

## THE CLERGY AND LENT

### 1 Peter 5 1b-2

I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it.

Ministry belongs to everyone and the priest has a particular role within the body. Lay ministry should not be undervalued!

The church is a community, not an organisation, strengthened by the death and resurrection of Christ constantly being transformed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The task of leadership (priest) in the church is to serve the whole Church and build it up so that each person may discover the part they are called to play in witnessing to Christ and building the kingdom and to be ready for the inevitable sacrifices that go with a life following Christ. Leadership in the church is not an easy thing. (Stephen Cottrell)

It will be around God's table at the Eucharist that anyone who is called to the priesthood will find themselves most keenly aware of the immensity of this calling and of God's great confidence in them, but that it is not really their ministry at all. It is God the Holy Spirit at work in his Church. A priest represents Christ to the people and the one who brings the people to Christ. This is the priestly vocation!

Use of the word priest is partly tradition.

### NEW TESTAMENT

The word priest and priesthood are only used to describe Jesus our High Priest (Hebrews 7. 26 and 8.1)

In fact, **we are all consecrated priests through Baptism**, as St. Peter in 1 Peter 2[:9] says, "You are a royal priesthood and a priestly kingdom," and Revelation [5:10], "Through your blood you have made us into priests and kings."

The church practices the **Historic threefold pattern of ministry: bishops, priests and deacons.**

**Different from the leadership of the world because it is rooted in Christ.**

**At ordination you are charged with swearing an oath to follow the 39 Articles of the C of E**

**Articles 1–5: The Doctrine of God:** The first five articles articulate the doctrine of God, the **Holy Trinity** and the **incarnation** of Jesus Christ.

**Articles 6–8: Scripture and the Creeds:** These articles state that Holy Scripture contains everything necessary for **salvation**, so that no one can be required to believe any doctrine that cannot be proved on the basis of biblical teaching. The

articles acknowledge the authority of the [Apostles' Creed](#), the [Nicene Creed](#) and the [Athanasian Creed](#) because they express Scriptural teaching. It states that the [Apocrypha](#) is not part of Scripture. While not a basis of doctrine, the Apocrypha continues to be read by the church for moral instruction and examples for holy living.<sup>[59]</sup>

**Articles 9–18: Sin and Salvation:** These articles discuss the doctrines of [original sin](#) and [justification by faith](#) (salvation is a gift received through [faith](#) in Christ). They reject the medieval Catholic teachings on performing [good works](#) can make a person worthy to receive justification.

**Articles 19–21: The Church and its Authority:** These articles explain the nature and authority of the [visible church](#). They state that the church, under Scripture, has authority over matters of faith and order. General councils of the church can only be called with the permission of the civil authority. It is possible for church councils to reach the wrong decisions, so they should only be followed if their actions align with Scripture.<sup>[62]</sup>

**Articles 22–24: Errors to be avoided in the Church:** These articles condemn the Roman Catholic teachings on [purgatory](#), [indulgences](#), the use of religious images and the [invocation of saints](#). In addition, the Roman Catholic practice of using Latin as a [liturgical language](#) is disapproved of in favour of the vernacular. The articles state that no person should preach publicly or administer the sacraments unless they are called and authorised by legitimate church authority.<sup>[63]</sup> This was meant to counter the radical Protestant belief that a Christian could preach and act as a minister on his own initiative in defiance of church authorities.<sup>[64]</sup>

**Articles 25–31: The Sacraments:** These articles explain the Church of England's [sacramental theology](#). According to the articles, [sacraments](#) are signs of divine grace which God works invisibly but effectively in people's lives. Through sacraments, God creates and strengthens the faith of believers. The radical Protestant belief that sacraments are only outward signs of a person's faith is denied by the articles.<sup>[65]</sup> While the Roman Catholic Church claimed [seven sacraments](#), the articles recognise only two: [baptism](#) and the [Lord's Supper](#).<sup>[66]</sup>

The articles state that [infant baptism](#) is "most agreeable with the institution of Christ" and should continue to be practiced in the church.<sup>[68]</sup> In the Lord's Supper, participants become partakers of the body and blood of Christ and receive the spiritual benefits of Christ's death on the cross.<sup>[69]</sup> According to the articles, this partaking should not be understood in terms of the Roman Catholic doctrine of [transubstantiation](#), which is condemned as "repugnant to the plain words of Scripture". Instead, the articles declare that there is no change in the substance of the bread and wine. Rather, participants are fed the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit and through faith.<sup>[70]</sup> The articles declare that "The offering of Christ once made is the perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world". This was meant as a repudiation of the idea that the Mass was a sacrifice in which Christ was offered for the forgiveness of sins for the living and the dead in purgatory.<sup>[71]</sup>

**Articles 32–36: The Discipline of the Church:** The articles defend the practice of [clerical marriage](#) and the church's power of [excommunication](#). It states that

traditions and ceremonies in the church may vary by time and place; national churches can alter or abolish traditions created by human authority.

**Articles 37–39: Christians and Civil Society:** The articles affirm the role of the monarch as the **Supreme Governor of the Church of England**. It rejects all claims to the Pope's jurisdiction in England. It defends the state's right to use **capital punishment** and declares that Christians may serve in the military. It rejects the Anabaptist teaching that the property of Christians should be held in common, but it does explain that Christians should give **alms** to the poor and needy. It also defends the morality of oath-taking for civic purposes.<sup>1</sup>

## **OLD TESTAMENT PRIESTS EXODUS CHAPTER 29:1-21**

**Aaron**, the traditional founder and head of the Israelite priesthood, who, with his brother **Moses**, led the Israelites out of **Egypt**. The figure of Aaron as it is now found in the **Pentateuch**, the first five books of the **Bible**, is built up from several sources of traditions.

### **Adoration of the Golden Calf**

Aaron is described in the **Book of Exodus** of the **Hebrew Scriptures** (**Old Testament**) as of the tribe of Levi, three years older than his brother Moses. He acted together with his brother in the desperate situation of the Israelites in Egypt and took an active part in the **Exodus**, their liberation from bondage there. Although Moses was the actual leader, Aaron acted as his “mouth.” The two brothers went to the **pharaoh** together, and it was Aaron who told him to let the people of **Israel** go, using his magic rod in order to show the might of (God). But Moses alone went up on **Mount Sinai**, and he alone was allowed to come near to God. Moses later was ordered to “bring near” Aaron and his sons, and they were anointed and **consecrated** to be priests “by a perpetual statute.” Aaron’s sons were to take over the priestly garments after him. Aaron is not represented as wholly blameless. It was he who, when Moses was delayed on Mount Sinai, made the **golden calf** that was idolatrously worshiped by the people.

Aaron is a central figure in the traditions about the Exodus, though his role varies in importance. At the beginning he seems to be coequal with Moses, but after the march out of Egypt he is only a shadow at Moses’ side. Moses is obviously the leading figure in the tradition, but it is also clear that he is pictured as **delegating** his authority in all priestly and cultic matters to Aaron and “his sons.”

### **The Priestly Garments**

**28** “Have Aaron your brother brought to you from among the Israelites, along with his sons Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, so they may serve me as priests. <sup>2</sup> Make sacred garments for your brother Aaron to give him dignity and honour.

## **ELI 1 SAMUEL 1 & 2**

Samuel, the son of Elkanah (of Ephraim) and Hannah, was born in answer to the prayer of his previously childless mother. In gratitude she dedicated him to the service of the chief sanctuary of Shiloh, in the charge of the priest **Eli**.

The priesthood of ancient Israel was the class of male individuals, who, according to the Hebrew Bible, were patrilineal descendants from Aaron (the elder brother of Moses), who served in the Tabernacle, Solomon's Temple and Second Temple until the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE.

## **THE PRIESTHOOD TODAY**

### **The Ministry of the Priest includes:**

- Preaching the word of God.
- Baptizing.
- Offering the Sacrament of Confession for the forgiveness of sins.
- Offering Mass daily.
- Praying.
- Providing pastoral guidance and spiritual direction.
- Marriage preparation for couples and celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage.

### **Healthy priestly leadership**

The Godly use of power is accountable, plural, transparent, embodies nurturing; being with; acting as an accurate mirror.

A healthy culture values policies and processes; models repentance and forgiveness; prioritises accountability and transparency; welcomes feedback; recognises contributions; learns from mistakes. An unhealthy culture is at the other end of the spectrum from these points.

## **THE PRIEST AND LENT**

We are all distracted by 'life,' temptations, choices. Lent stops us in our tracks and providing the opportunity to rethink, draw closer to our ministry and prepare ourselves to the passion of Christ.