

A GREAT HIGH PRIEST

Take-Home · Session 6 · After the Order of Melchizedek · Hebrews 7

A Catholic Journey Through the Letter to the Hebrews

What We Found

Three verses held it all. Genesis 14:17-20: Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High before Aaron existed: and he brought out bread and wine, blessed Abraham, and received a tenth of everything. Hebrews 7:1-2 unpacks the names: king of righteousness by translation, and king of Salem, that is, king of peace.

Scripture's silence was the portrait. No father, no mother, no genealogy, no death on the page: a priesthood drawn without the two documents (birth and death certificates) that governed every Levitical priest: resembling the Son of God, a priest for ever.

A priest by indestructible life. Jesus, from Judah, disqualified from every altar in Israel, is priest “by the power of an indestructible life” (7:16): his ordination certificate is the empty tomb: and by the only ordination oath in Scripture (Psalm 110:4).

He always lives to make intercession. The offering was once for all; the intercession presenting it never pauses (7:25). Right now, with wounds for credentials, he is presenting you to the Father by name.

The Church has said his name at the altar all along. The Roman Canon (Eucharistic Prayer I) asks the Father to accept our offering as he accepted “the offering of your high priest Melchizedek”: sixteen centuries of Genesis 14 at the altar, and now you will always hear it.

Voices of the Church

St. Cyprian of Carthage *Letter 63*

Melchizedek prefigured the mystery of the sacrifice of the Lord: bread and wine offered by a priest of God Most High, fulfilled when Christ offered the very thing Melchizedek had offered, his own body and blood.

St. Ambrose of Milan *On the Sacraments*

The sacraments Christians receive are older in figure than the synagogue's: the bread and wine came forth from Salem's priest-king while Abraham still wandered.

St. Thomas Aquinas *Commentary on Hebrews*

Only Christ is the true priest; the others are his ministers: every ordained priest acts in his person, the one untransferable priesthood made present in every age (CCC 1545; 1548).

Live It This Week

1. Pray Hebrews 7:25 nightly, inserting your own name: he always lives to make intercession for ____.
2. Find a Mass this week using Eucharistic Prayer I and listen for the name: or read the Roman Canon slowly once, as prayer.
3. Read Hebrews 8 before next session. It contains the longest Old Testament quotation in the entire New Testament: find it, and note what God promises to do with the law, with knowledge of himself, and with sins.

Scripture Memory Verse

HEBREWS 7:25 (RSV2CE)

“Consequently he is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.”

Before Next Session

Read Hebrews 8: the better covenant, and the longest quotation.

Catechism Connections

CCC 1333 (Melchizedek's bread and wine) · CCC 1544-1545 (his priesthood, our ministers) · CCC 1548 (the priest acts in the person of Christ) · CCC 519 (he intercedes now)

YOUR GUESS, RETURNED

The slip stapled or tucked into this sheet is the guess you sealed in Session 1 and opened tonight. Keep it. Whatever it says, it is proof that Scripture was teaching you before it explained anything: and a souvenir of the night the bread and wine came out of Genesis.