

THE SACRAMENTS IN SCRIPTURE: EUCHARIST

“All the invisible realities of our redemption become visible in the sacraments.”

—Pope Leo the Great

Holy Orders

1. Exodus 19:3-6. *Then Moses went up to God; the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the Israelites: You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites.”*

- While while the ordained priesthood is a specific role given to some of God’s people, **all** of God’s people, by virtue of their baptism, share in the threefold mission of Jesus as **priest, prophet, and king.**

- Interestingly, in v.15 Moses warns the people as they prepare to meet God on “the third day” (coincidence? I think not!) to “not go near a woman” – in other words, to abstain from sexual relations.

2. 1 Peter 2:9. *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

- St. Peter here echoes the call to holiness that God gave to His people at Mt. Sinai.

3. Leviticus 8:10-12; 9:1-2; 10:8-11. *Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it, and consecrated them. He sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all its utensils, and the basin and its base, to consecrate them. He poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron’s head and anointed him, to consecrate him... On the eighth day Moses summoned Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel. He said to Aaron, “Take a bull calf for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer them before the LORD... And the LORD spoke to Aaron: Drink no wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons, when you enter the tent of meeting, that you may not die; it is a statute forever throughout your generations. You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean; and you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes that the LORD has spoken to them through Moses.*

- Leviticus 8-10 has the complete account of the ordination of Aaron and his sons.

- See the great level of detail that God insists on in every level of worship: the ordination itself, but also how things are supposed to be and look, and even how Aaron and his sons are supposed to be dressed.

- Aaron and his sons are anointed with oil and consecrated to offer sacrifices to God for thanksgiving and for the forgiveness of sins. What is the Mass? A sacrifice. What does *Eucharist* mean? Thanksgiving.

What does it bring about? The forgiveness of sins and the reconciliation of God and man.

- Significance of the eighth day, and the prophetic office of the priest.

4. Hebrews 7:11-14, 26-28. *Now if perfection had been attainable through the levitical priesthood—for the people received the law under this priesthood—what further need would there have been to speak of another priest arising according to the order of Melchizedek, rather than one according to the order of Aaron? For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. Now the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.*

For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself. For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

- Really, it's not a bad idea to just read all of Hebrews 4-7, especially 4:14-5:10 and 6:19-7:28.
- It's our friend Melchizedek again! Imagine that. See Genesis 14 and Psalm 110 for a refresher.
- Difference between the levitical priesthood and the priesthood of Melchizedek – and the significance of Jesus being of the tribe of Judah and not the tribe of Levi. Jesus is **prophet, priest, and king**.
- The priesthood is a sharing in the one priesthood of Jesus Christ. The priest's life is not his own, his ministry is not his own, even his priesthood is not his own: it is Jesus Christ in him (cf. Galatians 2:20).

5. John 13:1-5. *Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.*

- In response to everyone who complains that, by not ordaining woman, the Church is somehow belittling them and not "sharing power" or whatever, take a long, hard look at this Gospel. **THIS** is what the priesthood is all about. The priesthood was never about power, even when it was being abused. The priesthood is, in the simplest of terms, washing the feet of the disciples of Jesus. The priesthood is service and sacrifice and laying down one's life, not about exerting authority over someone else.
- The priest exists to *be* Jesus for God's people, to *see* Jesus in God's people, and to *bring* Jesus to God's people. Or put a bit more concretely, the priest gives God's sacraments to God's people.
- See also Mark 10:45, Matthew 20:25-27, John 3:27-30.
- Pope St. Gregory I ("the Great") – "Servant of the Servants of God."
- Real power in the Church comes from **holiness**, not titles. Look at the saints for confirmation of this: John Paul II and Mother Theresa; Francis and Clare; Benedict and Scholastica... Do you know what every pair has in common? In the view of the world, the man had more "power," but in reality, each of those men realized that their women counterparts were closer to the heart of Jesus Christ and had more *actual* power than they ever would. Does this explain why women cannot be ordained priests? No. But hopefully it debunks the myth that by not ordaining women, the Church is denying them "power."

Holy Matrimony

1. Genesis 2:18, 20-25. *Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." ... The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said,*

*"This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;*

*this one shall be called Woman,
for out of Man this one was taken.”*

Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

- We're actually going to skip talking about this for the moment, because we have to see it in light of...

2. Ephesians 5:21-33. *Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind – yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.*

- Marriage is meant to be a reflection, an icon of the love between Christ and the Church, and even more: the love among the Persons in the Holy Trinity. No big deal.

3. Revelation 19:6-9. *Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying out,*

“Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God

the Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and exult

and give him the glory,

for the marriage of the Lamb has come,

and his bride has made herself ready;

to her it has been granted to be clothed

with fine linen, bright and pure” –

for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are true words of God.”

- The Bible begins with the story of a marriage, and it ends with the story of a marriage.