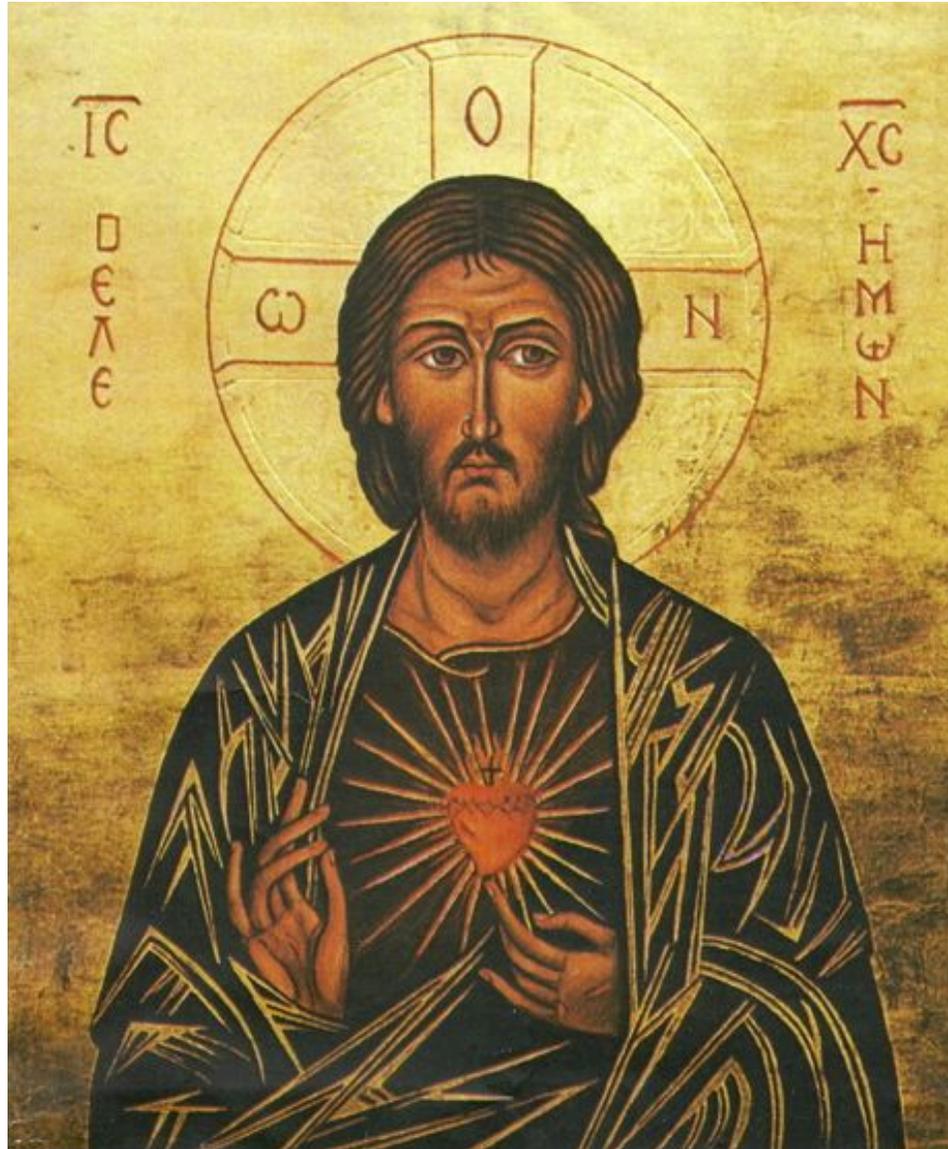


06. priest, prophet and king



## The reign of God's love



‘Committed to building a new world, we do so not from a sense of obligation, not as a burdensome duty, but as the result of a personal decision which brings us joy and gives meaning to our lives.’

(Pope Francis: *The Joy of the Gospel*, 269).



There is only one **king** in the Christian Religion: Christ. It is he who brings about the reign of God's love in the world. Now he, the vine, acts through us his branches.

In baptism we were anointed **king**.

## Pope Francis: The Joy of the Gospel

‘The Gospel speaks of a seed which, once sown, grows by itself, even as the farmer sleeps (*Mark* 4:26-29). The Church has to accept this unruly freedom of the word, which accomplishes what it wills in ways that surpass our calculations and ways of thinking’(n.22).

‘An evangelizing community is always concerned with fruit, because the Lord wants her to be fruitful. It cares for the grain and does not grow impatient at the weeds’(n. 24).

‘The parish is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach’(n.28).

## Pope Francis: The Joy of the Gospel

‘True faith in the incarnate Son of God is inseparable from self-giving, from membership in the community, from service, from reconciliation with others. The Son of God, by becoming flesh, summoned us to the revolution of tenderness’(n. 88).

‘Today, our challenge is not so much atheism as the need to respond adequately to many people’s thirst for God, lest they try to satisfy it with alienating solutions or with a disembodied Jesus who demands nothing of us with regard to others. Unless these people find in the Church a spirituality which can offer healing and liberation, and fill them with life and peace, while at the same time summoning them to fraternal communion and missionary fruitfulness, they will end up by being taken in by solutions which neither make life truly human nor give glory to God’(n. 89).

## Pope Francis: The Joy of the Gospel

‘An authentic faith – which is never comfortable or completely personal – always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it. We love this magnificent planet on which God has put us, and we love the human family which dwells here, with all its tragedies and struggles, its hopes and aspirations, its strengths and weaknesses. The earth is our common home and all of us are brothers and sisters.

If indeed “the just ordering of society and of the state is a central responsibility of politics”, the Church “cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice” (Benedict XVI). (n. 183).

In Chapter 4 on ‘The Social Dimension of Evangelization,’ Pope Francis selects two critical issues:

I. The Inclusion of the poor in society (nn. 186-237)

II. ‘Peace and Social dialogue’ (nn. 238-258)

I. The Inclusion of the poor in society

‘Life for all must have priority  
over the appropriation of goods by a few’(n. 188).

Prayer for politicians (n. 205).

## Pope Francis: The Joy of the Gospel

‘Today and always, “the poor are the privileged recipients of the Gospel” (Benedict XVI) (n. 48).

‘God shows the poor his first mercy’ (n. 198)

“The Church has made an option for the poor which is understood as a ‘special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness ... This is why I want a Church which is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us ... We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them.’” (n. 198)

## Abbé Pierre

‘Let us never lose our living conviction  
that it is not necessary to wait  
until we are splendid people  
before we can do splendid things.

That would probably mean waiting a long time,  
too long in fact!

We need only to understand one splendid thing  
and then try to base our whole life upon it:  
and that thing is that  
the person we must help in all things  
is the person who is suffering the most.’

Albert Nolan OP

‘The option for the poor is an uncompromising and unequivocal taking of sides in a situation of structural conflict. It is not a matter of preaching to some people rather than to others, or a matter of being generous to the ‘under-privileged’, or a judgment about the personal guilt of the rich, or even, in the first instance, a matter of life-style. It is the assertion that Christian faith entails, for everyone and as part of its essence, the taking of sides in the structural conflict between the oppressor and the oppressed.’

‘A thoroughgoing option for the poor includes the willingness to question one’s assumptions and to learn from those who are oppressed. It is only after one has learned to have confidence in the ability of the oppressed to promote their own cause and to bring about their own liberation that one can begin to share that struggle with them and to make a contribution in real solidarity with all those who have taken an option against oppression.’

‘One of the characteristic themes and guidelines dealt with by the Magisterium in recent years is the option or love of preference for the poor. This is an option, or a special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness ... It cannot but embrace the immense multitudes of the hungry, the needy, the homeless, those without medical care, and, above all, those without hope of a better future. It is impossible not to take account of the existence of these realities. To ignore them would mean becoming like the rich man who pretended not to know the beggar Lazarus lying at his gate’ (Luke 16:19-31).

(JPII *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 1987 n. 42).

‘The preferential option for the poor is not limited to material poverty, since it is well known that there are many other forms of poverty, especially in modern society – not only economic but cultural and spiritual poverty as well’(JPII Centesimus Annus 1991 n. 57).

## Jean Vanier

‘Indeed, far from being desirable, success, power and wealth prevent us from being truly ourselves. It is only when we recognise our weakness, our poverty, when we seek help, that we become human. We are not called to be perfect; we are called to be humble. And this is the gift we receive when we live with and work beside people who are fragile ... The poorest lead us into another world ...

‘There are a lot of people clapping Francis. But are they doing what he suggests? Are they going to the peripheries and befriending the poorest, and receiving the wisdom that the poor can give? The church will not change because of Francis. It will change because of all of us. Because of me.’ (See *The Tablet* 26 April 2014, pp. 10-11)

‘I have come to cast fire upon the earth  
and how I wish it were blazing already’ (Luke 12:49)

Teilhard de Chardin 1934

‘Some day,  
after harnessing space,  
the winds,  
the tides  
and gravitation,

We shall harness for God  
the energies of Love.

And then,  
for the second time in the history of the world,  
we shall have discovered fire.’

## Pope Francis: The Joy of the Gospel

‘When properly understood, cultural diversity is not a threat to Church unity. The Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son, transforms our hearts and enables us to enter into the perfect communion of the blessed Trinity, where all things find their unity. He builds up the communion and harmony of the people of God. The same Spirit is that harmony, just as he is the bond of love between the Father and the Son. It is he who brings forth a rich variety of gifts, while at the same time creating a unity which is never uniformity but a multifaceted and inviting harmony. Evangelization joyfully acknowledges these varied treasures which the Holy Spirit pours out upon the Church. We would not do justice to the logic of the incarnation if we thought of Christianity as monocultural and monotonous’ (n. 117).

## Pope Francis: The Joy of the Gospel

‘Popular piety enables us to see how the faith, once received, becomes embodied in a culture and is constantly passed on. Once looked down upon, popular piety came to be appreciated once more in the decades following the Council. In the Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Pope Paul VI gave a decisive impulse in this area. There he stated that popular piety “manifests a thirst for God which only the poor and the simple can know” and that “it makes people capable of generosity and sacrifice even to the point of heroism, when it is a question of bearing witness to belief” (n. 123).



There is only one **prophet** in the Christian Religion: Christ. It is he who mediates God's word to the world. Now he, the vine, acts through us his branches.

In baptism we were anointed **prophet**.

Each baptised person has a unique share in the prophetic mission of the Risen Christ in the world.

Mediating God's word  
to the world

Dominic spoke of our  
vocation:

*'contemplata tradere'*

“communicating to  
others what one has  
contemplated”(Thomas  
Aquinas, quoted n. 150).



Ignatius of Loyola used a similar expression:

**‘in actione contemplativus’**  
(contemplative in action).

In prayer we are drawn deeper into communion with God. It is from this communion that we are sent into mission.



**‘Jesus called them to be with him  
and to go out to proclaim the message’(Mark 3:14).**

‘Today’s vast and rapid cultural changes demand that we constantly seek ways of expressing unchanging truths in a language which brings out their abiding newness “The deposit of the faith is one thing... the way it is expressed is another” (John XXIII 1962) (n.41)

‘Let us never forget that “the expression of truth can take different forms. The renewal of these forms of expression becomes necessary for the sake of transmitting to the people of today the Gospel message in its unchanging meaning” (JPII Ut Unum Sint 19) (n.41).

Opening address at Second Vatican Council - Pope John XXIII  
October 11th 1962

‘Our task is not merely to hoard this precious treasure, as though obsessed with the past, but to **give ourselves eagerly and without fear to THE TASK THAT THE PRESENT AGE DEMANDS OF US** – and in so doing we will be faithful to what the Church has done in the last twenty centuries. So the main point of this Council will not be to debate this or that article of basic Church doctrine that has been repeatedly taught by the Fathers and theologians old and new and which we can take as read. You do not need a Council to do that. But starting from a renewed, serene and calm acceptance of the whole teaching of the Church in all its scope and detail as it is found in Trent and Vatican I, Christians and Catholics of apostolic spirit all the world over **expect a leap forward in doctrinal penetration and THE FORMATION OF CONSCIENCES** in ever greater fidelity to **authentic teaching.** (continued next page)

Opening address at Second Vatican Council  
- Pope John XXIII October 11th 1962

But this authentic teaching has to be studied and expounded in the light of the research methods and the literary formulations of modern thought. For the substance of the ancient deposit of faith is one thing, and **the way in which it is presented** is another. And it is to this latter that careful and where necessary patient consideration must be given, everything being measured according to the requirements of a

**TEACHING AUTHORITY**

**THAT IS PREDOMINANTLY PASTORAL IN CHARACTER’.**

‘The word of God is living, active,  
sharper than any two-edged sword,  
piercing until it divides  
soul from spirit,  
joints from marrow;  
it is able to judge the thoughts  
and intentions of the heart.

There is no creature that is hidden from God; all is laid  
bare before God.

The word faces us towards God.’



There is only one **priest** in the Christian Religion: Christ. It is he who draws people into the sanctuary of God's presence. Now he, the vine, acts through us his branches.

In baptism we were anointed **priest**.

## Jesus, our One and Only Priest

In the Christian Church there is only one priest, Jesus, 'the one mediator between God and humankind'(1 Timothy 2:5).

The church is a priestly community.

We are 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people'(1 Peter 2:9).

'Jesus made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father'(Revelation 1:6).



Tintoretto

## Pope Francis: The Joy of the Gospel

‘An evangelizing community is filled with joy; it knows how to rejoice always. It celebrates every small victory, every step forward in the work of evangelization. Evangelization with joy becomes beauty in the liturgy, as part of our daily concern to spread goodness. The Church evangelizes and is herself evangelized through the beauty of the liturgy, which is both a celebration of the task of evangelization and the source of her renewed self-giving’(n. 24).

‘The Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak’(St Ambrose) (n.47).

‘I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and which then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures. If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life. More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: “Give them something to eat” (Mark 6:37).(n. 49).



See, I make all things new