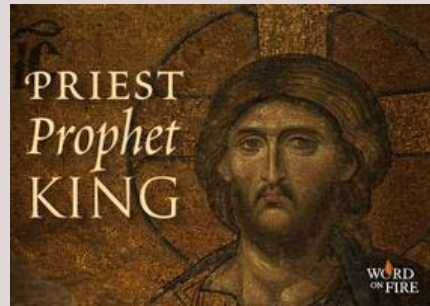


CHRIST, THE PRIEST, PROPHET, AND KING

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The three main functions of Christ have given birth to the four dimensions of the pastoral praxis. In order to prove this statement I will first consider the three main functions of Christ, Priest, Prophet, and King using the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II to the Laity, *Christifideles Laici*. Through the sacrament of Baptism we the faithful are made sharers in the Christ three-fold mission. First the priestly character of Christ's mission does not ordain the faithful, but as members of the Body of Christ one is able to offer and unite sacrifices with His ultimate sacrifice on the cross. This action makes the faithful sharers in the priestly office of Christ's mission. *"Incorporated in Jesus Christ, the baptized are united to him and to his sacrifice in the offering they make of themselves and their daily activities."*¹ This obviously encourages the full participation in the Liturgy of the Eucharist; this priestly aspect of the life of Christ draws us into the liturgy more fully. *"The liturgical celebration, in fact, is a sacred action not simply of the clergy, but of the entire assembly...In this way there is a natural transition from an effective involvement of the lay faithful in the liturgical action to that of announcing the word of God and pastoral care."*²



The second main function of Christ is his prophetic nature. As disciples of Christ we need to study, follow and share his word, beginning with the witness of our lives. *Through their participation in the prophetic mission of Christ...the lay faithful are given the ability and responsibility to accept the gospel in faith and to proclaim it in word and deed, without hesitating to courageously identify and denounce evil...They are also called to allow the newness and the power of the gospel to shine out every day 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."*³ Just as the Priestly function of Christ gives birth to the Liturgy the prophetic function of Christ in our lives gives birth to the dimensions of Martyria and Koinonia. Martyr means witness. The witness of the Gospel in our everyday lives through the prophetic function of Christ, even in the midst of contradictions calls for our martyrdom. Whether it is a red or white martyrdom disciples of Christ must die to themselves and their preferences in order to give His prophetic message. The prophetic function of Christ also encourages Koinonia. God's word is universally and therefore unifies those who follow it, as a community of believers giving life to the pastoral praxis of Koinonia; bringing about unity with God through Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

Lastly, Christ is the King of heaven and earth and should be the King of each heart. The faithful not only look forward to belonging to His heavenly kingdom one day but should usher in the Kingdom of God by their very lives. *"They exercise their kingship as Christians, above all in the spiritual combat in which they seek to overcome in themselves the kingdom of sin, and then to make a gift of themselves so as to serve, in justice and in charity, Jesus who is himself present in all his brothers and sisters, above all in the very least."*⁴ The faithful making of themselves a gift is in short the fourth dimension of pastoral praxis, diakonia. The faithful sharing in Christ's Kingly mission and function, the building up of the kingdom of God is practically speaking the service and or ministry to and in the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, none other than Diakonia.

¹ Pope John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, On the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and the World, Apostolic Exhortation, 1988, 14

² CL, 23

³ CL, 14

⁴ CL, 14

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