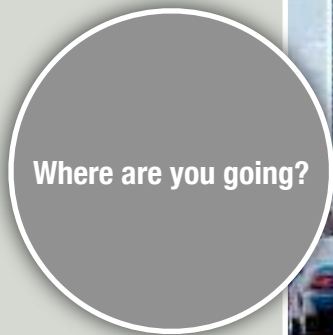


# QUO VADIS

## SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS



**“DO NOT SAY, ‘I AM ONLY A YOUTH’; FOR TO ALL TO WHOM I SEND YOU YOU SHALL GO, AND WHATEVER I COMMAND YOU SHALL SPEAK.”**

Jeremiah 1:6

### Does A God-Ordained Priesthood Truly Exist?

By Laura England

To examine this question we must first realize the basis for the Lutheran meaning of the “priesthood of all believers.” Protestants are often taught there is no God-ordained priesthood but rather all Christians share in the one unique high priesthood of Jesus Christ through our faith in him and through our salvation. Selecting a few Scriptures and examining them on the surface, it is very easy to see how one person can draw this conclusion. (Hebrew 5:6, 1 Peter 2-5-9) Frequently, select Scriptures are pulled to

point out Christ’s one unique role as High Priest and Mediator (Heb 4:14-16, 1 Timothy 2:5). We are told if we hear anything about Catholic theology that “they [Catholics] don’t believe what Scripture says.” A large part of my journey into the Church, however, was finding out that what I was told was at best misguided, and at worst a lie.

Catholics do indeed believe in what Scripture says. We believe in the priesthood of all believers. The *Catechism of the Catholic*

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## Pope Quote of the Month

“Priestly ordination, which hands on the office entrusted by Christ to his Apostles of teaching, sanctifying and governing the faithful, has in the Catholic Church from the beginning always been reserved to men alone.”

John Paul II *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, 1

Church paragraph 1546 teaches, “Christ, high priest and unique mediator has made of the church ‘a kingdom, priests for his God and Father.’ The whole community of believers is, as such, priestly. The faithful exercise their baptismal priesthood through their participation, each according to his own vocation, in Christ’s mission as priest, prophet and king. Through the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, the faithful are consecrated to be...a holy priesthood.” (my emphasis)

We exercise this and live this out day by day by living a life in accordance with the Spirit. A life bearing the fruit (Gal 5:22-25). And we produce the fruit of the Spirit by living in faith, hope and love. This is how we live out our mission, for God, by being a living example of Jesus in our daily lives and in what we do. The Church believes in this. This is the “Priesthood of all Believers.”

What about the ordained priesthood? Is it truly God given? Is it a Sacrament? Can it be defended from Scripture? These are questions that if we do not ask them ourselves, our family will ask them. I will start with Scripture. Yes the priesthood can be defended from New Testament Scripture. As a matter of fact, the Scriptures in

Hebrews that are often cited against the priesthood are followed by Scriptures for the

“The faithful exercise their baptismal priesthood through their participation, each according to his own vocation, in Christ’s mission as priest, prophet and

Hebrews 5 and 6 speaks of all of the qualifications of the priest. My favorite is Hebrews 5:1 “Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with those with those who are ignorant and going astray since he himself is subject to weakness. This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins and for the sins of the people.” Clearly the writer of Hebrews is speaking of men who are chosen by God and are flawed men. Further reading of Hebrews 5 and 6 and we realize the chapters are specifically addressing priests of the Christian faith and how they are to be chosen, and what their role is.

The *Catechism* teaches us that the ordained priest acts in the person of Christ (*in persona Christi*) CC 1548. The priest in no way interferes with Christ’s role for forgiveness of sins, rather acts on the authority extended to him by Jesus through Peter and the other Apostles (Matt 16:18, John 20:23). The priest is called to be the coworker of the bishop, and is the head of a particular parish or ecclesial office (*Catechism*, 1595). The *Catechism* also teaches the essence of the ordained priest is different. They teach (*munus docendi*) preside over divine worship (*munus liturgicum*) and pastoral governance (*munus regendi*) (*Catechism* 1592). The priest carries out the administering of the Sacraments as Christ commanded. (See John 20: 23, Matt 28:18-20 Luke 22: 14-20). Later on, St Paul

writes to the Church in Corinth describing how the Eucharist is to be taken and presided over (I Corinthian 10,11). So what does it all mean?

Yes, there is a priesthood, ordained by God. It is found in the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church (well except the Eastern Churches but that is another topic for another day) It only takes a little digging to find it, and to make sense of it. The Lord has provided the answers in Scripture. For a more detailed explanation of the Catholic theology of the priesthood please read the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* paragraphs 1548-1599.

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Laura was received into the Catholic Church this past Easter.

## Are you a teen or young adult on the journey into the Catholic Church?

Quo Vadis exists to provide fellowship and support to all youth who wish to draw closer to Jesus Christ and His One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, especially the youth of converting Protestant clergy or lay people.

For more information please contact Mary Clare Piecynski  
maryp@chnetwork.org or  
740-450-1175 ext 105

[www.quovadis youth.org](http://www.quovadis youth.org)

## BOOK OF THE MONTH

### *Sacraments in Scripture* By Tim Gray

*Sacraments in Scripture* delves into the biblical foundations of the sacraments, the seven masterpieces of God's love. Tim Gray guides readers through the Gospels, showing Christ's deliberate acts to inaugurate these sacred signs of the New Covenant. With review questions at the end of each chapter, this study is ideal for both group and individual use, and is perfect for learning how to answer contemporary objections to the sacraments.

*Sacraments in Scripture* is available from the Coming Home Network at 740-450-1175 or [www.chresources.com](http://www.chresources.com)

# Biblical Evidence for Priests

By Dave Armstrong

## PRIESTS

**We are all priests. There is no special class set apart from others in the Church**

The Bible says that we are to "call no man father." So why do Catholics do that?

### Initial reply

The Bible teaches that there is such a thing as clergy, who are set apart from lay members of the Church, and also gives indication of priestly function.

### Extensive reply

The priesthood as we know it today is not a strong motif in the New Testament. But this can be explained in terms of development of doctrine: some things were understood only in very basic or skeletal terms in the early days of Christianity. This is even true of doctrines accepted by all, such as the Holy Trinity or original sin. The canon of the biblical books was slow to

formulate (four centuries). Also, it has been argued that priesthood was a subdued feature of primitive Christianity because it had not yet finally separated from Judaism; therefore, the authority of Jewish priests was still accepted. Acts 2:46 describes the Jerusalem

Christians as "day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes". The Apostle Paul was presenting offerings in the temple around the year 58 (Acts 21:26), acknowledged the authority of the Jewish high priest, described himself as a Pharisee (Acts 23:5-6), and

observed Jewish feasts (Acts 20:6).

But one can indeed find evidence in the Bible of a Christian priesthood. Jesus entrusts to His disciples a remembrance of the central

## Church Fathers Quote

**Ignatius of Antioch [50-117 AD]  
Epistle to the Smyraeans**

"You all should follow the bishop as Jesus Christ does the Father. Follow too the presbytery as the apostles, and honor the deacons as the command of God. Without the bishop let no one do anything that is appropriate for the church. Let that Eucharist be considered valid that is under the bishop or performed by one to whom he entrusts it. (2) Wherever the bishop appears, let there be the fullness [of the church] as wherever Christ Jesus appears, there is the catholic church."

Quote taken from *Ignatius of Antioch: A New Translation and Theological Commentary* by Dr. Kenneth J. Howell

aspect of the liturgy or Mass (consecration of the bread and wine) at the Last Supper

## Scripture Quote of the Month

**"You are a priest  
forever according  
to the order of  
Melchizedek."**

**Hebrews 7:17,  
See also  
Genesis 14:18**

(Lk. 22:19: "Do this in remembrance of me"; Paul may also have presided over a Eucharist – Acts 20:11). These same disciples were (like priests) models of a life wholly devoted to God, as a matter of lifelong calling. Jesus had chosen and "appointed" them, and they had become His "friends" (Jn. 15:15-16). He was their sole master (Mt. 6:24). There was no turning back in their ministry (Lk. 9:62), and they were called to a radical commitment involving even leaving possessions and their entire families (Mt. 4:22, 19:27; Lk. 14:26). The priest-disciple must accept

hardships and privations and embrace self-denial (Mt. 8:19-20, 10:38, 16:24, etc.), and (if so called) celibacy, for the sake of undistracted devotion to the Lord (Mt. 19:12; 1 Cor. 7:7-9). They served the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 3:5, 9:19; 2 Cor. 4:5), and dispensed sacraments (1 Cor. 4:1; Jas. 5:14), including baptism (Mt. 28:19; Acts 2:38,41). A universal priesthood of "offering" (sacrifice) extending to "every place" in New Testament times is prophesied in Isaiah 66:18,21 and Malachi 1:11.

Protestants sometimes cite 1 Peter 2:5,9 (cf. Rev. 1:6, 5:10, 20:6) to the effect that *all* Christians are priests. But Peter was citing Exodus 19:6: "you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." The problem with this is that the older passage couldn't possibly have meant that there was no priesthood among the ancient Hebrews, since they clearly had a separate class of priests (Leviticus: chapters 4-7, 13-14). This is even seen in

the same chapter, since Ex. 19:21-24 (cf. Josh. 3:6, 4:9) twice contrasts the "priests" with the "people." Thus, it makes much more sense to interpret 1 Pet. 2:5 as meaning a people "specially holy" – like priests; a separate, holy, "chosen" people, as is fairly clear in context, in both parallel passages. The notion of "spiritual sacrifices" (faith, praise, giving to others) applies to all Christians (Phil. 2:17; Heb. 13:15-16).

### **Objection**

How can Catholics explain calling their priests "Father" in light of Matthew 23:9: "And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven"?

### **Reply to Objection**

Jesus was simply teaching (using the common Hebrew method of exaggeration or hyperbole: see Mt. 19:24, 23:24; Lk. 6:42, 14:26) that God the Father is the ultimate source of all authority. He said this during the course of

rebuking the Pharisees for spiritual pride (Mt. 23:2-10). Those who use this argument neglect to see that it would prohibit *all* uses of the word *father* whatsoever; even biological fathers. Since that is an absurd outcome, it is clear that the statement cannot be taken in an absolute sense. Beyond that, Jesus Himself uses the term *father* many times (Mt. 15:4-6; 19:5,19,29; 21:31; Lk. 16:24,27,30; Jn. 8:56, etc.). Several other passages from others utilize the term, too (sometimes twice), so unless it is believed that they were being disobedient to Jesus, the objection to calling Catholic priests *father* must be discarded:

**Acts 7:2:** And Stephen said: "Brethren and **fathers**, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our **father** Abraham, . . ."

**Romans 4:12:** . . . the **father** of the circumcised . . . our **father** Abraham . . .

**Romans 4:16-17:** . . . Abraham, for he is the **father** of us all, as it is written, "I have made you the **father** of

many nations . . ." (cf. 9:10; Phil. 2:22; Jas. 2:21)

**1 Corinthians 4:15:** For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many **fathers**. For I became your **father** in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

**St. Augustine  
(354-430)**

'But they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with him for a thousand years' [Rev. 20:6]. This clearly does not mean only the bishops and presbyters, who are now called by the distinctive name of 'priests' in the Church; but just as we call all Christians 'Christs' in virtue of their sacramental anointing (*chrisma*) so we call them all 'priests' because they are members of the one Priest. And the apostle Peter says of them that they are 'a holy people, a royal priesthood' [1 Pet. 2:9].

(*The City of God*, translated by Henry Bettenson, Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1972, XX, 10; p. 919)

## Catechism Quote of the Month

Holy Orders and Matrimony, are directed towards the salvation of others; if they contribute as well to personal salvation, it is through service to others that they do so. They confer a particular mission in the Church and serve to build up the People of God. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 1534

Dave Armstrong is a Catholic apologist who has written many books and articles defending the Catholic faith. Some of his titles include *A Biblical Defense of Catholicism*, *The One-Minute Apologist* and *The Church Fathers Were Catholic Patristic Evidences for Catholicism*. Please visit Dave's website at [www.biblicalcatholic.com](http://www.biblicalcatholic.com) for more information on the books he has written (icons permanently on the top of the blog's front page, including a package e-book deal) and to discover his numerous writings on apologetic topics.

## Priestly Q&A

By Mary Clare Pieczynski

### Where in the Bible does it teach of the priesthood?

See John 20:21, Acts 10:14-15, Acts 13:3, Acts 14:23, Acts 20:28, Romans 10:15, Romans 15:16, Ephesians 4:11, 1 Thes 5:12, 1 Timothy 4:14, Titus 1:5, Hebrews 5:1, Hebrews 7:17.

### What are the degrees of the priesthood?

Bishop, presbyter (priest) and deacon. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* paragraph 1593.

### Why is priestly celibacy important?

It is important so the ordained ministers in the Latin Church (excluding permanent deacons) so they can “give themselves entirely to God and to men. Celibacy is a sign of this new life to the service of which the Church’s minister is consecrated; accepted with a joyous heart celibacy radiantly proclaims the Reign of God.” *Catechism of the Catholic Church* paragraph 1579

### Why can’t women become priests?

Pope Paul VI writes of the Church “She holds that it is not admissible to ordain women to the priesthood, for very fundamental reasons. These reasons include: the example recorded in the Sacred Scriptures of Christ choosing his Apostles only from among men; the constant practice of the Church, which has imitated Christ in choosing only men; and her living teaching authority which has consistently held that the exclusion of women from the priesthood is in accordance with God's plan for his Church.” 1. Paul VI, Response to the Letter of His Grace the Most Reverend Dr. F.D. Coggan, Archbishop of Canterbury, concerning the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood (November 30, 1975); AAS 68 (1976), 599.

See also

1. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration Inter Insigniores on the question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood
2. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 1577.
3. *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, John Paul II

### What is the difference between the ordained priesthood and the priesthood of all believers?

The difference “exists at the *mode* of participation in the priesthood of Christ and is essential in the sense that “while the common priesthood of the faithful is exercised by the unfolding of baptismal grace, — a life of faith, hope and charity, a life according to the Spirit — the ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood... and directed at the unfolding of the baptismal grace of all Christians”. Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding The Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priest.