



The Priesthood

Then I will give you shepherds after
My own heart, who will feed you on
knowledge and understanding.

-Jeremiah 3:15

Year for Priests

"If we fully realized
what a priest is, we
would die of love!"

St. John Vianney

The Priesthood - Apologetics

◇ What is a priest?

- Priests are mediators between God and man
- Priests offer sacrifices to God on behalf of others
- A sacrifice is a gift given to God that is changed in some way

◇ What is a Catholic priest?

- An "alter Christus"
- Acts *in persona Christi*
- The priest is an icon of Christ (eastern Christian notion)
- The one who offers the holy sacrifice of the mass
- From the Council of Trent on the Mass:
*-For the victim is one and the same, the same now offering by the ministry of priests,
who then offered Himself on the cross, the manner alone of offering being different.*

◇ Does Jesus really institute a sacred priesthood?

- "...do this in memory of me" (Luke 22:19)
- "whose sins you forgive are forgiven them" (John 20:23)
- Argument from History
- First Council of Nicaea refers to priests as ones who "offer" the Eucharist, unlike deacons

◇ Calling priests "Father" – heresy or sign of the Church's orthodoxy?

- Jesus says, "Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven." (Mt. 23)
- In Judges, the idea of priest and father are tied together. (Jdg 17:10, 18:19)
- St. Paul says, "Even if you should have countless guides to Christ, yet you do not have many fathers, for I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel." (1 Cor. 4:15)
- St. Paul says that from the Father "every family in heaven and on earth is named" Eph. 3:14

◇ Women priests?

- John Paul II: *"I declare that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful."* (*Sacerdotalis Ordinatio*)
- Christ chose those whom He willed. (Jn 6:7 & Mk 3:13-14)
- Constant and universal practice of the Church, east and west, for 2 millennia
- Further reading: *Sacerdotalis Ordinatio* by John Paul II and *Inter Insigniores* by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.