Article XIV: Order in the Church

Introduction:

When this article speaks of a rightly ordered call, it refers to the Church's historic practice of placing personally and theologically qualified men into the office of preaching and teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments. This is done by means of a formal, public, and official call from the Church to do so. When this article was presented, it was understood that a call into the preaching office would be confirmed and formally recognized by means of the apostolic rite of ordination (with prayer and the laying on of hands).

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[1] Our churches teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church, or administer the Sacraments, without a rightly ordered call.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to be called?

2. Who is called to teach and administer the sacraments in the Church?

3. Who calls pastors?

4. What does “publicly” mean?

5. What are the qualifications of a pastor?

6. How the Church ensure that a man is qualified to teach and administer the sacraments publicly? (*rite vocatus*)

7. What is Ordination?

8. Can anyone simply prop himself up as a pastor?

9. What about auxiliary offices in the Church?

10. What about women in the office of public ministry?

Conclusion:

Christ established the Office of the Holy Ministry as a gift to His Church for the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Therefore, no one may assume this office on his own authority, but must be rightly called through the Church. How does Christ provide His Church with faithful ministers to proclaim His Word and administer His Sacraments? He does so through examination, a proper call, and ordination. The Church recognizes and confirms a man's call to this sacred responsibility through ordination. Ordination does not confer an indelible sacramental character or make a man a superior Christian; rather, it publicly sets him apart to serve as Christ's steward, faithfully proclaiming His Word and administering His Sacraments for the salvation of souls.