

Ambassadors for Christ The Sacrament of Priesthood

Objectives

To understand the role of the sacrament of priesthood in the church

References

- ❖ Priesthood: HH Pope Shenouda III
- ❖ Is there any salvation outside the church: HG Anba Gregorious
- ❖ Sacrament of Priesthood: HG Anba Mettaos

Scriptural Verse

“And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.”
(Hebrews 5:4)

Lesson Outlines

Spiritual Meaning of Priesthood:

Every believer can be a priest through offering his prayers as incense (Psalm 141:2) and giving his body as a living sacrifice (Romans 12: 1)

In the Old and New Testaments, priests are chosen by God. “I give your priesthood to you as a gift for service, but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death.” (Numbers 18:7)

- ❖ Story of Koorah, Dathan and Abeeram (Numbers 16)
- ❖ When King Saul dared to raise the burnt offering, he was rejected (1 Samuel 13:9)
- ❖ King Uzziah dared to raise the incense and remained a leper till his death. (2 Chronicles. 26:19-21)

The calling is very clear and is followed by

- ❖ Consecration and anointing procedures (Leviticus 8:12)
- ❖ God ordered special robes and attire to be made for the priests to wear. (Exodus 40:12-15)
- ❖ They had to pass under Moses’ hands (Ordination)
- ❖ They are distinguished from other people. A gold name plate on Aaron’s forehead to be accepted in front of God (Exodus 28: 38)
- ❖ As anointed, they receive the Holy Spirit which bestows authority to carry out the ministry of the priesthood (Isaiah 61:1)

The priesthood is transformed in the New Testament from being of the Order of Aaron, to the Order of Melchizedek, and from offering blood sacrifices, to offering bread and wine. It is more superior according to St. Paul’s explanation (Hebrews 7:3)

- ❖ Without father, without mother, without genealogy (not related to the Tribe of priests)
- ❖ Having neither beginning of days nor end of life (Hebrews 7:21)
- ❖ Came with an Oath and continues forever (Hebrews 7:24)

Sacrament of Priesthood

- ❖ A holy sacrament. It is supplementary (gives grace to the person who receives it), non-redemptive (not necessary for salvation) and non-perishable.
- ❖ Instituted by our Lord when He chose the Twelve, and consecrated them for ministry (Luke 6: 13) and (Matthew 10: 5- 8).
- ❖ Gives authority of absolution and binding (Matthew 18:18) and (John 20: 22-23).
- ❖ Gives authority for baptizing and teaching the commandments (Matthew 28: 19-20).
- ❖ Gives authority to deal with the Holy Body and Precious Blood (Luke 22: 14-20).

The Honor, Responsibilities and Titles of Priesthood

- ❖ A divine call, choice and an appointment. (Mark 3:13-15) and (Luke 6:13)
- ❖ A selection and consecration (Acts 13:2-3)
- ❖ Faithfulness and stewardship of the mysteries of God to provide spiritual nourishment for the flock (Luke 12: 42) and (1 Corinthians 4:1-2)
- ❖ Ambassadors of the Lord to continue the service of reconciliation with God (2 Corinthians 5:18) and (Ephesians 6:20)
- ❖ Teachers, Guides and Rulers (1 Corinthians 12:28) and (Hebrew 13: 7)
- ❖ Fathers (1 Corinthians 4:14, 17) and Shepherd (John 21: 15-16) and (Acts 20:28)
- ❖ Angels and Messengers (Revelation 2:1) and (Mark 1:2)

Ranks of Priesthood

1. The order of Deacons (Servants)
2. The order of Priests (Teachers)
3. The order of Bishops (pastors or shepherds)

The Holy Breath and the Laying of hands

Our Lord ordained His disciples granting them the Holy Spirit and the Episcopal Authority (John 20:20-23). This Holy breath still upheld and is handed over from generation to generation. The bishop breathes on the ordained open mouth and says “Receive the Holy Spirit” and he replies “I opened my mouth and for myself, I attracted a Spirit”. Selection of deacons and laying the hands on them is explained in Acts 6:3-6

Conclusion

The sacrament of priesthood is vital to the apostolic churches and is rooted in Holy Scripture.

Activities/Discussion points

Discuss the ordination of the following people:

St. Stephen - Acts 6: 3-8

St. Paul - Acts 13:3