

Take-Home: Session 8

A Kingdom of Priests · A Royal Priesthood

What We Found

The title of this study turned out to be your name. "You are a chosen race, a ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, a holy nation, God's own people": Peter, echoing our first memory verse, Exodus 19:6, by way of the Greek Old Testament, over the whole Church. The vocation spoken at Sinai, the arc this study traced, is proclaimed by Peter over the whole Church in Christ, and if you are baptized, that is you. And the priesthood is not a compliment; it has offerings: your body presented as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1), a sacrifice of praise, good done and goods shared (Hebrews 13:15 to 16), your work, your family, your patient endurance, offered through Jesus Christ (CCC 1546; for the lay faithful's daily sacrifices, CCC 901). We also gave the Reformation's reading of this verse its full weight, and answered it with two discoveries of our own: Israel held its corporate priestly vocation and an ordained priesthood side by side at God's command (Exodus 19; Exodus 28 to 29; Numbers 16); and 1 Peter itself opens from an apostle and closes with orders to the elders who tend the flock. The letter of the royal priesthood is an officer's letter, and Peter felt no tension, because there is none: the ministers exist AT THE SERVICE of the priestly people (CCC 1547). Both priesthoods at full strength, differing essentially and ordered to one another, with no rivalry.

Voices of the Church

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. Leo the Great

Preaching to ordinary baptized Christians in the fifth century, St. Leo teaches in substance that all the reborn share a royal and priestly dignity: the sign of the cross makes them a kingly people, and the anointing of the Spirit consecrates them as priests. This verse was never lost; it was the Church's own preaching all along. (A summary of Leo's teaching.)

Sermon 4

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. Augustine

"The whole redeemed city, that is, the congregation and society of the saints, is offered to God as a universal sacrifice through the great High Priest." Your life is not beside the sacrifice; it is in it.

City of God, Book 10, chapter 6

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. Thérèse of Lisieux

St. Thérèse teaches, in substance, that the smallest acts, done with great love, become great offerings: a difficult person loved, a hidden chore done, a discomfort accepted without complaint. She is the royal priesthood's field manual for an ordinary Tuesday. (A summary of the heart of her Story of a Soul.)

Story of a Soul

Live It This Week

- Each morning, name one concrete thing from the coming day and offer it out loud: "Father, through Jesus Christ, I offer you this." Watch what it does to the thing.
- At Mass, at the preparation of the gifts, place your week on the paten in your mind: your work, your family, your hardest thing.
- Memorize the memory verse with someone. It is long. It is your name.

Memory Verse

"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 marvelous light."

1 Peter 2:9 (RSV2CE)

Before Next Session

Read 1 Timothy 2:1 to 6 once.

Catechism References

CCC 901; CCC 1546 to 1547.