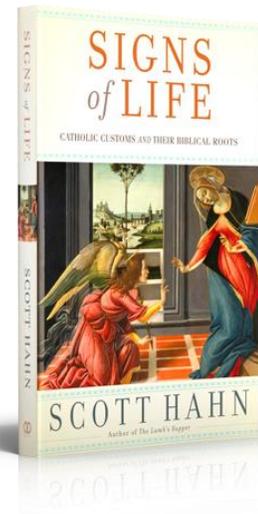


SIGNS OF LIFE:

20 Catholic Customs and their Biblical Roots

by Dr. Scott Hahn

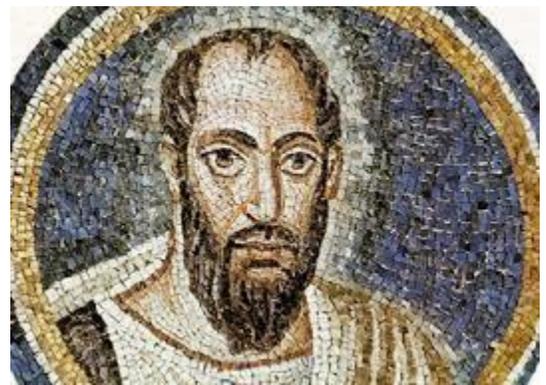
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Session 5 – Chapters 9 and 10

Chapter 9: Holy Orders

- ✠ Scripture presents God’s priests as fathers – spiritual fathers on Earth. St. Paul considered himself to be the father and the mother (1 Thessalonians 2:7) of the churches he founded, and especially of his disciples. (See Philippians 2:22 [Timothy’s father]; Philemon 10 [father of Onesimus, the runaway slave]; 1 Corinthians 4:14-15 [father of believers]. See also 1 Timothy 1:2 and 1:18; 2 Timothy 1:12; and Titus 1:4.
- ✠ Jesus taught us to call God our Father (Matthew 6:9), echoed by St. Paul as he declares that we are adopted children in Christ (Romans 8:16-17). Jesus encouraged “children” to come to Him in Mark 10:14 and Matthew 18:5.
- ✠ Fathers were empowered as priests in the Old Covenant before there was a priestly tribe (the Levites) or a High Priestly family (that of Aaron). See Genesis 4:3-4, 8:20-21, and 12:7-8). Fathers passed this priestly ministry to their first-born sons, although exceptions have been made (such as Jacob “stealing” the blessing, and therefore the priestly ministry, from Esau – twice! Once for some lentil soup and once by fooling his blind father by wearing an animal skin). Another exception would be Jacob passing on the priestly mantle to his favorite son of his favorite wife, Rachel – Joseph (of the technicolor dream coat). Reuben was the first-born and ought to have received the priestly garment, that fine robe.





✠ God intended for all twelve tribes of Israel to be a priestly nation, but after the Golden Calf Apostasy, only the Levites swore to be true to the One God (see Exodus 32:25-29). The other eleven tribes lost the priesthood, but could experience a taste of it with a Nazirite Vow. Aaron and his sons were to be the only High Priests.

✠ Levites were asked to “be to me a father and a priest.” (Judges 17:10 and 18:19) We see the idea of fatherhood inherent in the priest throughout salvation history.

✠ Jesus, the only Son of God, recaptures the fatherhood of the priesthood and establishes priest as fathers in the Divine economy. All validly baptized Christians are called “children of God” forming God’s household (see the Letter to the Hebrews).

✠ St. Peter declares the reinstatement of the Church, God’s Chosen People, as a “royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people.” (1 Peter 2:9)

✠ Jesus established His eleven apostles as priests at the Last Supper (see Luke 22:19 and John 13:5, 8). They became fathers because they were priests “in the service of the Gospel.” (Romans

15:16)

✠ St. Augustine: “The apostles were sent as fathers...sons were born to you who were constituted bishops...The Church calls them fathers.” Fathers communicate life; priests, our spiritual fathers, communicate spiritual life to us through the sacraments.

✠ When we honor our priests, when we respect our Church, we are keeping the Fourth Commandment: Honor your father and your mother. Good children pray for their fathers (Genesis 9:22-27 – Shem and Japheth covered Noah’s “nakedness,” his shame, but did not look upon it.)



Chapter 10: Anointing of the Sick

- ✠ This sacrament can be received more than once.
 - ❖ If a person has a chronic condition, they may be anointed; and anointed again if the condition worsens.
 - ❖ A person going into surgery when they will be anesthetized may be anointed.
 - ❖ A person in danger of death may receive this anointing.



- ✠ This sacrament involves several components:
 - ❖ The priest hears the person's confession and absolves them of their sins
 - ❖ He anoints them with holy oil as a tangible sign of the grace they receive
 - ❖ The anointing is for the consolation of the person and their family
 - ❖ The sacrament may result in physical healing or protection but always confers spiritual healing – the graces we need to face our trials
- ✠ Symbolic meaning of oil:
 - ❖ Provides food (from Heaven)
 - ❖ Provides fuel for light and cooking (Light of the World)
 - ❖ Heals and seals a wound (caused by sin) (Salvation equates with health)
 - ❖ Helps to heal sore muscles (from grappling with temptation)
 - ❖ Helps to relax knots in hair (from our sins)
 - ❖ Makes one slippery to escape the grasp of the Enemy
- ✠ Sickness and death entered the world through Original Sin; Jesus has conquered both sickness and death. Sickness is no longer a curse, but an opportunity to unite our sufferings with the Cross of Jesus; our sickness can be redemptive. Jesus assured St. Paul, "My grace is enough for you," (2 Corinthians 12:9). St. Paul declared that "it is when I am weak that I am strong," (2 Corinthians 12:10). St



Paul also advises the early Church: "We bear at all times in our body the sufferings of the death of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body." (2 Corinthians 4:10)

- ✠ Jesus declared that it is a greater work to forgive sins than to heal when he read the minds of the Pharisees: "only God can forgive sins." Jesus then told the forgiven man to "take up his mat and walk." (See Mark 2:9) The physical, tangible sign is there to testify to the spiritual reality.

- ✠ St. James advises believers: "Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the Church...let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord." (James 5:14-15)