

02. Jesus: king, prophet, priest



The Being (Greek rendition of YHWH) Exodus 3:14

ho ôn

Jesus
Christ



‘I will betroth
you
to myself
in tenderness’
(Hosea 2:20)

Saint
John

Jesus, our One and Only Priest

In the Christian Church there is only one priest, Jesus, 'the one mediator between God and humankind' (1 Timothy 2:5).

The priesthood of the baptised is a special sharing in the priesthood of Christ.

As we reflect on Jesus as King, Prophet and Priest, an argument can be made that it is the aspect of Priesthood that offer the best perspective on the way in which Jesus can be said to be King and Prophet.

Jesus as King

Jesus way of being a king was as a humble servant: ‘You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet’ (John 1:13-14).

He is the Good Shepherd ‘who lays down his life for his sheep.’

(John 10:11; see MSC Constitutions page 6).

Jesus as King

He was a 'king' by giving himself throughout his ministry, culminating in his gift of himself in love on the cross. As we will note shortly, giving oneself is essentially a priestly act.

Jesus as the Prophet

Jesus not only spoke God's word. He is God's Word-made-flesh. His mission was to 'testify to the truth' (John 18:37). The truth is, of course, that God is love.

Jesus testified to this by 'bringing Good News to the poor', by 'proclaiming liberty to captives' and 'new sight to the blind', by 'setting the downtrodden free' (Luke 4:18 = Isaiah 61:1-2).

MSC Constitutions n. 20

‘Religious profession consecrates us in Christ and his mission. Like him we are sent into the world to proclaim the Good News that God is a Father who shows his concern for the poor and suffering, and who gives meaning to life by giving us his love.’

Jules Chevalier 1881 accepting the mission in Micronesia and Melanesia

‘Following the example of Mary, in all simplicity we have made known our obvious inadequacy, our well-founded misgivings. Since, despite this honest admission, you are saying to us as the angel did “Fear nothing. Accept the offer which is made to you. The Spirit of God will be with you. The power of the Most High will overshadow you.” Respectfully we submit, and our humble congregation answers with the Virgin of Nazareth: “Behold the servant of the Lord, let what you have said be done to me,” And with Saint Peter: “At your word I shall cast the net.”

As with his way of being King, so with his way of being Prophet, the key is found in his offering of himself to his Father and to us.

He was a Prophet by giving himself throughout his ministry, culminating in the gift of himself on the cross.

Giving himself is essentially a priestly act.

Jesus as Priest

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews recognised that in his person and in his ministry, culminating in his self-giving on the cross, Jesus brought to perfection the priestly ministry.

PRIEST

SANCTUARY

Presence to God

**Action
towards
US**

**Action
towards
GOD**

WORD

MEDIATION

**SACRI
FICE**

God's Way

US

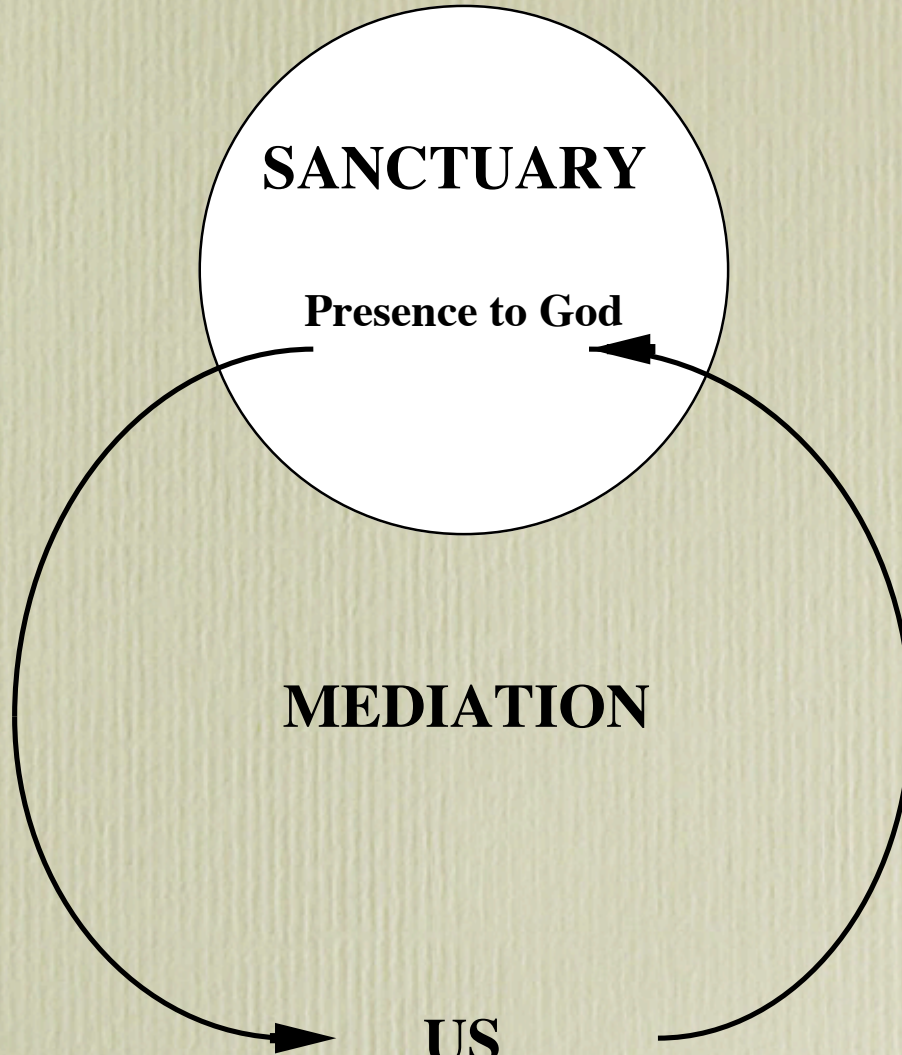
Self-offering

Will

Prayer

Blessing

forgiveness



The priestly ministry of the Levitical priest

‘The priests officiate in the sanctuary and approach Yahweh to serve him’ (Ezekiel 45:4).

‘The Lord set aside the tribe of Levi ... to stand in the presence of Yahweh, to do him service, and in his name to pronounce blessing’ (Deuteronomy 10:8).

The priestly ministry of the Levitical priest

‘Moses consecrated Aaron ... to bless his people in the name of the Lord ... to offer sacrifice to the Lord ... to make atonement for the people. He entrusted him with his commandments, committed to him the statutes of the law, to teach Jacob his decrees and enlighten Israel on his law’ (Sirach 45:18-21).

Jesus perfects the mediation of the Levitical priests

They carried out their mission in the sanctuary.

They mediated between God and the people when they spoke God's word from the sanctuary and when they declared God's will as inscribed in the Torah.

Jesus speaks only what he receives from the Father (John 8:28), and he reveals God's will, thereby showing not only who God is but also how we are to respond to God and so enjoy the divine communion in which holiness consists.

The Levitical priests mediated between the people and God when they received gifts from the people and offered them to God as sacrifices. Jesus gives God's Spirit without measure (John 3:34), welcomes everyone and offers to God all who are in communion with him. Through this communion in self-offering, he sanctifies and saves all who come to the Father through him.

'He is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them' (Hebrews 7:25).

The priestly ministry of the High Priest

Yom Kippur (the 'day of the cover')

Jesus as 'high priest'

Hebrews 2:17-18

'Jesus had in all things to become like his brothers and sisters so that he might become a merciful and trustworthy high priest for the things of God, in order to expiate the sins of the people. For in what he has suffered himself, being tested, he is able to offer help to those who are being tested.'

Jesus perfects the mediation of the high priest

‘He is the expiation-sacrifice that takes our sins away, and not only ours but the whole world’s’

(1 John 2:2).

‘All are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation-sacrifice by his blood, to be received by faith’ (Romans 3:24-25).

The priestly ministry of the King

‘A priest according to the order of Melchizedek’ (Psalm 110:4), the priest-king of Jerusalem (Genesis 14:18).

The king’s priestly role transcended that of the Levitical priests, for his sanctuary was not just the temple, but the ‘Holy Land’.

Jesus perfects the mediation of the priest-king

The king was God's especially anointed one, mediating God's word to the people by governing according to God's law and binding the people together as God's covenant people.

Jesus made the reign of God effective among those who became his disciples: 'a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek' (Hebrews 5:6).

He is the 'the one mediator between God and humankind' (1 Timothy 2:5).

Next

03. A priestly people



In the Likeness of Jesus