are collectively referred to as a 'College of Cardinals' and they attend meetings and are always available both as a group or as individuals should the Pope request their counsel.

Cardinals are chosen by the Holy Father to serve as his principal assistants and advisers in the central administration of Church affairs. Collectively, they form the College of Cardinals. Provisions regarding their selection, rank, roles, and prerogatives are detailed in Canons 349 to 359 of the Code of Canon Law of the Catholic Church.

Following that of the Pope, the title of cardinal is the highest dignity in the Catholic Church which was recognized as early as the pontificate of Sylvester I (314-335). Rooted in the Latin word *cardo*, meaning "hinge," cardinals are created by a decree of the Roman Pontiff and chosen to serve as his principal collaborators and assistants. Cardinals are considered "princes of the Church" and are addressed by the title of "Eminence."

In early years, "cardinal" was a title attributed generically to ecclesiastics in the

service of a church or diaconate, particularly to ecclesiastics in Rome who were the Pope's counselors. Later this title was reserved for those responsible for the titular churches (tituli cardinales) of Rome and the most important churches in Italy and abroad. Gradually, from Pope Nicholas II in 1059 to Pope Eugenio IV in 1438, this title acquired the prestige which still marks it today.

The College of Cardinals was constituted in its current form in 1150: it has a Dean, who is the bishop of Ostia, along with the other titular church which he already holds, and a Camerlengo or Chamberlain, who administers the goods of the Church when the See of Peter is vacant. The Dean is chosen from those cardinals of episcopal rank who possess a title to a suburbicarian diocese, which are the six dioceses closest to Rome (Albano, Frascati, Ostia, Palestrina, Porto-Santa, Ruffina and Velletri-Segni).

Because the Cardinals are called to help the Pope in his leadership of the Church, they are also linked in a special way to the Diocese of Rome. With the exception of a small number of Cardinals who are made the titular bishops (ie, in name only) of the sees surrounding Rome, each of the remaining Cardinals is given the honorary "governance" of one of the most traditional Parish Churches of Rome. Whenever they visit Rome, they are encouraged to minister to their community. Strictly speaking, it is the Cardinal who is the "parish priest" of these parishes, not the priest who fulfils that role in reality. However, in real terms, the

Cardinal's position in that church is only titular.

During the period known as 'sede vacante' (vacant seat) which is the time between a Pope's death and the election of his successor, the day to day running of the Church is primarily in the hands of the 'College of Cardinals'.

Cardinals under the age of 80 elect the Pope when the Holy See becomes vacant; and are major administrators of church affairs, serving in one or more departments of the Roman Curia. Cardinals in charge of agencies of the Roman Curia and Vatican City are asked to submit their resignation from office to the Pope on reaching the age of 75. A cardinal's title, while symbolic of high honor, does not signify any extension of the powers of holy orders.

There are three degrees within the College of Cardinals:

- * Cardinal Bishops
- * Cardinal Priests
- * Cardinal Deacons

This does not correspond to their actual degree of orders (ie, whether they are a bishop, priest or deacon) but to their position within the College of Cardinals. Cardinals appointed from dioceses around the world are made Cardinal Priests. Cardinals appointed from within the Roman Curia are made Cardinal Deacons. However, after having been a Cardinal Deacon for 10 years, the Cardinal can petition the Pope to be

promoted to Cardinal Priest. The distinction between the three degrees of Cardinals has little practical significance except in determining the order and rank for ceremonial processions. Also, during the period after a Pope dies and before a new one is elected, it is one's position within the College of Cardinals that determines one's power to exercise certain roles if the Dean of the College of Cardinals or Camerlengo are unable to do so.

Pope Paul VI's Apostolic Constitution "Romano Pontifici Eligendo," promulgated on October 1, 1975, established numerical limits for the College of Cardinals. It stated that cardinals who had reached the age of 80 could not enter into conclave, and that the number of electors could not go beyond 120. Pope John Paul II continued this limitation when he revoked "Romano Pontifici Eligendo" and introduced a new revised set of rules for papal elections in "Universi Dominici Gregis" in 1996. These new set of rules however, were changed back to Paul VI's Apostolic Constitution by Pope Benedict XVI in 2007.

The head (as primus inter pares) of the College of Cardinals known as the Dean is elected by the Cardinal Bishops from among their own number but his nomination must be approved by the Pope.

Originally the privilege of papal election was not restricted to the cardinals and for centuries the Pope was usually a Roman priest and never a bishop from outside, and to preserve the apostolic succession the rite