

Take-Home: Session 9

A Kingdom of Priests · One Mediator, Many Fathers

What We Found

We read the two most-quoted verses against Catholic priesthood, whole. 1 Timothy 2:5, "one mediator between God and men," turned out to sit in the same paragraph where Paul COMMANDS "supplications, prayers, intercessions... for all men" and calls it pleasing to God: the one mediation of the ransom is the spring; our intercessions are water from it, not rival wells (the Council states the principle, *Lumen Gentium* 62, quoted at CCC 970: the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude, but gives rise to, a shared cooperation from the one source). And Matthew 23:9, "call no man father," read in context, forbids three titles (teacher, father, master) as trophies of religious vanity, while the New Testament itself is full of gospel fathers: Paul ("I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel"), Stephen ("our father Abraham," honored ancestral fatherhood), John (writing to "fathers"), and Jesus' own parable ("Father Abraham," twice, uncorrected; Luke 16:24, 30). The positive teaching is Ephesians 3:14 to 15: "every family" (the Greek *patria*, from *pater*, traditionally also rendered "every fatherhood") in heaven and on earth is NAMED from the Father: derived, real, and pointing at the source. And the loop closed: among the first offerers this study met were parents offering for their households; baptized parents still take up that pattern through the common priesthood.

Voices of the Church

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. Thomas Aquinas

Christ alone is the perfect mediator, who reconciled the human race to God by his death; yet nothing prevents others being called mediators in a qualified sense, as ministers and cooperators participating in the one mediation. Subordinate mediation does not compete with Christ; it hangs from him. (A summary of his teaching on Christ the Mediator.)

Summa Theologiae III, q. 26

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. Cyprian of Carthage

"He can no longer have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his mother." God fathers his children through a family, the Church our mother; Paul's "I became your father in Christ Jesus" fills in the household.

On the Unity of the Church

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. Irenaeus of Lyons

St. Irenaeus teaches, in substance, that the one taught the faith from another's mouth is called the son of his teacher, and the teacher his father: begotten in the order of grace. In the second century, gospel fatherhood was ordinary Christian vocabulary. (A summary from his work against the heresies.)

Against Heresies, Book 4

Live It This Week

- Pray 1 Timothy 2:1 to 2 literally once a day: intercede by name for one person in civil authority, whether or not you voted for them.
- Thank one spiritual father or mother in your life this week, specifically.
- If you are a parent or hope to be: bless your children aloud once this week with the Numbers 6 blessing: parents exercising the baptismal priesthood of the domestic church.

Memory Verse

"For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named."

Ephesians 3:14 to 15 (RSV2CE)

Before Next Session

Read 2 Timothy 1:3 to 14 once. Notice what Paul says was given, and how.

Catechism References

CCC 970; CCC 2634 to 2636.