

**The Priesthood of the Baptized
(5th Sunday of Easter, Year A)****1 Peter 2:4-9—The Priesthood of the “People of God”**

⁴ Come to him, to that living stone, rejected by men but in God’s sight chosen and precious; ⁵ and *like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* ⁶ For it stands in scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and he who believes in him will not be put to shame.” ⁷ To you therefore who believe, he is precious, but for those who do not believe, “The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner,” ⁸ and “A stone that will make men stumble, a rock that will make them fall”; for they stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. ⁹ But you are a chosen race, *a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people*, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:4-9)

1. Christology: the Living Stone and the New Temple (2:4-10)
2. Temple: “spiritual house” (Greek *oikos pneumatikos*) (2:5)
3. Priesthood: “holy priesthood” (Greek *hierateuma hagion*) (2:5)
4. Sacrifices: “spiritual sacrifices” (Greek *pneumatikas thysias*) (2:5)
5. Messianic Stone: the “stone” of the new Temple (Isa 28:16; cf. Dan 2)
6. Psalms 118: rejected Cornerstone (Psalm 118:22)
7. New Israel:
 - a. “Chosen Race” (Greek *genos eklekton*)
 - b. “Holy Nation” (Greek *ethnos hagion*)
8. Lay Priesthood: “royal priesthood” (Greek *basileon hierateuma*)
9. Ecclesiology: “People of God” (Greek *laos theou*) (2:10; cf. Hos 2:23)

The Living Tradition

Catechism: On entering the People of God through faith and Baptism, one receives a share in this people’s unique, *priestly vocation*: “Christ the Lord, high priest taken from among men, has made this new people ‘a kingdom of priests to God, his Father.’ *The baptized, by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated to be a spiritual house and a holy priesthood.*” (CCC 785, citing *Lumen Gentium* 10; cf. Heb 5:1-5; Rev 1:6)

Catechism: “Hence the laity, dedicated as they are to Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit, are marvelously called and prepared so that even richer fruits of the Spirit may be produced in them. *For all their works, prayers, and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of mind and body, if they are accomplished in the Spirit—indeed even the hardships of life if patiently born—all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* In the celebration of the Eucharist

these may most fittingly be offered to the Father along with the body of the Lord. And so, worshipping everywhere by their holy actions, the laity consecrate the world itself to God, everywhere offering worship by the holiness of their lives.” (CCC 901, quoting *Lumen Gentium* 34, 10, and 1 Pet 2:5)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (5th Sunday of Easter, Year A)

1. Why does the New Testament use the word “priesthood” to refer to the laity? What are the implications of this terminology? What did Vatican II teach?

2. What exactly are the “spiritual sacrifices” that all Christians are able to offer?

For Further Reading

1. Keating, Daniel. *First and Second Peter, Jude*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.
2. Bede the Venerable. *Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles*. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1985.
3. Bray, Gerald. *James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. New Testament XI. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2000.