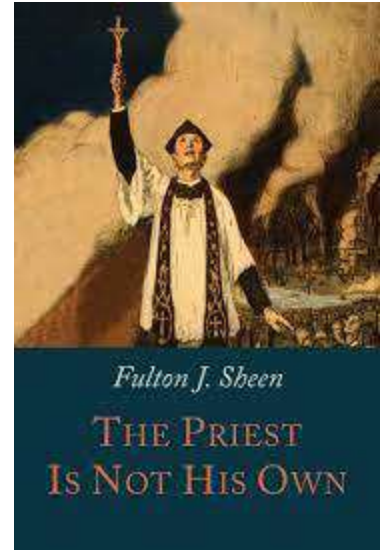


The Priest Is Not His Own

By Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

“He gave Himself up on our behalf,
a sacrifice breathing out fragrance as He offered it to
God.” – Ephesians 5:2



Session 1: Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2

Reflect from the text:

- ✠ Jesus' priesthood is unique in that the priest *is* the victim
 - ❖ Ancient Israelites slaughtered the victim and the priests offered the sacrifice
 - ❖ This foreshadows the Sanhedrin *and* the people executing Jesus Christ
- ✠ The life is in the blood; “I have told the Israelites: You shall not consume the blood of any flesh. Since the life of all flesh is its blood, anyone who consumes it shall be cut off” because to consume the blood of an animal debases us. –Leviticus 17:14 “You shall not eat of the blood.” –Deuteronomy 12:16 *Considering my consumption of media, news, and entertainment, do I debase myself? Or do I seek that which will uplift me to the highest Heavens: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving?*
- ✠ Sin is also in the blood. Sacrificial sin offerings involve the shedding of blood. “Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins.” – Hebrews 9:22
- ✠ Prayer:
 - ❖ In the silence of our hearts
 - ❖ Crying aloud for joy, in pain, in intercession
 - ❖ Tears of contrition or gratitude
- ✠ Consider the foreshadowing in the Old Testament of the marvelous exchange of the Incarnation and Redemption:
 - ❖ Two birds – one slain, the other dipped in its blood and set free (Leviticus 14)
 - ❖ Two goats – one slain, the other “escapes” into the wilderness (Leviticus 16)
 - ❖ Jesus is slain so that we, dipped in His Blood, are set free from sin. Our sins have been driven into the wilderness, far from us. *How often do we seek the scapegoat to repossess our sin when we submit to temptation?*
- ✠ The Eucharist reminds us that we are victims: “Shall we eat bread and give no wheat to the ground? Shall we drink wine, and give no grapes to be crushed?” *What do you offer to God (1) in thanksgiving and (2) as participation in Christ's Paschal Mystery?*
- ✠ We “give” God our time at Mass and receive *eternity*; we die to ourselves and receive *life*; we bring our emptiness and receive *all*. *Do we actively participate in the Mass so as to receive every blessing God pours out?*

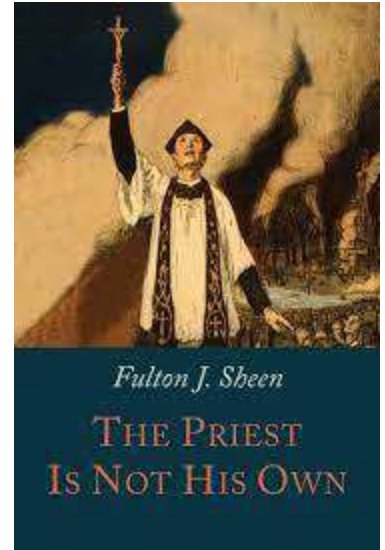
- ✠ Three prefigurements of Christ and His Church:
 - ❖ Abel was the first blood-sacrifice and prefigures “red” martyrs
 - ❖ Abraham endured many tests of his faith, but not unto martyrdom; this prefigures “white” martyrdom
 - ❖ Melchisedech offered bread and wine, as priests do; they ought also to offer themselves to the Lord in service to their vocation
- ✠ Priests and faithful Catholics offer ourselves in union with the Cross of Christ:
 - ❖ Jesus is recognized in the breaking of the bread. *Do I break with sin so as to offer myself to the Lord as an acceptable sacrifice?*
 - ❖ “Offer up your bodies as a living sacrifice, consecrated to God.” – Romans 12:1
 - ❖ “Your bodies are meant for the Lord.” – 1 Corinthians 6:13 *Do I treat my body with the dignity it deserves as a Temple of the Holy Spirit? Temples are places of worship and praise, of contrition and forgiveness, of sacrifice and life.*
 - ❖ “Take your share of hardship...we are to share His Life because we have shared His Death.” - 2 Timothy 2:3,11
 - ❖ “If we have died with Christ...we shall also live with Him.” – Romans 6:8 *How have I died with Christ? Do I live with Him now?*
 - ❖ We need not look outside our hearts to find a sheep to offer to God; we have that within us which we can crucify. – St. Augustine
- ✠ We must empty ourselves and seek God earnestly: “The hungry He has filled with every good thing, and the rich He has sent empty away.” – Luke 1:53 *Am I so full of pride, envy, anger, lust, gluttony, avarice, or sloth that there is no room for the good things with which God wants to fill me? Or am I humble, obedient, and grateful?*
- ✠ Good shepherds can be known from the howling pack of wolves which surround him. *Let our prayers for our priests include a prayer for protection from the predations of wolves.*
- ✠ The symbolism of Jacob’s Ladder:
 - ❖ Foundation on the Earth, rising to Heaven – Christ’s Incarnation stretches between Heaven and Earth *Have I built my foundation of faith upon the Rock of Christ? Or is my house built on sand?- Matthew 7:24-27*
 - ❖ Angels ascending and descending – priests offer bread and wine, prayers and sacrifices to God and descend with the Bread of Heaven, graces, and blessings. *Our prayers for our priests help them with their Divine Office of ministry.*
 - ❖ God chose men, not angels, to be priests because human experiences of weakness, temptation, and ignorance are all unknown to the angels experientially; it takes a man to know the foibles, joys, and needs of mankind.

- ✠ In the Offertory, the bread and wine encompass all of humanity, all of history, and all of creation are brought to the gate of Salvation:
 - ❖ Bread and wine – wheat and grape – soil of the Earth, toil of mankind, sun and rain – all gathered up and brought together to the altar.
 - ❖ Heaven and Earth meet in the Mass: the Church Triumphant, Militant, and Suffering – as the hands of the priests become the Hands of Jesus, continually making intercession for us.
 - ❖ Our holy hours offered for our priests support their intercession on their own behalf and on ours. “Those to whom much is given, much is expected,” (Luke 12:48) and what greater gift could be given than to be a priest, an *alter Christus*?
- ✠ Mindfulness/awareness of our life in Christ, and the priests’ lives in Christ:
 - ❖ Best illumined in the fire of sacrifice
 - ❖ Priests are called to be another Christ, not “just some other guy”
 - ❖ Priests are taken from the world – they know our travails and temptations
 - ❖ Priests are separated from the world – by their words and deeds, they must be a countercultural sign - “In this sign, you will conquer.” *Do our prayers for our priests take these points into consideration?*
 - ❖ The priests are called to live out their vocation close to the flock, guarding them from predators and showing them the way to green pastures and restful waters. *We must pray that they remain faithful good shepherds as they lead the flock.*
 - ❖ The fire of the Holy Spirit leads and guides us unerringly. Fires of our own kindling do not rise as sweet incense to God. *Pray that our priests welcome the Divine Fire and spread it to their flock.*
 - ❖ The priest on fire with the Holy Spirit will bear great fruit in his flock.
- ✠ The Church teaches, governs, and sanctifies through the Holy Spirit. As the priest takes on the Mind of Christ, he is no longer his own; he is Christ’s.
 - ❖ Only in forgetting oneself – foregoing one’s ego – can a priest be one with Christ
 - ❖ At the wedding at Cana, the servants filled the jars with water; Jesus transformed ordinary water into the finest wine. We (and the priests for whom we pray) are the jars; our faith, our love, our good works, and our prayers are the water; Jesus takes our small offerings and divinizes them, conferring upon our efforts Divine grace.
 - ❖ As the branches depend for life upon the Vine, we depend upon Christ to enliven our faith. Here we say with St. Paul: “Christ lives in me.”
 - ❖ Ordination empowers the priest to say with Jesus: “I absolve you,” and “This is My Body.”
 - ❖ Mortification empowers the priest to perform the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.

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Session 2: Chapters 3 and 4

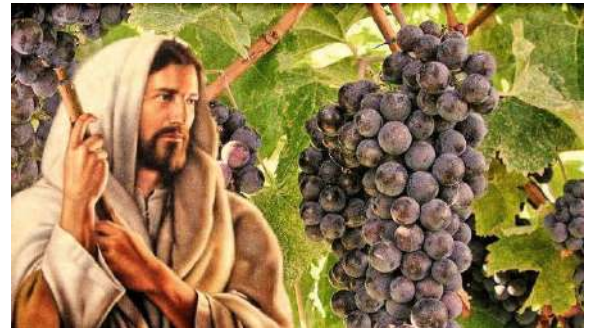
Reflect from the text:

- ✠ The idea of fatherhood presupposes a child: “you did not become a father until I became a son.” *Does this help your understanding of the Son proceeding from the Father, God from God – equal and consubstantial?*
- ✠ From Genesis through the Apocalypse (Revelation), fruitfulness is a hallmark of God and His Chosen People. *Reflect on how you’ve been incorporated into this Tree of Life through your baptism and ask yourself: how have I borne fruit for the Lord?*
- ✠ Priests are fathers:
 - ❖ “Begetting” them in the waters of baptism
 - ❖ Bringing them back into the family when they wander
 - ❖ Restoring them to relationship with God
 - ❖ Providing for their spiritual needs through the Mass and the sacraments
- ✠ Some of the burdens our priests bear:
 - ❖ Administration of the parish – including finances
 - ❖ Organizations which require his presence
 - ❖ Evangelization to his parishioners
 - ❖ Outreach to all souls within his parish boundaries
 - ❖ Daily Mass – a joy to be sure; perhaps sometimes a burden
 - ❖ Distribution of the sacraments – again, a joy; perhaps also a burden
 - ❖ Preparation for the sacraments – shared with ministers and staff, perhaps
 - ❖ *Do you remember all of the ways our priests serve us as you pray for them?*
- ✠ Sitting and standing –
 - ❖ Did the image of Jesus standing in Heaven when His Church is under persecution move you? Did the thought of Jesus not sitting until He ascended into Heaven move you?
 - ❖ One of the admonitions against the High Priest, Eli, who took young Samuel into his care, is that he sat (and ate) too much – eating sacrificed food forbidden to him; he shirked his priestly duties and his duties as a father to his sons (who ate the sacrificed food and practiced Temple prostitution), and the Jews suffered for it. (1 Samuel)

- ✠ Consider where Jesus was found on Earth and how He is found now in His priests:
 - ❖ Among saints and sinners
 - ❖ Amidst good and evil
 - ❖ Alone and isolated at times
 - ❖ In great crowds at times
 - ❖ *Let us pray for our priests wherever they are found*
- ✠ Fire = light and heat – priests need both to be an effective *alter Christus*
 - ❖ Light = Truth
 - ❖ Heat = Zeal
 - ❖ *What did you think of the comparison with the Communists – that they have the zeal but not the Truth? Had you ever considered that the conditions under Communism mimic how we are called to act in the Kingdom of God?*
 - Order and Obedience
 - Discipline – physical and mental
 - Study
 - Detachment from excess
 - Submission to the Will of God (or the Party) of your ego and your will
 - ❖ Uniting our lives with the Cross of Christ brings us to the Kingdom, whereas what is found in Communism is tyranny, dehumanization, and slavery
 - ❖ “The fire on the altar must burn continually. Never must the altar be empty of this perpetual fire.” – Leviticus 6:12-13 *Is my heart perpetually on fire for the Lord? How do I feed this fire? How can I help our priests feed their fire?*
- ✠ Vocations – priests must encourage young men to heed God’s call
 - ❖ By word – asking for vocations, encouraging vocations, praying for vocations
 - ❖ Be deed – holy example of life and of serving reverently at the altar, holding vocation retreats or encouraging diocesan vocation retreats
 - ❖ *What am I doing to foster vocations? What does our parish do to encourage vocations?*
- ✠ Sanctification of the priest by God ought to be communicated to us, the parishioners. Holiness is better caught than taught, as the exemplary life of prayer and penance of our priests shows us the Way, the Truth, and the Life – Jesus Himself.
- ✠ Virtues distinguishing the priest, according to Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer in John 17:
 - ❖ Perseverance
 - ❖ Joy
 - ❖ Deliverance from evil
 - ❖ Holiness through sacrifice
 - ❖ Unity of the Church
 - ❖ Constant companions of Jesus
 - ❖ Enjoyment of the glory of the Lord in Heaven
 - ❖ *Perhaps we can pray for these particular virtues when we pray for our priests*

- ✠ “Do this in remembrance of Me,” commands Jesus of His priests – they must sacrifice themselves as He sacrificed Himself. They must be victim-priests. *At Mass, when you hear these words, or during your Holy Hour for your priests, remember that the priest particularly is called to pour himself out for the Church, just as Jesus poured Himself out.*
- ✠ Priests minister to those in the sheepfold **and** those who are not – some wandered away from the shepherd, some do not yet know the shepherd. *Do I pray for the conversion of sinners? Do I pray for Catholics who have left the Church to return?*
- ✠ *In toto Christi* is the priest to work – in the whole Christ. Prayer is our most powerful weapon against evil and our loftiest praise to God. Intercessory prayer from a holy person, and especially a holy priest, is potent; therefore, for a priest to neglect to intercede is a sin of omission. *Pray that our priests remember to intercede on our behalf.*

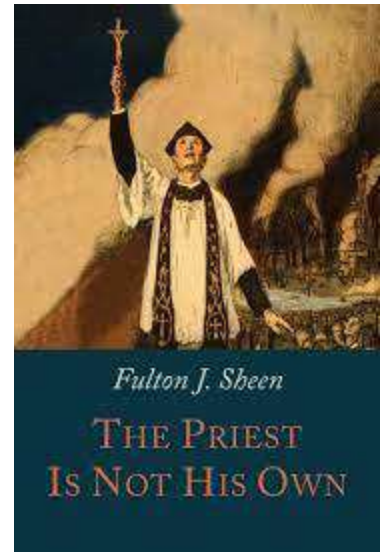
✠ Which of these images speaks to you of the matters considered in these two chapters?



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Session 3: Chapters 5, 6, and 7

Reflect from the text:

- ✠ The Holy Spirit pervades all of Jesus’ mission and all of salvation history, from Genesis to Apocalypse.



- ✠ The Holy Spirit reveals to our priests their mission and supports them in carrying it out. *Do we pray for the Holy Spirit to strengthen and guide our priests?*

- ✠ As the Holy Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness after His baptism to face temptations, so each priest must battle in the power of the Holy Spirit against his temptations and in his trials. *The victorious priest can then help us to battle our temptations and to conquer despair in trials.*

- ✠ Only in the Spirit can Jesus be recognized as the Son of God, Lord of all. *Pray that our priests steep themselves in the Spirit so they can guide their flock to the Lord.*
- ✠ The Holy Spirit enlightens us as to sin: we are keenly aware of having compromised our relationship with God.
 - ❖ Those not enlightened by the Spirit may ask: is a sin mortal or venial? How far before I “get into trouble”?
 - ❖ Those who have fallen away from the Faith content themselves that they are “good people,” without considering the beauty of pursuing virtue and excellence rather than settling for “good.”
 - ❖ *Let us pray that our priests pursue virtue and excellence and inspire their flock to do so as well.*
 - ❖ *Let us pray for priests whose sins scandalize the faithful, that they will repent and believe in the Gospel; convert and become good shepherds.*



- ✠ Satan, the Accuser, and he who was “a liar from the beginning,”
 - ❖ Lies to us when tempting us that a sin is not a sin, or is not serious; and
 - ❖ Lies to us after we fall, that our sin is unforgivable.
 - ❖ *Pray for those put to such tests: that they cling to God’s merciful love and do not yield to despair.*

✠ Roots and branches:

- ❖ The Holy Spirit roots us into ever deeper spiritual depths to nourish us; and
- ❖ From this nourishment, this love of God, we branch out to “love our neighbor”
- ❖ *Do we pray for our priests’ souls to be nourished? How do we help our priests to root themselves more deeply in love of God?*



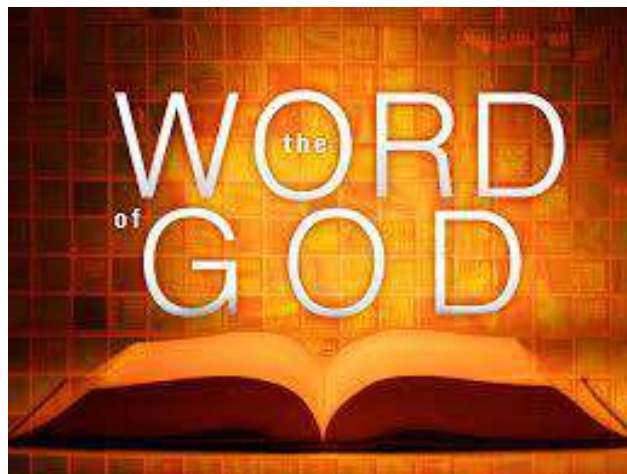
✠ Our priests are laborers in the field of God.

They supply the work; the Spirit supplies the strength. Priests must be *willing* to do the work; the Holy Spirit perfects their efforts and provides for the growth – conversions.

- ❖ *Looking back over my faith life, do I see a series of conversions?*
- ❖ *Has my growth been stagnant? Have I settled for being a “cultural Catholic”?*
- ❖ *How can I open myself to the Holy Spirit and be docile to Him?*

✠ Priests must habitually cleave their hearts to Heaven; from this union, they will find the strength and the compassion to minister to their flock.

✠ Priests who continually delve into the Word of God are able to inspire their congregation with the Spirit who Divinely inspired the Word. As the Spirit breathed forth His Word to the sacred authors, so He breathes upon us as we hear or read His Word. His inspiration is ever new to the open heart. *Are our priests heavily burdened with “much serving”?* If so, how can we help?



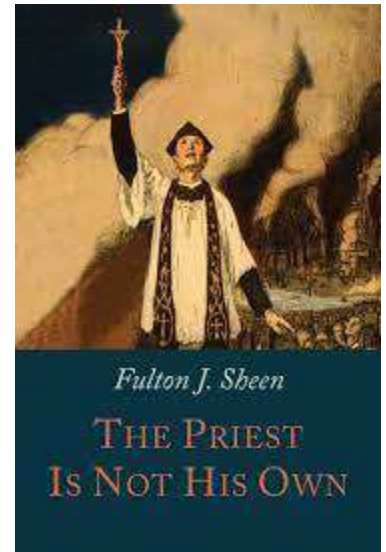
- ✠ Spiritual poverty: humility and gratitude; hunger for God; acknowledging the great gulf between Creator and creature, spanned only by Jesus' Incarnation and Paschal Mystery. Spiritual poverty enables God to “fill us with every good thing.”
- ✠ The priests' vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience aim to detach them from clinging to the goods of this world in order to be richly rewarded in this life and the next. *How blessed are we who are served by good and holy priests!*
- ✠ Priests' poverty consists of
 - ❖ Limitation to what is strictly necessary
 - ❖ Using spiritual means – radical reliance on God
 - ❖ Liberally pouring out his time and talents for the flock without counting the cost to himself
 - ❖ Giving all praise, thanks, and glory to God and keeping none for himself – once he has done his duty, he is an “unprofitable servant” who waits at table after having worked in the fields.
 - ❖ *Our prayers can help our priests when their energy or zeal is flagging. We can marry our spiritual poverty to theirs.*



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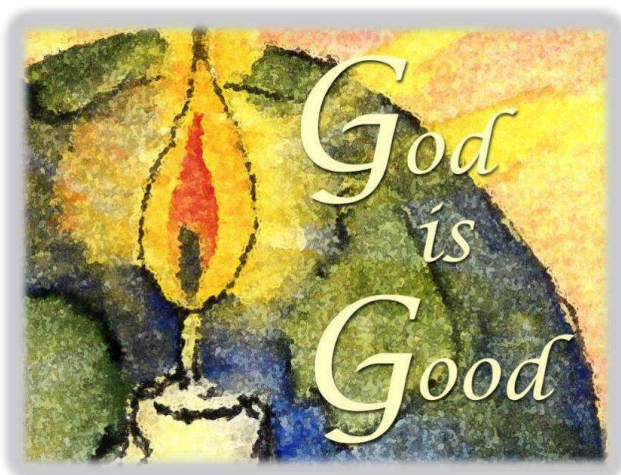
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Session 4: Chapters 8 and 9

Reflect from the text:

- ✠ From the fullness of the heart, the mouth speaks. – Luke 6:45 – the spiritual depth of the priest’s soul flows out in sermons which move people to contrition and conversion.
- ✠ Priests and others who minister at the altar must remain conscious of their privilege to serve the Lord lest the ardor of their love for Him grows cold.
- ✠ *Acedia* is spiritual sloth – the loathing of doing what is good; the desire to avoid the good and an indulgence of the emotions and lower passions
- ✠ *Do you have a better understanding of the multitudinous temptations and dangers to a priest’s soul? When we pray for our priests, let us keep in mind the battles they face.*
- ✠ Consider the many Scriptural recommendations given on pages 128-129. How many did you already know? Which ones were new to you? *Which ones provide fodder for your earnest prayers for our priests?*
- ✠ The urgent call to repentance sounds throughout Divine Revelation. As often as we repent, we turn away from sin and back towards God. *Do you feel repentant often? Let us pray for a healthy spirit of repentance in our priests so that they are continually turned toward God.*

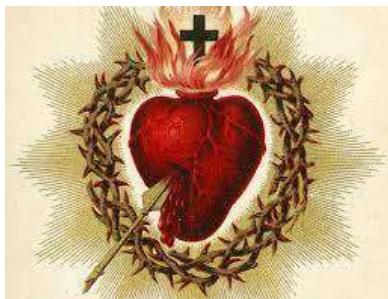


✠ Proper prayer is docility to the Holy Spirit, who “intercedes for us with groans beyond all utterance.” The Spirit prays with and for us, especially when we know not how to pray. *Let us be mindful of the Holy Spirit, then, during our Holy Hour for our priests.*

- ✠ Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, every trial enriches the soul of the priest. The priest must consciously “will what he has not chosen” by accepting the crosses sent to him and not those he chose out for himself. *Contemplate our priests being tried in the fire of the Holy Spirit so that they are refined for service to the Lord.*
- ✠ Are you surprised to read that the Divine Office, the Breviary, is burdensome to priests? Let us give thanks to God, then, for our good and holy priests who undertake this portion of the Cross on our behalf. Their prayers benefit us, *and our prayers benefit them. Thank God for this marvelous economy of salvation!*
- ✠ Supernatural counsel: the Holy Spirit alone convicts us of sin and provides the remedies:
 - ❖ Cooperation with Grace
 - ❖ Faith – “I do believe, Lord; help my unbelief!” – Mark 9:24
 - ❖ Mortification – fasting and penitential practices
 - ❖ Prayer
 - ❖ Renewal in spirit and in mind, in heart and in soul
- ✠ Written in 1963, this book foretells a “phenomenon of...diabolical possession and a renewed interest in Satan. Plays, novels, books, and movies (will) use his name more...as something fascinating...as children will play with fire.” *Do you believe that this prophecy has come to pass in our times? Our holy hours are pitched battles, then, as we seek to armor our priests in prayer for them to battle on our behalf.*



- ✠ Sin resists the Spirit of Love; stifles the Spirit of Love; and distresses the Spirit of Love. We are perfectly contrite when we repent of our sins because we have harmed our relationship with God, whom we love above all. We are imperfectly contrite when we repent of our sins because we fear God’s just punishment. *Let us pray for perfect contrition and perfect repentance.*

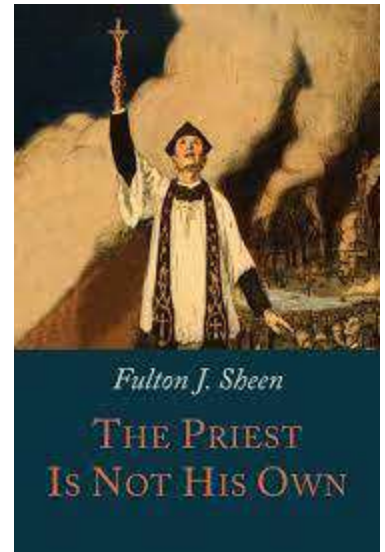


- ✠ The Sacred Heart of Jesus overflows with love and mercy for us. Priests are called upon to love us with His Sacred Heart, to call us to repentance through the Sacred Heart. *Pray that our priests, too, will feel the love and mercy of His Sacred Heart.*

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Session 5: Chapters 10 and 11

Reflect from the text:

- † The Apostle Simon is reflected in the human nature of the priest – weak, prone to failing and temptation
- † Peter, the Rock upon whom Jesus built His Church, is reflected in the supernatural nature of the priest as an *alter Christus*
- † Simon Peter – as he was called by these two names – shows us that the human nature is lifted up by the Simon/priest nature, and that the Simon nature is still subject to the Peter/human nature. Thank God that He provided for priests this way!
 - ❖ Priests *are Christ* to us – they are conduits for graces through the sacraments and blessings. Through their hands and mouths, we hear and are touched by grace, a share in the Divine Life.
 - ❖ Priests remain humble, if they are docile to the Holy Spirit, by battling against their weak tendencies and temptations. They can empathize with our temptations and weaknesses.
- † Contrast 1 Peter 1:1 and 2 Peter 1:1. How has our first pope matured? (p 159)
- † *Are we willing to acknowledge in our priests not only Christ the Priest but also Christ the victim? Our prayers help the Peter nature to enter into the victimhood of Christ.*
- † *Do we see in our spiritual life Simon the Cyrene, struggling under the Cross with Christ? Or do we see Simon the fisherman, halfheartedly obeying Jesus’ command to lower his **nets** – Simon lowered **a net**? Do we trust Jesus wholeheartedly, especially as we pray: “Jesus, I trust in You”?*
- † *How does this quotation enlighten the difference between the repentance of Peter and the guilt of Judas Iscariot: “Supernatural remorse leads to an abiding and salutary change of heart; whereas the world’s remorse leads to death.” -2 Corinthians 7:10*
- † In Gethsemane, Jesus advised the Apostles: “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” – Luke 22:40 In the Our Father, we reaffirm our trust that He will not lead us into temptation – we fall into it ourselves. *Our prayers for our priests ought to include a plea that they will not enter into temptation.*

- ✠ Consider these statements together: “Watchfulness against the forces of evil trains the spirit to resist.” “Danger is as long as life.” (p 170) “Without Me, you can do nothing.” – John 17:19 *How can we best foster good and avoid evil?*
- ✠ Contemplate the gravity of neglecting prayer: “He who omits prayer needs no devil to cast him into Hell; he casts himself into it.” – St. Teresa of Avila
- ✠ Popes Pius XI and Pius XII remark upon the importance of the “sanctification” of the priest’s innermost self – a living bond with the Holy Spirit from which will flow the graces necessary to minister to his flock. *Pray that our priests may be centered in prayer which will anoint all of their actions with grace.*
- ✠ “He who does not advance in perfection will fall into imperfection.” (p 174)

Archbishop Sheen gives us images to illustrate this point: going uphill; rowing against the current; an untended garden; a neglected fence; and he quotes from the Apocalypse, the prophet Isaiah, and the parable of the slothful servant in Matthew. *Which image was most illustrative for you?*



- ✠ Archbishop Sheen gives a sketch of the spiritual biography of a priest whose ardor for God has grown cold:
 - ❖ Neglect of prayer
 - ❖ Withdrawal from the Eucharistic Presence
 - ❖ Seeking creature comforts
 - ❖ Failure to avoid temptations
 - ❖ Substituting a created good for the Ultimate Good, our Creator
 - ❖ *Do you recognize any of these warning signs in your own soul? Now that you know the warning signs, will you be more vigilant?*

† Contemplate the gaze of Jesus:

- ❖ In prayer
- ❖ As you receive the Eucharist
- ❖ In Adoration
- ❖ In our neighbors



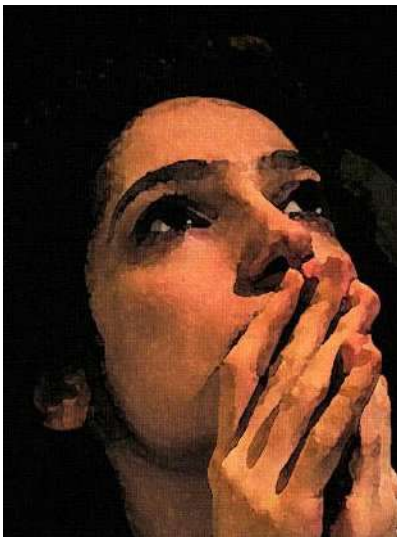
- ❖ *Do you allow Jesus to gaze on you with love? Do you feel His gaze when you're tempted to sin? Pray for the loveliness of His gaze to inflame your love for Him, and that you respond speedily to His reproach as you approach sin.*

† Archbishop Sheen highlights the love which impelled Peter into action:

- ❖ Falling to his knees: “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” – Luke 5:8
- ❖ Bidding the Lord to allow him to walk on the water towards Him
- ❖ Entering the empty tomb
- ❖ Swimming to the shore to the Risen Lord
- ❖ *How does our love of God impel us into action?*

† Jesus asked Peter: “Do you love Me?” – using the word *agape* – “love feast” – a sacrificial love. Peter responded: “Yes, Lord, I love You.” – using the word *phileo* – friendship love. *Pray that our priests can always respond wholeheartedly with agape for the Lord.*

† *Agape* surrenders to the Beloved, even unto death. Our priests suffer white martyrdom in our society; red martyrdom in others. *Please pray for all priests, that their agape for the Lord helps them to shoulder the Cross even unto Calvary.*



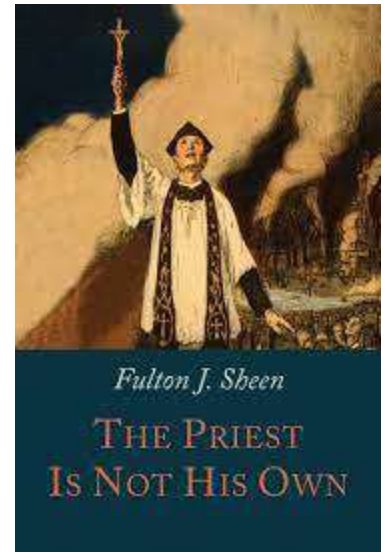
† The three levels of love for God:

- ❖ Unawakened – soporific, in a stupor, because of love of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Obedience but not submission.
- ❖ Penitent – in fear of God’s just punishment. Obedience in fear.
- ❖ Believing – loving God above all else. Obedience as surrender.
- ❖ *Do you recognize these levels of love in your relationship with God? Will knowing about them help spur you on to the greatest level more often?*

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Session 6: Chapters 12 and 13

Reflect from the text:

- ✠ Archbishop Sheen delves into the Letter to the Hebrews when he expounds upon the doctrine that priests are “priests forever, in the line of Melchisedech.”
 - ❖ Melchisedech is a mysterious figure
 - Having no lineage or ancestry
 - Offering bread and wine, not the blood of animals
 - Accepting a tithe from Abraham
 - A kingly priest and a priestly king, foreshadowing King David and Jesus
 - King of Jerusalem – *Jeru* meaning “God exalts” and *salem* meaning “peace.”
 - ❖ This line differs from the Levitical priesthood and the Aaronic High Priesthood. Jesus Himself, our Eternal High Priest, did not descend from Levi but from Judah, David’s lineage.
 - ❖ *Commit to reading the Letter to the Hebrews and reflecting on the eternal priesthood of Jesus as lived out in the priests for whom we pray.*
- ✠ The Apostle John refers to Jesus as the Bread of Life and the Light of the World.
 - ❖ The showbread, or bread of presence, foreshadows the Real Presence



❖ The lampstands in the sanctuaries of the Tent of Meeting and in the Temple and in the synagogues foreshadow the Light of the World. The Festival of Lights (Hanukkah) foreshadows the Light of the World.

✠ Consider the awe and reverence with which we ought to approach to worship God. *Is His fire burning within us? Do we light the*

Way for others? Let us continue to pray that our priests will remain good and holy, ever growing in their devotion to God.





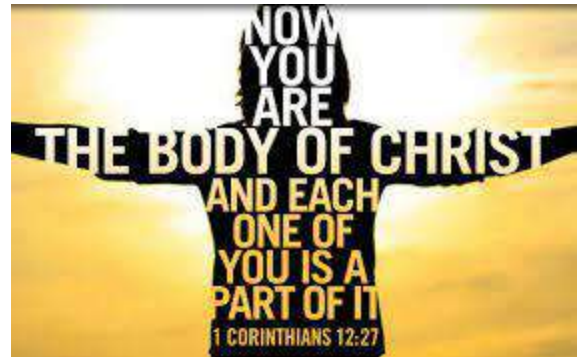
- ✦ The Ark of the Covenant contained:
 - ❖ Manna, bread from Heaven
 - ❖ The (broken) two tablets of the Ten Commandments – the Word of God
 - ❖ Aaron’s budded rod which signified that he was the authentic High Priest
- ✦ The Ark of the Covenant protected and rewarded those who held it in reverence
- ✦ The Ark of the Covenant brought plague upon those who treated it like a trophy

✦ Apply this to the Holy Eucharist:

- ❖ Jesus is the Bread from Heaven
- ❖ Jesus is the Word of God
- ❖ Jesus is our eternal High Priest
- ❖ The Eucharist transforms us, protecting us from evil and giving us graces *if we receive the Eucharist worthily*
- ❖ The Eucharist brings condemnation upon those who approach unworthily (1 Corinthians 11:29)

✦ *Our priests are honored with the privilege of holding bread at the moment it becomes the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of our risen and glorified Lord Jesus Christ. Please pray for them, that familiarity will not dull their sense of devotion.*

✦ *Do we respond readily to Jesus’ invitation to “Come and see”? Do we invite others to “come and see” Jesus in the Real Presence? Do others see Jesus in us?*



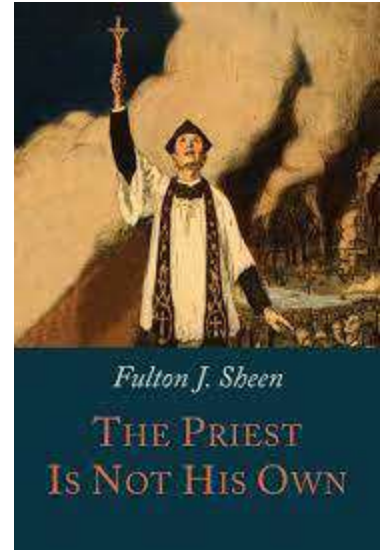
- ✠ *How do you understand the phrase that “Judas knew the price of everything and the value of nothing”?*
 - ❖ Do you think that Judas was self-aware enough to apply Jesus’s parables on the dangers of attachment to material wealth to himself? *Have you reflected on His parables and applied them to yourself?*
 - ❖ Love of money is a dangerous attachment, pulling us away from love of God and neighbor.
 - ❖ Love of comfort is also a dangerous attachment which detaches us from the love of God and neighbor.
 - ❖ *Reflect in your heart on other loves which detach you from loving God above all else, and pray for our priests, that their love for God never slackens.*
- ✠ Do you agree with Archbishop Sheen that Judas’ first detachment was a lack of faith?
 - ❖ This was prefigured in the Fall, the Original Sin: Adam and Eve distrusted God. They thought He was holding out on them. Their faith was shaken and they grasped at the forbidden fruit.
 - ❖ *When our faith is shaken in challenging times, do we grasp at what is forbidden? Do we seek to know through occult means that which God has hidden from us?*
- ✠ Simeon prophesied that Jesus would be the “rise and the fall of many.” (Luke 2:34) Archbishop Sheen comments that Jesus united not only His friends, but His enemies as well.
- ✠ Consider Jesus’ actions at the Last Supper as recorded by St. John:
 - ❖ Rising – from His Heavenly throne – and rising from the Passover meal
 - ❖ Laying aside His Divine Glory – laying aside His garments
 - ❖ Wrapped His Divinity in His humanity – wrapped a towel about His waist
 - ❖ Pouring His Blood and Water from His side – pouring water on the feet
 - ❖ Wiping out sin and death – wiping the feet of His apostles
- ✠ *Did it strike you that the Eleven addressed Jesus as “Lord” while Judas addressed Him as “Master”?* He did not instill in us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love, according to 2 Timothy 1:7. *Do we approach Him with awe and reverence grounded in love? Or do we approach in slavish fear?*
- ✠ “In the Presence of Divinity, who can be sure of his innocence?” (p 222) *This is the humble attitude of a devoted child of God; we ought to cultivate this attitude in ourselves and pray that our priests bear it in mind.*



The Priest Is Not His Own

By Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

“He gave Himself up on our behalf,
a sacrifice breathing out fragrance as He offered it to
God.” – Ephesians 5:2



Session 7: Chapters 14 and 15

Reflect from the text:

- † Archbishop Sheen denotes the reasons for a Holy Hour of Adoration. *Which ones apply to you?*
- ❖ A lively love of the Lord and delight in His Presence, to dwell with Him
 - ❖ A desire to know Him better so that our eyes are not prevented from recognizing Him
 - ❖ Obedience to His request: “Could you not watch one hour with Me?” MT 26:40
 - ❖ Because Jesus’ Real Presence in the Eucharist is the “source and summit” of all of the spiritual goods in the Church
 - ❖ Because the balance of “ora” (prayer) and “labora” (work) needs both prayerful contemplation and works of mercy for love to flower. We fill our own cup with the Presence of God before we can fill the cups of others.
 - ❖ We are truly “at home” in the Presence of the Lord.
 - ❖ Docility to the Holy Spirit during Adoration will reveal hidden depths of Scripture, Tradition, and our own souls to us.
 - ❖ We can “walk the walk” – actively practice our faith – and we can “talk the talk” – tell others about our faith. They may see our faith more clearly when we spend that Hour with Jesus.
 - ❖ To make reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus for our own sins and for those of others. We intercede for our priests and for others. God distributes the graces from our Holy Hour to those in need.
 - ❖ To revitalize our flagging hearts when the Cross is heavy.
 - ❖ To be touched by the Divine Physician, who shows our wounds to us as He binds them up for us.
 - ❖ To receive the graces we need to grow in holiness.
 - ❖ To love Him freely. He is the Lord of time; He gives us time. *Ought we not give some of that time back to Him?*
 - ❖ To embrace the Cross with equanimity: “Be still and know that I am God.” (Psalm 46:10)
 - ❖ To embrace His humility, His poverty, His “littleness” in the eyes of the world

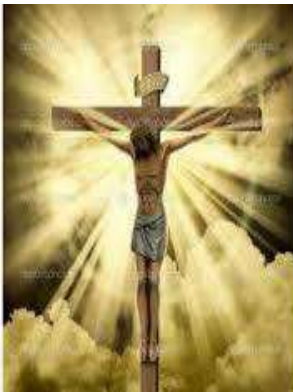


✠ Archbishop Sheen describes *how* to make a Holy Hour.
Which of his suggestions do you already practice? Which ones will you adopt?

- ❖ Before Mass
- ❖ Begin with liturgical prayer from the Divine Office or spiritual reading
- ❖ Pray from the heart
- ❖ Leave time for quiet meditation – let God speak to you
- ❖ Seek intimacy with the Lord – don't mechanically follow a rigid practice
- ❖ Enjoy your time with God
- ❖ Continue your meditation even in times of dryness of prayer;

the effort itself will result in spiritual benefits not necessarily felt at the time

- ❖ “Adopt the bodily posture best calculated to move the soul.” – St. Augustine
- ❖ “Take the position which seemed best for exciting the soul's internal devotion.” – St. Jerome
- ❖ Archbishop Sheen believes that kneeling is the proper posture for Adoration:
 - ❖ Jesus knelt in the Garden of Gethsemane
 - ❖ It is a posture of humility
 - ❖ It atones for our failings
 - ❖ It is proper recognition of the King of Kings



- ❖ Weekly is not often enough to become a habit of holiness; daily is best suited for growth in the spiritual life
- ❖ The manna fell daily to encourage reliance upon God
- ❖ “Give us this day our daily bread.”
- ❖ “Take up your cross *daily*.”
- ❖ “My Hour has come.”

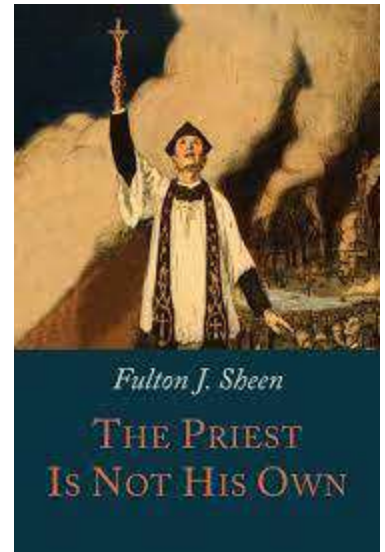
- ❖ Your Holy Hour can be an opportunity to offer reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, especially if you are suffering physically, mentally, or spiritually during your Holy Hour
- ❖ Your Holy Hour is naturally dedicated first of all for the good of the priests for whom we pray



The Priest Is Not His Own

By Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

“He gave Himself up on our behalf,
a sacrifice breathing out fragrance as He offered it to
God.” – Ephesians 5:2



Session 8: Chapters 16 and 17

Reflect from the text:

- † Archbishop Sheen reiterates the teaching of the Church on man being a unity of body and soul:
 - ❖ What takes place in the body affects the soul
 - ❖ What takes place in the soul affects the body
 - ❖ Both body and soul will be raised up on the Last Day
 - Those in Heaven will experience the joys of Heaven in body and soul
 - Those in Hell will suffer in both body and soul
 - ❖ “Soul of Christ, sanctify us; Body of Christ, heal us.” (From the prayer the *Anima Christi*)
- † *Do we honor God with our bodies when we pray? When we worship? At all times?*
- † *Do we honor God with our souls when we pray? When we love? At all times?*
- † *How are **purity** and **piety** related?*
- † “Offer up your bodies as a living sacrifice.” – Romans 12:1 – *How do you interpret this? How do you live it out?*
- † “Herald His death by dying with Him.” *How do we die with Jesus yet remain a living sacrifice?*
- † “We carry about in the body the death of the Lord Jesus.” – 2 Corinthians 4:10
- † The above citation is especially true when applied to the priests for whom we pray and echoes the title of the book: *A Priest is Not His Own*. Whose is he, then?
- † Love is a positive choice for one and none other **and** a negation of competing loves. For the priest, he chooses God and none other, yet finds spiritual fecundity through the exercise of his priesthood. *Let our prayers for our priests be for their fidelity to their ordination and their vocation.*
- † “As **Mary** mothers all people at the Foot of the Cross, so priests father all” who come to him. *Our prayers for our priests can be an ardent appeal to the Blessed Mother.*
- † “Let there be no complaint against God for sending a cross; let there only be wisdom enough to see that **Mary** is there making it lighter, making it sweeter, making it hers.”

