

I

Sister: The office of Bishop is to be appointed and entrusted with a position of authority and oversight. A Bishop holds the fullness of ministerial priesthood, given the responsibility by Christ to govern, teach and sanctify the Body of Christ. What then is the role and functions of the Bishop to Priest, and vice versa?

Archbishop: When a priest celebrates the Mass, they do so in the name of the bishop in whose province they reside. This is never more prevalent than when the priest recites the words from the Canon of the Mass: “for (Name) our (arch)bishop etc...” whether the bishop is the priest’s ordinary or not. Likewise a bishop within a jurisdiction will say “for (Name) the (arch)bishop of this (arch)diocese and me your unworthy servant...”

A bishop’s responsibility to their priest(s) is one of mutual respect and to ensure they have the proper training, not only in philosophy and theology but also stability with physical, mental, spiritual and emotional health. That the faithful who are recipients of priestly service are cared for adequately and appropriately.

The priest’s responsibility to the bishop, is to honour their promises made at ordination, that the work of the Church may move forward. Personalities and ego can become a hindrance and it can and does happen. We have an example with Paul correcting Peter (*Gal. 2:11-21*), but remember the bishop is the head of the Church and the priest is the bishop’s assistant. If there exists an issue, integrity, honesty and transparency compel you to approach the bishop to address concerns. No good can come from backbiting, duplicity and disobedience

II

Sister: Why does our Lord refer to Himself as "the Son of Man" and not as "the Son of God?" God Himself calls our Lord "His beloved Son" and we affirm this in fact to be true. Why then does our Lord prefer the title "Son of Man" when referring to Himself?

Archbishop: First, I want to establish that the Church teaches and has always taught that the ‘Son of God’ and the ‘Son of Man’ are one in the same Person—Jesus Christ of Nazareth. The Fourth Ecumenical Council (Chalcedon) addressed the Person of Christ thus:

So, following the holy fathers, we all with one voice teach the confession of one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: the same perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, the same truly God and truly man, of a rational soul and a body; of one essence with the Father as regards His divinity, and the same of one essence with us as regards His humanity; like us in all respects except for sin; begotten before the ages from the Father as regards His divinity, and in the last days, for us and for our salvation, the same born of Mary, the virgin God-bearer, as regards His humanity.

He is one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, acknowledged in two natures which undergo no confusion, no change, no division, no separation. At no point was the difference between the natures taken away through the union, but rather the property of both natures is preserved and comes together into a single person and a single subsistent being. He is not parted or divided into two persons, but is one and the same only-begotten Son, God, Word, Lord Jesus Christ, just as the prophets taught from the beginning about Him, and as the Lord Jesus Christ Himself instructed us, and as the creed of the fathers handed it down to us.

(Council of Chalcedon; Definition of the Faith)

Our Lord always had an aspect about Him of humility. A prime example of the two titles working in unity with each other is from the wedding feast in Cana. Jesus says to His Mother “*it is not my time...*” (Jn 4:2) and as the Son of God, He made it clear that God had not yet called Him to begin His mission and yet all power in heaven and on earth had been given to Him. Nevertheless had He done so, it would have been of His own volition and ego and thus our salvation would have been lost for ever. And yet in humble

submission to His earthly Mother—as the Son of Man—He turned water into wine. The two wills were not working against each other quite the contrary, they were working for the good.

Making grand claims, or lacking any real authority is by its very nature the sin of pride. We see that when the Lord is offered all worldly glories and benefits. Christ makes it clear that His worship is to God and God alone. It is true, the devil had power to give it over to Him. Likewise, it is true that Jesus is the ‘Son of God’ but humility dictated that He should not proclaim things boasting in His own glory, a characteristic of the devil.

III

Sister: I am a registered organ donor and also donate blood on a quarterly basis, and have recently registered to be a stem cell donor. Will this be permissible as a Candidate for Holy Orders?

Archbishop: This is a personal decision and one you are free to discern. As your Bishop I will say be mindful that one day you may become a Saint and whatever is left of you could very well be venerated...

IV

Sister: I have been in the Dutch Reformed Church my whole life. I have however learned from my recent studies that denominations have a fair amount of human perception involved as well as personal choice. I have started my studies with the intention to study the Bible in its entirety and not from a denominational point of view. Since I am a candidate for Holy Orders within the Reformed Old Catholic Church (ROCC), what is the stance of the holy Church on different denominations?

Archbishop: The Church, in the truest sense of the word, is Catholic and Apostolic. Catholic in that it is Universal and not culturally based. Some denominations have changed the word from Catholic to Christian in an attempt to not identify it with Rome, which is ridiculous because it gives credence to Rome as having the monopoly on ‘Catholic’.

It is important to establish why the Church is *Apostolic* because that is what gives it its legitimacy. It should be a question asked of all Churches “*are you apostolic and can you prove it?*” There are such communities that have not maintained bishops with apostolic succession called *ecclesial communities*. Those who are attached to such and having received a valid baptism are in an unusual way in communion with the Church.

The leaders of the Church (ROCC) encourage its faithful and clergy to participate in the prayer services of other Christian denominations, where appropriate. The exception would be if a particular congregation, celebrates a form of holy communion and teaches that it is emblematic or symbolic of the Body and Blood of Jesus—then in good conscience the faithful should refrain from reception being a breach of the first commandment of having something in the “*likeness of heaven above or in earth...*” (Ex. 20:4).

V

Sister: The Bible consists of 66 books (39 within the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament) whilst the Catholic Bible has a total of 73 books (46 within the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament). Why are there two different versions and why were the OT books not included in the Bible?

Archbishop: There are more than two versions. The Protestant Bible has 66. The Coptic Orthodox Bible has 68. The Catholic Bible has 73. The Greek Orthodox Bible has 79 and the Ethiopian Orthodox Bible has 81. Permit me to answer regarding the Protestant and Catholic Bibles.

After the Reformation those books that were not part of the Hebrew Canon were removed (Apocryphal and Deuterocanonical books) where as the Catholic version follows a variant of the Septuagint or Greek translation of the Old Testament, which includes Sirach, Baruch and the two Maccabees, which are not found in the Hebrew Canon (David Sørensen).

Sr Carla van Aswegen · Abp Rima Tamaiparea-Puki · 17 May 2021