

1. Ministerial Priesthood in the New Testament: Summary:

- a. Reasons for the absence (or rather scarcity) of priestly terminology in the NT for Christian priests:
 - i. Torrell, *A Priestly People*, gives three reasons (p. 124 [not in packet]):
 1. “the concern to avoid confusion with the Jewish priests and with those of the pagan religions;” [i.e., since the Jerusalem Temple with its priests still existed]
 2. “the other side of the preceding reason: the awareness of the complexity and the novelty of Christian ministry, which forbids its being reduced to a simple function of the ‘sacrificer’;” [i.e., the ministry of the Christian priesthood fulfills but also transcends the Levitical priesthood. As we have seen, it draws more on other models of OT priesthood.]
 3. “finally, and above all, the clear perception of the uniqueness of Christ's priesthood and sacrifice, which does not allow us to think that in Christianity there are other priests besides him.” [i.e., the Christian priesthood is a participation in the priesthood of Christ]
 - ii. Ratzinger also mentions the first reason – the silence is due to historical reasons rather than reasons of principle, namely, “that the Jewish Temple still existed and that its *hiereîs* [priests] were recognized as such” – translation from Italian: Joseph Ratzinger, *Opera Omnia*, Vol. 12: *Annunciatori della parola e servitori della vostra gioia: Teologia e spiritualità del Sacramento dell'Ordine* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2013), 114.
 - iii. Galot, *Theology of the Priesthood*, 33 [packet 31*] similarly mentions the first and second reasons: “Jesus refrains from letting the new priesthood be poured into the old framework of the Jewish priesthood. In order to show this innovation and preclude confusion, he must abstain from using priestly terminology in relation to himself and his disciples.”
 - iv. Historical Development regarding the use of sacral language of Christian priesthood in the first three centuries (see Torrell, *A Priestly People*, 87-93): Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Cyprian, Origen
- b. Other Terminology used for Christian leaders: Apostle, Shepherd, *Episkopos*, *Presbyteros* (see Ratzinger, *Called to Communion* 112-125 [packet 15-21*]). Our study of the OT models of priesthood also suggests that certain terms can take on a priestly dimension.
 - i. Twelve / Apostles – those sent on mission by Jesus, as He is sent by the Father (e.g., John 13:20; 17:18; 20:21). Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 115 (16*): “Having ‘nothing’ of their own [cf. John 15:5] draws the apostles into communion of mission with Christ. This service, in which we are made the entire property of another, this giving of what does not come from us, is called sacrament in the language of the Church.” (Note in this regard how the NT priesthood transcends the OT priesthood – e.g., the power to say “This is my Body” or “I absolve you from your sins” does not come from one’s own capabilities.)
 - ii. Shepherd, *Episkopos*, and *Presbyteros*:
 1. Acts 20:28 – Paul, speaking to the *presbyters* (Acts 20:17) of Miletus, says: “Keep watch over yourselves and over the whole flock of which the holy Spirit has appointed you overseers [*episkopoi*, “bishops” Douay-Rheims], in which you tend [*poimainein* “shepherd” NRSV] the church of God that he acquired with his own blood” (NAB). “As an office conferred by the Spirit, it is ‘sacramental’” (Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 122 [20*]). Note that the task of being a shepherd was closely associated in the OT with the Davidic monarch (king-priest model) (e.g., 2 Sam 5:2; Ezek 34:23; 37:24). Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, goes beyond the OT expectation by laying down his life for the sheep (John 10:11, 15, 17, 18); i.e., he is both Shepherd and Lamb of Sacrifice, but since he himself lays down his life (i.e., makes the offering), he is Priest as well.
 2. 1 Peter 5:1-4 – “¹ So I exhort the presbyters among you, as a fellow presbyter and witness to the sufferings of Christ and one who has a share in the glory to be revealed. ² Tend [Shepherd] the flock of God in your midst, [overseeing] [*episkopeō*] not by constraint but willingly, as God would have it, not for shameful profit but eagerly. ³ Do not lord it over those assigned to you, but be examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the chief Shepherd is revealed, you will receive the unfading crown of glory” (NAB). Cf. 1 Peter 2:25, where Jesus is called the “Shepherd and Bishop [*episkopos*].” Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 124 [21*]): “If Peter connects the priest with the apostle via the word copresbyter, he likewise

links him via the word *episkopos*, meaning overseer or guardian, with the *episkopos*, Christ, the shepherd himself, and in this way integrates all the elements in Christology.” Note that the presbyters are like “elder brothers” (Acts 15:23) (model of firstborn-sons as priests).

- c. Priestly Activity of the Apostles (cf. Rick Strelan, *Luke the Priest*): One can also conclude that those carrying out priestly activity are indeed priests.
- i. Preaching Forgiveness of Sins (cf. Luke 24:47) in Acts (Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18)
 - ii. Peter and Paul in Acts perform powerful deeds that recall Jesus’ powerful healings and ritual holiness (Acts 3:1-10; 5:15-16; 9:40-41; 14:8-10; 19:11-12; 20:7-12)
 - iii. Priestly dimension of the Apostles’ Ministry in the NT:
 - 1) Paul’s Priestly Service: Rom 15:15-16: “¹⁵ But I have written to you rather boldly in some respects to remind you, because of the grace given me by God ¹⁶ to be a minister (λειτουργός) of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in performing the priestly service (ἱεραουργοῦντα from ἱεραουργέω “to act as a priest) of the gospel of God, so that the offering up of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the holy Spirit (NAB).”
 - 2) Paul’s Ministry analogous to that of Temple priests: 1 Cor 9:13-14: “¹³ Do you not know that those who perform the temple services eat what belongs to the temple, and those who minister at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? ¹⁴ In the same way, the Lord ordered that those who preach the gospel should live by the gospel (NAB).”
 - 3) Presbyters carry out priestly duties like offering incense (Rev 5:8).
- d. Cultic vocabulary needs to be examined, not just one term such as “priest,” but also terms such as “Temple,” “sacrifice,” and “covenant”: e.g., Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 172-174 [packet 9-10*]: “What does the priesthood of the Church mean, on the basis of the New Testament? Is there such a thing at all? [...] If we want to give a proper answer to these questions, then mere terminological investigations concerning the initial difference and the later process of amalgamation of the concepts of *presbyter* and *hiereus* (*sacerdos*) are not enough. We have to go deeper than that; the whole network of problems concerning the relationship between the Old and the New Testament is up for discussion here. Is the New Testament essentially a break with the Old or essentially its fulfillment, in which everything is taken up and transformed and, in the very fact of being renewed, preserved? [...] In the Resurrection of Christ [...] the temple is rebuilt through God’s own power (Jn 2:19). This living temple – Christ – is himself the new sacrifice, which has in the body of Christ, the Church, its own enduring ‘today.’ On the basis of this sacrifice, and with a view to it, there is a true priestly ministry of the new cult in which all the ‘figures’ are fulfilled. That is why any conception that presupposes a complete break, in matters of worship and priesthood, with the pre-Christian history of salvation and that denies any connection between Old Testament priesthood and that of the New Testament must be rejected. [...] Through the sacrifice of Christ and its acceptance in the Resurrection, the entire cultic and sacerdotal heritage of the Old Covenant has been handed over to the Church.” (See also Galot, 34-37 [31-33*].)
- e. The Eucharist as the New Covenant Sacrifice of Christ (from whose Altar Christians eat [cf. Heb 13:10]): Note the fulfillment & transformation of OT sacrifice in the sacrifice of the Mass: e.g., Eucharistic Prayer I (Roman Canon):
- i. “For them, we offer you this sacrifice of praise, or they offer it for themselves and all who are dear to them ... and paying their homage to you, the eternal God, living and true.
pro quibus tibi offerimus vel qui tibi offerunt hoc sacrificium laudis, pro se suisque omnibus ... tibi reddunt vota sua aeterno Deo, vivo et vero.
 1. “sacrifice of praise” θυσία ἀνέσεως – this phrase is used in the LXX to refer to one of the kinds of sacrifices offered by the Levitical priests, the *zēbach todah* זֶבַח תּוֹדָה abbreviated as *todah* (or *tôdâ*) (see Lev 7:11-15; cf. Ps 50:14, 23; 107:22; 116:17). It was a sacrifice of thanksgiving involving the eating of bread, a bloody sacrifice, and prayers/hymns. Passover was a particular example of a thank offering or *todah* sacrifice (Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist*, p.56)
 2. In the NT, we see this phrase only once, in Heb 13:15 (with the other elements of Christ’s sacrifice / altar, eating a meal, and prayers/hymns in 13:10, 12, 15), describing the Christian Eucharist, which is thus a transformation of the *todah*. See Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith* (pp. 51-

60), citing the work of the Protestant exegete H. Gese. Also, James Swetnam, “*Zebach Toda* in Tradition: A Study of ‘Sacrifice of Praise’ in Hebrew, Greek and Latin,” *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 15 (2002), 65-86, discusses the possible connection between Heb 13:15 and the phrase *sacrificium laudis* in Eucharistic Prayer I. Liturgical scholars (e.g., Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2:168) have long noted the possible connection to OT *todah* texts such as Ps 49[50]:14.

3. According to rabbinic sources (the midrash Leviticus Rabbah 9:7; Pesiqta 12), several ancient Rabbis taught the following: “In the coming [messianic] age all sacrifices will cease, but the thank offering will never cease; all [religious] songs will cease, but the songs of thanks will never cease” (Cited in Hartmut Gese, *Essays in Biblical Theology*, 133). In Hebrew, “thank offering” is *todah*. See also Jer 33:11.
- ii. “Be pleased, O God, we pray, to bless, acknowledge, and approve this offering in every respect; make it spiritual and acceptable, so that it may become for us the Body and Blood of your most beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Quam oblationem tu, Deus, in omnibus, quaesumus, benedictam, adscriptam, ratam, rationabilem, acceptabilemque facere digneris: ut nobis Corpus et Sanguis fiat dilectissimi Filii tui, Domini nostri Iesu Christi.

1. **Biblical Text:** “I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship [λογικὴν λατρείαν].” (Rom 12:1 NAB)

obsecro itaque vos fratres per misericordiam Dei ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam viventem sanctam Deo placentem rationabile obsequium vestrum (Rom 12:1 Vulgate)

2. “St. Paul’s concept of *logikē latreia* [Rom 12:1 “spiritual/rational worship”]... [is] the most appropriate way of expressing the essential form of Christian liturgy” (Ratzinger, *Spirit of the Liturgy*, 50). See also Pope Benedict, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Part Two, 80.

2. Common Priesthood and Ministerial Priesthood

- a. Old Testament: Exod 19:6: “⁵ Now, if you obey me completely and keep my covenant, you will be my treasured possession among all peoples, though all the earth is mine. ⁶ You will be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation” (NAB).
 - i. Israel’s unfulfilled vocation to be a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation”. Israel as a nation is God’s first-born (Exod 4:22; cf. Deut 14:1-2; 32:5-9; Jer 31:9; Hos 11:1), and hence the kingdom of priests (Exod 19:6) → *royal priestly primogeniture*
 - ii. “[T]he priest’s place and function within society must serve as the ideal model for Israel’s self-understanding of its role among the nations” (Nahum M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Exodus* [Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991] 104).
- b. New Testament: 1 Peter 2:5, 9: “⁵ and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood (ἱεράτευμα) to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. [...] ⁹ But you are ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood (ἱεράτευμα), a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises’ of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (NAB).
 - i. *Hierateuma* (ἱεράτευμα) (LXX: Exod 19:6; 2 Macc 2:17; 1 Peter 2:5, 9) – “a group of people exercising a priestly function” (Vanhoye 249). Note the corporate sense in 2:9, where the phrase “royal priesthood” is in parallel with other corporate phrases: “chosen race ... holy nation ... a people for possession”. In 2:5, because of the phrase “spiritual house [cf. 2 Sam 7; Heb 3:6] for a holy priesthood” there is an emphasis on the priestly functioning of this group, namely the offering of spiritual sacrifices (cf. Rom 12:1) (Vanhoye 260). The priestly people has a witness-function toward the world (Vanhoye 272). “Distinguish between an individualistic claim to the priesthood and a personal participation in the common priesthood” (Vanhoye 262).
 - ii. Structure in “spiritual house” (cf. Eph 2:19-22; Rom 12:3-8): 1 Peter 5:1-4: presbyters as shepherds and *episkopoi* after the model of Christ, the arch-shepherd and *episkopos* (2 Peter 2:25; cf. the arch-priest → high priest in Heb; see also Heb 13:20 great shepherd of the sheep).
 - iii. See also Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6

- c. Both/and: Just as in Israel, there was both a collective “royal priesthood” and individual priests (Exod 19), so also in the Church, there is a common priesthood and a ministerial priesthood.
3. Priestly Celibacy: article by De la Potterie on the biblical origin of celibacy in relation to priesthood (http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_cclergy_doc_01011993_bfoun_en.html). See also the discussion in Stefan Heid, *Celibacy in the Early Church: The Beginnings of Obligatory Continence for Clerics in East and West* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2001).
- a. CCC; Matthew 19:22, about celibacy "for the sake of the kingdom of heaven"; and the Pauline text of 1 Corinthians 7:32-35.
- b. Key Phrase: μιᾷ γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ (*unius uxoris vir*) “husband of one wife” occurs three times: for bishops in 1 Tim 3:2; for presbyters in Titus 1:6 (cf. 1:5); for deacons in 1 Tim 3:12
- i. “Now a bishop must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, dignified, hospitable, an apt teacher” (1 Tim 3:2 RSV)
 - ii. “Let deacons be the husband of one wife, and let them manage their children and their households well” (1 Tim 3:12 RSV)
 - iii. “⁵ This is why I left you in Crete, that you might amend what was defective, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you, ⁶ if any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of being profligate or insubordinate” (Titus 1:5-6 RSV)
- c. De la Potterie asks: “How can one base the *celibacy* of priests on the evidence of texts which talk about *married* ministers? Such reasoning can only make sense if there is a middle term between the two extremes (marriage of ministers and celibacy): it is that of *continence*, to which, in fact, *married* ministers were bound.” He concludes that “we are now no longer dealing with an external, ecclesiastical prescription but rather with an inner perception of the fact that ordination makes the priestly minister a representation of Christ the bridegroom in relation to the Church, bride and virgin, and hence he cannot live with another wife.”