

In the second reading, Saint Peter wrote: “Let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ... You are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises” of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” Although there is some debate about this, the earliest traditions tell us that this letter was written to the Christian communities of Asia Minor, possibly from Rome shortly before Peter was martyred. Regardless of when the letter was written, the scriptures speak to all people at all times so Peter was writing this letter to us. God has chosen us to be a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God’s own who offer sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ and to announce the praises of the one who called us out of darkness into His wonderful light. Offer sacrifice and announce praise. This is the duty of all of the baptized, not just the ordained ministers of the Church. It is very common and very easy for people to say “That is Father’s job.” There are things reserved for deacons, priests, and bishops to do, but every person here is called to offer sacrifices and to evangelize—which is what announcing the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his wonderful light is all about.

All of the baptized participate in Jesus' works of priest, prophet, and king as appropriate for their states in life. Stated most simply, priests offer sacrifice, prophets comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable—meaning we proclaim God’s word and fight against injustice in ways that might cause great discomfort for people who don’t want to hear those words. Kings and queens are called to be good stewards of the material and spiritual resources of the world. Those three works overlap. For example, kings and queens who are good stewards are going to fight against injustices in the world (prophetic work) and they will do it by making sacrifices and calling the wealthiest of their people to offer sacrifices alongside them (priestly work).

Each one of us must participate in Jesus' works of priest, prophet, and king according to our state in life. We don’t do this work in isolation from each other though, we must do it together and help each other. One very concrete way we can do this is through the Archbishop’s Catholic Appeal which we are launching this weekend. Most other parishes started two weeks ago but I was gone so we are starting this weekend instead. The envelopes are in the pews and in the breezeway; many of you might have received envelopes in the mail. Those envelopes provide information about what your money pays for. Please read that information for yourself and then prayerfully decide how much you can offer to

support the church's mission in Western Oregon. Our fundraising goal is \$38,000—which is the same as last year's goal. We actually surpassed that goal last year, so if everyone just did what you did last year, we will meet this year's goal and you won't have to hear from me about it again until next year. We need everybody's help in this though, so please, no matter how much you can give, please give something according to your means. If you have the ready, you can put the envelopes in the second collection basket or bring them back next week and turn them into the main collection basket or you can mail them directly to the archdiocese; you can also donate online. However you choose to donate, please make sure you write down "Our Lady of the Mountain" as the parish.

To some degree or another we are all priests who offer sacrifice and we are all kings who must be good stewards of the gifts God has given to us. As good stewards we can exercise our prophetic ministry by helping those who need our help. We can do all of that when we help the Archbishop in his work of bringing light to those living in darkness here in western Oregon.

Every year we have this appeal, but I am not sure how often we get updates on "results" - not that money is solving all of our problems but it certainly does help us do the work we need to do. Are you aware of what has been happening in our archdiocese over the past three years? In 2023 we had around 700 people enter the church through OCIA. The following year the number was 1000. Last year the number was 1200. This year the number was over 1600. The Holy Spirit is at work here calling more and more people back to the Father through Jesus. We have 32 men in the seminary right now in various stages of formation; four of them will be ordained as priests this year on June 20—including Deacon Shawn Daniel whom many of you might remember from when he was here a couple years ago. Those numbers are encouraging signs, but there is more work to do. Coming up within the next couple of months, Archbishop Sample will be consecrating the entire Archdiocese to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and along with that, I would encourage every family to enthrone an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in their homes.

There are good things happening here but there is a lot more work to be done, in cooperation with God's graces. Please be as generous as you can to this appeal. God has called us out of darkness into his wonderful light. Let us share the joy he has brought us by sharing the gifts given to us by Jesus.