

The Priest and Christ

(03:00 – 07:04)

Basic Questions

- ❑ What does the priest do at Mass?
- ❑ How does Christ's action on the Cross relate to the priest's action in the liturgy of the Mass?

Key Ideas

- ❑ In the Mass, the priest conveys the living presence of Christ to the faithful.
- ❑ In the liturgy of the Mass, the priest performs the same actions that Christ performed on the Cross. This is seen throughout the verbs *preest/stands*, *precedet/presides*, *proclamat/proclaims*, *sociat/joins*, *dat/gives*, and *participat/partakes*.

Beginning Reflection

Ask the two *Basic Questions* (above) and ask the participants to be attentive to them as they view the next portion of the DVD.

Show DVD (03:00 – 07:04)

Activity

Reflection in Writing

Msgr. James Moroney makes the point that Christ

reigns from the wood of the Cross, presiding over a people gathered to himself, proclaiming the new covenant in his blood, drawing them to himself to join their sacrifices with his, [and] giving his own body and blood for the nourishment of this holy people.

He also quotes the Roman Missal as follows:

A priest also, who possesses within the Church the power of Holy Orders to offer sacrifice in the person of Christ, stands for this reason at the head of the faithful people gathered together here and now, presides over their prayer, proclaims the message of salvation to them, associates the people with himself in the offering of sacrifice through Christ in the Holy Spirit to God the Father, gives his brothers and sisters the Bread of eternal life, and partakes of it with them. (#93)

Based on these two statements, ask the participants to reflect in writing on how the priest in the celebration of the Eucharist performs the same actions as Christ on the Cross.

Possible answers may include:

- ❑ **preest / stands**
Just as Christ reigns from the wood of the Cross, the priest stands at the head of the faithful people gathered in the Church.
- ❑ **precedet / presides**
Just as Christ presides over a people gathered to himself, the priest presides over the prayer of those gathered for Mass.
- ❑ **proclamat / proclaims**
Just as Christ proclaims the new covenant in his Blood, the priest proclaims the message of salvation to his congregation.
- ❑ **sociat / joins**
Just as Christ draws all men to himself to join their sacrifices with his, the priest associates the people with himself in the offering of sacrifice through Christ in the Holy Spirit to God the Father.
- ❑ **dat / gives and participat / partakes**
Just as Christ gives his own Body and Blood for the nourishment of this holy people, the priest gives his brothers and sisters the Bread of eternal life. The priest and the people also partake of this Bread.

Spend a few minutes sharing and discussing responses.

Reflection in Writing

The *General Instructions of the Roman Missal* instructs priests to celebrate the Liturgy “with dignity and humility” (#93).

Have the participants write for a few minutes on the following question:

- ❑ To what extent do I now either communicate or experience “dignity and humility” in the Eucharistic liturgy?

Additional Resources

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1323

“At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet ‘in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.’”²

Directory on the Ministry and life of Priests, 41

“Be aware, then, of what you are doing, understand what is being fulfilled and why you are celebrating the mystery of the death and Resurrection of the Lord, bear the death of Christ in your body and walk in the newness of life.”