

Plymouth Diocese: Synodality Series Talk 5. Sharing the priesthood of Christ.

CCC 1121. Baptism and Confirmation confer a sacramental *character* or ‘seal’ by which the Christian shares in Christ’s priesthood. ..This configuration to Christ and the Church, brought about by the Spirit is indelible. It remains forever in the Christian ...as a vocation to divine worship and to the service of the Church. ...

The Priesthood of Christ

Christ is the fulfilment of all priesthood. Today there is no other priesthood except Christ’s. (‘priest’ = Latin ‘sacerdos’ – ‘giver of the sacred’)

To be priestly with Christ’s priesthood we need his continual help. Christ provides his priestly power, to make us priestly, primarily through the sacraments, especially Christ’s sanctifying grace in confession for purification and in the Eucharist for nourishment.

Christ appointed twelve apostles and consecrated them with his priestly power in order to provide, strengthen, purify and sustain our participation in the priesthood of Christ through the sacraments. The ministerial priesthood is Christ’s chosen way to enable the members of Christ’s body to be priestly.

Ultimate purpose of priesthood, fulfilled by Christ and his Church

- **Exodus 6:6-7.** ‘I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment and I will take you for my people and I will be your God;’
- **Jeremiah 24:7.** ‘I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD. They will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with all their heart.’
- **Ezekiel 14:11.** ‘in order that the house of Israel may no longer stray from Me and no longer defile themselves with all their transgressions. Thus they will be My people, and I shall be their God,’” declares the Lord God.”
- **Zechariah 8:8.** ‘and I will bring them back and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness.’
- **2 Corinthians 6:16** ‘What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.”
- **Revelation 21:3** ‘And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them’.

How to be 'priestly'

1. Give praise and thanksgiving

- But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. (1 Pet 2:9)
- Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. (Hebrews 13:15)

2. Worship and glorify God

- "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh," (Jn 17:1)
- 'and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen'. (Revelation 1:6)
- 'So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God'. (1 Cor 10:31)

3. Offer gifts and sacrifices

- 'I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship'. (Romans 12:1)
- 'you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ'. (1 Pet 2:5)

4. Covenantal obedience

- 'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' (Exod. 19:5–6)

5. Intercession

- 'First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men' (1 Tim 2:1)
- 'Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them'. (Heb 7:25)

6. Be stewards of the temple

(Temple of the earth, temple of the Church and temple of one's own body).

- 'Thus says the Lord: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord. ' (Isaiah 66:1)
- 'The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, he who has clean hands and a pure heart will ascend unto the hill of the Lord, and the Lord of Hosts is the King of Glory. (Habakkuk 2:20)
- 'He made the basin of bronze and its stand of bronze, from the mirrors of the ministering women who ministered in the entrance of the tent of meeting. (Ex 38:8)
- 'Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own' (1 Cor 6:19)
- The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. (1 Cor 6:13).