

## The Priestly Ordination of Jesus (5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent, Year B)

### Hebrews 5:7-9—The Prayers and Sufferings of Jesus

<sup>7</sup> *In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear.*

<sup>8</sup> *Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; <sup>9</sup> and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him...* (Hebrews 5:7-9)

1. Prayers of Jesus: the “prayers” and “tears” of Jesus in Gethsemane? (5:7; cf. Mark 14)
2. Obedience: “he learned obedience” through suffering (5:8)
3. Perfection: “being made perfect” or “complete” (Greek *teleoō*) (5:8)
4. Without Sin: Hebrews does *not* imply that Jesus was flawed:

For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, *yet without sin*. (Heb 4:15).

5. Priestly Ordination: Greek Septuagint terminology for *consecration*:<sup>1</sup>

<sup>31</sup> And Moses spoke to Aaron and his sons: “...<sup>33</sup> You shall not go out of the entrance of the tent of testimony for seven days, until *the time of your fulfillment* (lit., “the day of your perfection,” Greek *hēmera teleiōseōs*) is fulfilled, for he will complete your *ordination* (literally, “the perfection of your hands,” Greek *teleiōseitas cheiras hymōn*) in seven days... (Leviticus 8:31, 33) (trans. *Lexham English Septuagint*, p. 124)

[B]eing *made perfect* he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, <sup>10</sup> being *designated by God a high priest* after the order of Melchizedek (Heb 5:9-10)

6. Salvation: flows from Jesus’ suffering and priestly sacrifice (5:9)

### The Living Tradition

John Chrysostom: Do you see that he sets forth nothing else than His care and the exceeding greatness of His love? For what does the [expression] “with strong crying” mean? *The Gospel nowhere says this, nor that He wept when He prayed, nor yet that He uttered a cry. Do you see that it was a condescension? For he could not [merely] say that He prayed, but also “with strong crying.”* (John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Hebrews* 8.3;

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<sup>1</sup> Albert Vanhoye, S.J., *The Letter to the Hebrews: A New Commentary* (trans. Leo Arnold, S.J.; Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist, 2015), 105.

*NPNF1*, 14.404)

**Questions for Discussion and Reflection (5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent, Year B)**

1. What does Hebrews mean when it says Christ was “made perfect” (Hebrew 5:8-9)? What clues in the immediate context suggest that Hebrews is describing Jesus’ passion and death as a priestly consecration and sacrifice?

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**For Further Reading**

1. Albert Vanhoye, S.J., *The Letter to the Hebrews: A New Commentary*. Translated by Leo Arnold, S.J.; Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist, 2015.
2. St. Thomas Aquinas. *Commentary on the Letter of Saint Paul to the Hebrews*. Translated by F. R. Larcher. Lander, Wyo.: Aquinas Institute, 2012.