

The Dignity of the Sacrament and of the Priesthood

by Thomas a Kempis

The sermon emphasizes the dignity and importance of the priestly ministry, highlighting the need for humility, virtue, and devotion in the role.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 11:23, Ephesians 6:18, Philippians 2:17, 1 Timothy 4:12, Hebrews 4:16, Hebrews 5:4, James 5:16, 1 Peter 2:9, 1 Peter 4:10

Topics: "Sacrament Of Christ", "Priestly Ministry"

Description

Thomas a Kempis emphasizes the sacredness and dignity of priests in administering the Sacrament of Christ, highlighting that it is a divine calling rather than a human merit. He stresses the importance of priests believing in God above all else, conducting themselves blamelessly, and leading a life adorned with virtues and sanctity. The priest is called to act in Christ's place, praying for both himself and all people, and to remember the Passion of Christ through the sacred vestments and the sign of the Lord's cross. By faithfully celebrating Mass, the priest honors God, brings comfort to the Church, and obtains grace and mercy through prayer and offering.

Transcript

THE VOICE OF CHRIST

HAD you the purity of an angel and the sanctity of St. John the Baptist, you would not be worthy to receive or administer this Sacrament. It is not because of any human meriting that a man consecrates and administers the Sacrament of Christ, and receives the Bread of Angels for his food. Great is the Mystery and great the dignity of priests to whom is given that which has not been granted the angels. For priests alone, rightly ordained in the Church, have power to celebrate Mass and consecrate the Body of Christ.

The priest, indeed, is the minister of God, using the word of God according to His command and appointment. God, moreover, is there -- the chief Author and invisible Worker to Whom all is subject as He wills, to Whom all are obedient as He commands.

In this most excellent Sacrament, therefore, you ought to believe in God rather than in your own senses or in any visible sign, and thus, with fear and reverence draw near to such a work as this. Look to yourself and see whose ministry has been given you through the imposition of the bishop's hands.

Behold, you have been made a priest, consecrated to celebrate Mass! See to it now that you offer sacrifice to God faithfully and devoutly at proper times, and that you conduct yourself blamelessly. You have not made your burden lighter. Instead, you are now bound by stricter discipline and held to more perfect sanctity.

A priest ought to be adorned with all virtues and show the example of a good life to others. His way lies not among the vulgar and common habits of men but with the angels in heaven and the perfect men on earth. A priest clad in the sacred vestments acts in Christ's place, that he may pray to God both for himself and for all people in a suppliant and humble manner. He has before and behind him the sign of the Lord's cross that he may always remember the Passion of Christ. It is before him, on the chasuble, that he may look closely upon the footsteps of Christ and try to follow them fervently. It is behind him -- he is signed with it -- that he may gladly suffer for God any adversities inflicted by others.

He wears the cross before him that he may mourn his own sins, behind him, that in pity he may mourn the sins of others, and know that he is appointed to stand between God and the sinner, never to become weary of prayer and the holy offering until it is granted him to obtain grace and mercy.

When the priest celebrates Mass, he honors God, gladdens the angels, strengthens the Church, helps the living, brings rest to the departed, and wins for himself a share in all good things.

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