



## Newsletter – February 2021

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### **The priestly office of the laity**

Through baptism we are incorporated into Christ as a living member of the Church. As such, we participate in the triple office of Christ as priest, prophet and king. In this newsletter, we will focus on the priestly office of the laity.

A priest is a mediator, or bridge, between God and human beings. In the Old Testament, the Jewish priest was to offer sacrifices to God in the Temple of Jerusalem on behalf of the people to make up for his sins and the sins of the people. As offerings, goods such as grain or animals were given to the priest and burned on the altar. The sacrifices were a form of worship for atonement for sins.

The New Testament shows us that the old sacrifices were only a foreshadowing of the only true sacrifice of the self-giving of Jesus on the Cross. Jesus gives himself to us so that we may become holy, free from sin. Holiness is not something we can earn, but it is offered to us by grace. In the New Covenant, Jesus' sacrifice is the source of our salvation, so that we can enter into a new relationship with God, not through our sacrifices, but through grace.

As disciples of Christ, we are called to cooperate in his priestly mission through a new kind of sacrifice which is a "living sacrifice". St Paul tells us in his letter to the Romans, "I urge you, then, brothers, remembering the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, dedicated and acceptable to God; that is the kind of worship for you, as sensible people" (Rm 12:1). Instead of offering grain and animals in sacrifice to God, like in the Old Testament, we are now called to offer a spiritual sacrifice through the gift of ourselves. We are called not to earn God's mercy, but to express our gratitude and our love for God's mercy. In response to God's saving love for us, we are called to centre our lives on Christ: "He is the living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen by God and precious to him; set yourselves close to him so that you, too, may be living stones making a spiritual house as a holy priesthood to offer the spiritual sacrifices made acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1Pt 2:4-5).

Our participation in the priestly office of Christ consists of a new way of life which is to live like Christ, as adoptive children of God, by deepening our communion with the Father and by worshipping him. Out of love for God and for our neighbour, we are called to offer our own lives as a spiritual sacrifice “acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1P 2:5). Our work, our prayer, our family life, our involvement in the Church are all rooted in Christ and offered to God the Father as a living offering, for the love of God and our neighbour. As St John-Paul II put it, “incorporated in Jesus Christ, the baptized are united to him and to his sacrifice in the offering they make of themselves and their daily activities”<sup>1</sup>.

The baptized participate in the priestly mission of Christ by uniting their prayers, their works, their joys and their sufferings with the offering of Christ, so as to consecrate the world to God. Their communion with the priesthood of Christ is best expressed in their participation in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, which is described as “the source and summit of Christian life”<sup>2</sup>. They offer themselves and their daily activities as a spiritual sacrifice in the Eucharist and receive the graces they need with the gifts of the Holy Spirit in order to fulfil their common priesthood in the world: in their family, in their community and at work. Through their works and prayers, they cooperate with Christ in the sanctification of the world, building bridges between heaven and earth.

#### **John-Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, §14,5**

The lay faithful are sharers in the priestly mission, for which Jesus offered himself on the cross and continues to be offered in the celebration of the Eucharist for the glory of God and the salvation of humanity. Incorporated in Jesus Christ, the baptized are united to him and to his sacrifice in the offering they make of themselves and their daily activities (cf. Rom 12:1, 2). Speaking of the lay faithful the Council says: "For their work, prayers and apostolic endeavours, their ordinary married and family life, their daily labour, their mental and physical relaxation, if carried out in the Spirit, and even the hardships of life if patiently borne—all of these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Pt 2:5). During the celebration of the Eucharist these sacrifices are most lovingly offered to the Father along with the Lord's body. Thus as worshipers whose every deed is holy, the lay faithful consecrate the world itself to God" (LG 34).

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<sup>1</sup> John-Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, §14,5.

<sup>2</sup> Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, 11.

## Sharing

### See

How do I refer to Christ and his teaching when it comes to making a decision? How often do I pray? How often do I go to Mass?

### Judge

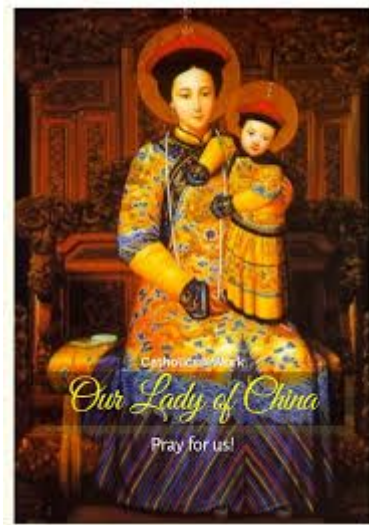
Why is it important to pray?

In what sense the Mass is "the source and the summit of Christian life"?

What does it mean to offer one's own life as a spiritual sacrifice to God?

### Act

What could I do for my own sanctification and the sanctification of my family, my community, my work place?



CFSM Spiritual Director Father Dominique  
and CFSM Executive Committee  
wishes all CFSM members  
and their families  
A Blessed Chinese New Year

## Announcement

### **Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2021**

The AGM for 2021 is scheduled to be held on Saturday 6 March 2021.

2.30pm to 5.00pm.

Venue: To be decided.