

Service of Appointment for a Religious Superior

Rooted in the Celtic Tradition | Inclusive & Sacred

Setting:

A quiet place, either indoors or in nature. The altar holds a bowl of water, a stone, a candle, and greenery. Bells or harp music may be played softly.

1. Gathering & Invocation

Bishop:

We gather today under the gaze of the Holy One,
the Three-in-One, the One-in-Three —
as the sun circles the earth, and the tide returns to the shore.
We are here to recognize a calling,
to bless a soul for service,
to appoint a guide among us.

Brief silence

All:

Spirit of the living God,
Move among us.
Be the flame in our hearts,
Be the wind on our skin,
Be the deep stillness in our souls.

2. Blessing of the Elements

Water (bowl is lifted):

May wisdom flow like a river in you.
May you wash away fear and doubt.
You are called to lead with clarity and compassion.

Stone (held in hand):

May you be grounded in truth.
As this stone is shaped by time and tide,
so may your Bishopship be shaped by love and justice.

Greenery (raised):

May life spring up wherever you go.
As the trees shelter the weary,
may you be a place of refuge and renewal.

Candle (lit):

May your spirit burn bright in darkness.
Be a beacon of hope,
a fire of courage.

3. Reading or Chant (choose or adapt)

- A passage from St. Brigid or St. Columba
- A reading from scripture or sacred text (e.g., Isaiah 61:1–3, Psalm 121)
- A Celtic blessing or original poem:

Reader:

“Go out, soul of strength,
With the blessing of hawthorn and the blessing of rain,
With the wisdom of the salmon and the steadiness of stone.
Be gentle with the broken-hearted,
Bold with the mighty,
Faithful with the forgotten.”

4. Declaration of Appointment**Bishop (to the Community):**

Do you affirm this person's calling —
to serve not above, but among;
to guide not with pride, but with prayer;
to lead not with force, but with faith?

All:

We do, with joy and hope.
We will walk alongside, support in love,
and hold this ministry in our prayers.

Bishop (to the Candidate):

Do you accept this appointment,
trusting in the Spirit that has led you here?
Will you lead with humility,
listen with open ears,
and serve with courage and grace?

Candidate:

I will, by the help of God and the prayers of the people.

5. Anointing & Laying On of Hands (or gesture if not physically touching)

Those present extend hands, or a few anoint the new superior's head or hands with water or oil.

Prayer of Blessing:

May the Spirit anoint you with wisdom,
May Christ walk with you in the wilderness,
May the Creator sing through you in silence and speech.

6. Closing Blessing**Bishop:**

Circle this one, O Christ,
Keep protection near and danger afar.
Circle this one, O Spirit,
Keep peace within and fear without.
Circle this one, O Eternal,
Keep light before, love beside,
And hope behind.

All:

Amen. Let it be so.

Optional: Song or Chant

- *Be Thou My Vision* (inclusive adaptation)

- *Deep Peace of the Running Wave to You*
- *An original Celtic-style chant*

