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Apostolic Guardian Church of Grace and Blessing

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Priesthood and Succession in the Apostolic Guardian Church

Introduction to the Apostolic Succession

The Apostolic Succession is the most ancient spiritual lineage that can be traced through history. It is approximately 2000 years old. Embedded in the lineages are not only the divine Apostolic powers and energies transmitted directly from the Master Jesus by the laying-on of hands, but also over 20 centuries of dedicated work of heart, soul, and spirit that all those who labored in the lineages transmitted through their striving and service. It links all those who operate the lineage with their spiritual ancestors.

Apostolic Succession provides a powerful, invisible link to the Master Jesus and becomes a vital source of interior transformation for each ordained person through meditation, dreams, and the Sacraments. It links members of the Church in the sacred chain of spiritual brothers and sisters who have dedicated themselves to the service of the Christ.

The Priesthood of Melchizedek

Apostolic Succession is the lineage of ordination originating with the Master Jesus and his Apostles. It is also known as the Priesthood of Melchizedek (the great universal human priesthood). Master Jesus was not a priest of Judaism. He was not initiated into the Aryan Priesthood or any of the other priesthoods that existed. Rather it is said by the initiate Paul and others that followed that his priesthood was the Priesthood of Melchizedek—the strange figure who appears in the old testament writings to initiate Abraham. So traditionally, in the Christian priesthood when priests are made, it is said, "Thou art a priest forever after the Order of Melchizedek."

Christian priesthood began as the Apostolic commission of the inner circle of 12 disciples chosen from a larger circle of 70 by the Master Jesus. Master Jesus placed his hands upon the head of each Apostle and sent them forth into the world even as he himself had been sent, i.e., "As the Father sent Me, so I send you. Then He breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" (John 20: 21-22).

The disciples that Master Jesus ordained to carry on the work that he had carried on were called "Bearers of the Teachings." In the Greek language it became Apostoli--the Apostles. The Apostles, in turn, each trained close disciples on whom they laid hands as their successors, each becoming a link in the Sacred Chain of the Priesthood of Melchizedek.

These sacred orders streamed out into the world in many different traditions because the Apostles went to different places. Thomas went to India. Mark ended up in Egypt; Peter in Antioch and Rome. Each of these is an example of a 'line of apostolic succession.' Historically, the churches that have preserved these lines of succession and lineages have been separate and separated. The Roman Catholic Pope preserves one line of succession. The Greek Orthodox another; The Coptic another and so on.

Although they had each been taught by Master Jesus, the Apostles had been far from uniform in thought and personality. They had many differences of opinion. Because of the great diversity of thought among the early Apostles, it was inevitable that the churches, which grew out of their separate missionary journeys, would differ widely.

Each Apostle of Christ was independent, each having his own ministry. This is a very important point as there was no Pope--no Apostle placed in charge of others. The twelve went forth sometimes working together and sometimes alone. As the Church of Christ grew, it grew independently establishing churches in cities; and as each city group grew they were called diocese's - hence the name Diocesan Bishop.

Many of the various Bishops or successors to the Apostles continued to remain independent of each other, each having their own Christian teachings and ceremonies. Occasionally when matters of faith were unclear, many of the Bishops would gather to clarify a particular issue of faith. These gatherings were called the Ecumenical Councils and provided a commonality to the Christian Church.

For three centuries, the diverse Christian traditions of India, Persia, Syria, Ethiopia, Palestine, Egypt, Greece, Rome and the western Celtic regions developed in native freedom. Thus, from the earliest times, valid lines of Apostolic succession were maintained both within and outside of the Roman jurisdiction.

Priesthood and Apostolic Succession in the Guardian Church

The succession of the Apostles has been kept, unbroken, in many different chains of succession from the hands of Master Jesus, up to the present time, when he laid hands on his students and they laid hands on theirs. Apostolic Succession is the person-to-person, hands upon head transmission of ordination authority that descends from the Master Jesus through his Apostles. It can be transmitted only by Bishops who are historical successors of the Apostles.

Apostolic Succession is more than simply lineage. Much is said of lineage in non-apostolic circles, such as the 'Order of the Golden Dawn' for example, where the topic of lineage is debated and its validity frequently questioned--especially by those persons or groups not holding any form of lineage. Thus it may be said that while the concept of lineage is an illusion in the magical sense (as argued by many magicians) Apostolic Succession is not; for Apostolic Succession leads back, in an unbroken current and line, to Jesus the Christ himself.

In the classical structure of the Church, there are three degrees of Priesthood--

deaconate, priesthood, and the episcopate or bishop. There are also several degrees of minor orders sometimes, but not always used. The highest office of the ministry is the Bishop. This is because the Bishop is an appointed Apostle of Christ. A Bishop is a person in the service of Christ whom has a lineal successorship back to one or more of Jesus' Apostles. In this manner the mystical current of Jesus, that was originally shared out amongst the Apostles has been carried forward into this present day by way of initiatic transmission.

In the nineteenth century, valid lines of Apostolic Succession were transmitted into independent church groups of Europe, England, and America, much to the chagrin of Roman and other church hierarchies. After years of legal battling in ecclesiastical and secular courts, the Catholic and Orthodox churches were forced to recognize the validity of these "irregular" Apostolic orders. The Orders of the Apostolic Guardians of Grace and Blessings are the Apostolic orders of the Master Jesus—the Orders of Melchizedek.

Patriarch of the Guardian Church of Grace and Blessings

Rev. Timothy A. Storlie, MS, MSW serves as Patriarch and Arch Bishop of the Guardian Church. With an MS in education, an MSW degree in social work, and an honorary doctorate in sacred theology, Timothy serves professionally as a Washington State Licensed Mental Health Counselor and as a Home Health and Hospice Medical Social Worker.

He holds apostolic succession in all 18 extant traditional lines, as an example the Antiochian-Jacobite Succession (Eastern Orthodox) extending back through 135 bishops to the Apostle Peter, and the Roman-Old Catholic Succession (Western Catholic) going back through 262 bishops, also to the Apostle Peter. He also holds clandestine Gnostic, Templar, and Rosicrucian lines of Europe that kept no written records for fear of the Inquisition.