

*How is a priest different than a religious brother?*

Bishops, priests and deacons are ordained in the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Jesus Himself instituted sacraments. Brothers, monks, friars, nuns and sisters take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, but there is no sacrament involved. Sometimes monks and friars can also be priests. These are called religious or order priests. Most of the priests who serve in parishes are diocesan priests who serve directly under their bishop. Generally brothers are monks or friars who are not ordained priests. They are the male equivalent of nuns and sisters, and live their lives as part of a religious community or order.

Religious orders fall into two general types; those who serve God entirely or mostly within their community, and those who go forth from their home communities to serve God among the people of the world. These are like two different kinds of vocations, and both are needed for a well balanced Catholic Church.

Nuns and sisters especially live as brides of Jesus, but brothers also have a love relationship with Jesus. Jesus is the spouse and husband of His bride, the whole Church. That's why the Church is always referred to as, "She," and not He. Nuns and brothers both model Christ's Bride, the Church, in a special way.

Priests, however, are the Father figures of the Church family. They are the visible extension of the spousal/ husbandship of Jesus the Bridegroom. This idea, being sacramental, comes to us from Jesus and the Holy Spirit and is the main reason only men have vocations to the priesthood.

Priesthood has its beginnings with the Apostles of Jesus. The vocation to consecrated life outside the priesthood came soon after in the early years of Church history. Priests and brothers have different vocations.