



# PRIESTHOOD

*“No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends... It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain... This I command you: love one another.” – JOHN 15:13, 16, 17*

## READING

### JESUS CHRIST, THE TRUE PRIEST

Jesus is at the center of the priesthood. In a way, there is only one priest—Jesus Christ, the Son of God. All other Catholic priests share in Jesus’ priesthood. It is not their own.

Imagine that a girl is turning nine years old. She is having a big birthday party. All her friends come to the party and bring presents. When it’s time to open the presents, the girl’s mom says to her little brother, “Peter, will you hand the presents to your sister?” Little five-year old Peter excitedly drops the presents on his sister’s lap, one by one, so she can unwrap them.

Are the gifts from the little brother? No, but he is the one who hands them out. That is a good way to think about priests. The gifts priests bring are really from Jesus.

When you turn on the faucet, water comes out. Does the faucet make the water? No. It delivers it to you! Priests are like the faucet. They help bring the water, but they are not the source of it.



This is why we have priests—so that they can bring us Jesus. Imagine if you lived a long time ago and could see and touch Jesus. Can you imagine him talking? Think about seeing his miracles, laughing with him, and asking him questions. Think about being healed by him! Well, that’s why God gave us the priesthood. Because of God’s gift, a real person, right before our eyes, can be Jesus for us.

When you go to confession, the priest says, “I absolve you of your sins.” He is like the little boy who gets to hand out the gifts. The gift of forgiveness is from Jesus, but it comes through the hands and voice of the priest. There is a special Latin phrase for acting in the person of Christ: *in persona Christi*. A priest acts *in persona Christi* as he delivers the love of Jesus Christ to us.



*A priest absolving a young woman in confession.*

*Photo by Stephen Golder  
Photography, Inc*

### DISCUSS:

- In your own words, how is a priest like a child who hands out the presents at a party?
- How does Jesus connect us to the Trinity?
- What do you think it would be like to heal a person?
- Which one of the sacraments would be most exciting to bring to people?



## EXPLORATION

### LAY DOWN ONE'S LIFE

Jesus talks about “laying down one’s life” for others. Think of a person you know (or know about) who is very generous, who always helps others, and who is hardly ever selfish. Write a paragraph describing this person.



## VISUAL ART



“Crucifixion,” by Nardo di Cione

### PRAY TOGETHER

#### *Vocation Prayer*

I glorify You, God,  
In all that I do.  
Mind, body and spirit,  
My best is for You.

For us to be close, Lord,  
Is what you desire.  
I trust that your good love  
For me will not tire.

I say, “yes” like Mary,  
And give you my heart.  
To follow you Jesus,  
I will do my part.

Help me follow your will  
No matter the call.  
Whatever vocation,  
I promise my all.

AMEN.