

THEOLOGY OF THE LAITY

DISCIPLES IN THE WORLD

Session III – Identity: Prophet

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A. BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST'S THREEFOLD IDENTITY

NOTES

- **PRIEST**
- **PROPHET**
- **KING**

As sharers in the role of Christ as priest, prophet, and king, the laity have their work cut out for them in the life and activity of the Church. Their activity is so necessary within the Church communities that without it the apostolate of the pastors is often unable to achieve its full effectiveness.

- Apostolicam Actuositatem 10

B. LAITY AS PROPHETS

- **WHAT IS A PROPHET?**
 - **GK "SPEAKS BEFORE"**
 - **2 SENSES OF SPEAKING BEFORE**
 - Foretelling – future events
 - Forthtelling – spreading message forth
 - **LUMEN GENTIUM 35**

Christ, the great Prophet, who proclaimed the Kingdom of His Father both by the testimony of His life and the power of His words, continually fulfills His prophetic office until the complete manifestation of glory. He does this not only through the hierarchy who teach in His name and with His authority, but also through the laity whom He made His witnesses and to whom He gave understanding of the faith and an attractiveness in speech so that the power of the Gospel might shine forth in their daily social and family life.

FOR PRAYER

C. OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND

- **MOSES – GREATEST OF THE PROPHETS**
 - **DEUTERONOMY 34:7-12**

"Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were undimmed and his vigor unabated.... Since then no prophet has arisen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, in all the signs and wonders the LORD sent him to perform in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh and all his servants and against all his land, and all the great might and the awesome power that Moses displayed in the sight of all Israel."

- **OTHER OT PROPHETS**
Various Backgrounds
- **JOHN THE BAPTIST – LAST OF THE “PROPHETS”**
 - **John 3:27-30**
“No one can receive anything except what has been given him from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said that I am not the Messiah, but that I was sent before him. The one who has the bride is the bridegroom; the best man, who stands and listens to him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. So this joy of mine has been made complete. He must increase; I must decrease.”

D. JESUS CHRIST FULFILLS THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES

- **WORD – LUKE 4:16-21**
He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom* into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,* because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.” Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, “Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.”
- **DEED – LUKE 7:16**
Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, exclaiming, “A great prophet has arisen in our midst,” and “God has visited his people.”

FOR PRAYER

LUMEN GENTIUM 35

Just as the sacraments of the New Law, by which the life and the apostolate of the faithful are nourished, prefigure a new heaven and a new earth, so too the laity go forth as powerful proclaimers of a faith in things to be hoped for, when they courageously join to their profession of faith a life springing from faith. This evangelization, that is, *this announcing of Christ by a living testimony as well as by the spoken word*, takes on a specific quality and a special force in that it is carried out in the ordinary surroundings of the world.

Consequently, even when preoccupied with temporal cares, the laity can and must perform a work of great value for the evangelization of the world. For even if some of them have to fulfill their religious duties on their own, when there are no sacred ministers or in times of persecution; and even if many of them devote all their energies to apostolic work; still it remains for each one of them to cooperate in the external spread and the dynamic growth of the Kingdom of Christ in the world. Therefore, let the laity devotedly strive to acquire a more profound grasp of revealed truth, and let them insistently beg of God the gift of wisdom.

CHRISTIFIDELES LAICI

They are also called to allow the newness and the power of the gospel to shine out everyday in their family and social life, as well as to express patiently and courageously in the contradictions of the present age their hope of future glory even "through the framework of their secular life."

E. WHAT IS MOST EFFECTIVE?

POPE PAUL VI (1974):

Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.

POPE BENEDICT XVI - CARITAS IN VERITATE

Charity in truth, to which Jesus Christ bore witness by his earthly life and especially by his death and resurrection, is the principal driving force behind the authentic development of every person and of all humanity. Love — caritas — is an extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous and generous engagement in the field of justice and peace. It is a force that has its origin in God, Eternal Love and Absolute Truth. Each person finds his good by adherence to God's plan for him, in order to realize it fully: in this plan, he finds his truth, and through adherence to this truth he becomes free (cf. Jn 8:32). To defend the truth, to articulate it with humility and conviction, and to bear witness to it in life are therefore exacting and indispensable forms of charity. Charity, in fact, "rejoices in the truth" (1 Cor 13:6). All people feel the interior impulse to love authentically: love and truth never abandon them completely, because these are the vocation planted by God in the heart and mind of every human person.

FOR PRAYER

HOMEWORK

- Keep praying 15 minutes each day
- Spend 5 minutes at the end of each day reflecting on grace/struggle of day, and closing with prayer:

I adore You, my God,
and I love You with all my heart.
I give You thanks for having created me,
for having made me a Christian,
and for having preserved me this day.
Pardon me for the evil I have done today;
if I have done anything good, please accept it.
Keep me while I take my rest
and deliver me from all dangers.
May Your grace be always with me.
Amen.

- **NEW ASSIGNMENT:** Share the Gospel each day in word and deed to the people in your day to day life (family, co-workers, friends, etc.) for 1 week