

**Incarnate Word Tract Series #1**  
**The Royal Priesthood: Who Is in It? What Does It Do?**

THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

One of the most vital doctrines of the Sacred Scriptures is the doctrine of the Royal Priesthood. And yet it is often one of the least understood teachings of our Holy Religion. The reason for this frequent misunderstanding certainly does not lie in the Bible. The Scriptures are very clear in answering the questions: “Who is in the Royal Priesthood?” and “What does the Royal Priesthood do?”

WHO IT IS

The term “Royal Priesthood” comes from I Peter 2:9, “But you are a chosen race, a **Royal Priesthood**, a holy nation, God’s own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of Him Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” St. Peter is here talking to the Christian churches, to the baptized people of God. That answers the question, “Who is in the Royal Priesthood.” **Every Christian** was made a member of the Royal Priesthood when he was called from the darkness of sin and unbelief into the light and forgiveness of God at his Holy Baptism. If you are a baptized Christian, you are a member of the Royal Priesthood.

WHAT IT DOES

To find out what you and the other members of the Royal Priesthood are to do, we need to ask, “What did the Old Testament Priesthood do?” The Old Testament priesthood offered sacrifices to Almighty God. And the New Testament says, that is precisely what the Royal Priesthood is to do—to offer sacrifices to God. St. Peter says it plainly in I Peter 2:5, “Like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house a holy priesthood, **to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God** through Jesus Christ.: If you are a baptized Christian, you are a member of the holy Royal Priesthood, called to offer sacrifices to God, your Savior.

These sacrifices are to be, says Peter, “**Spiritual sacrifices**”; that means sacrifices that are inspired by and offered through our Holy Baptism.

KINDS OF SACRIFICES

The Bible describes the sacrifices of the Royal Priesthood in many places, but we will discuss only these three:

**Romans 12:1.**—“Present your **Bodies** as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”

**Hebrews 13:15.**—“Through Jesus let us continually offer up a **Sacrifice of Praise** to God.”

**Hebrews 13:16.**—“Do not neglect to **do good** and to **share** what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”

In these three passages we see that the sacrifices of the Royal Priesthood, the priestly Church, are: our bodies, our praises, our good works, and our almsgiving.

These sacrifices of the Church reach their highest and most perfect expression in the Holy Eucharist, the Memorial of our Lord's saving sacrifice. That is what the Lutheran Church means when she teaches that the Holy Eucharist is both a Sacrament and a Sacrifice. For it is in The Holy Eucharist that we unite with our Lord Jesus in offering our Bodies, our Praises and our Alms. And the Bible promises that this Sacrifice is “acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” Be at the altar doing your priestly work every Sunday.