'As often as you eat the bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes' (1 Corinthians 11:26)

Each of these three studies from a celebrated Australian biblical scholar has its own origin and history but are presented here in a single volume in the current context of efforts to re-appraise and understand priestly ministry within the Catholic tradition.

The author reminds us that any assessment regarding the ongoing viability of an institution must include study of its origins which is why central to the collection is the second chapter that explores the New Testament origins of priesthood. The chapter questions and challenges some traditional teaching connecting priesthood with Last Supper narratives or the so-called priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17.

Yet, he also acknowledges the centrality of Eucharist in the ancient Christian communities as disciples gathered to remember the teachings of Jesus and to celebrate his memory in the breaking of bread. The importance of Eucharist led to a growing sense of the dignity and significance of those chosen to preside, resulting in a natural development of the church's understanding of that special ministry within the community.

The first and the third chapters serve as a 'frame' around these reflections. Chapter One 'Encountering Jesus: Exploring our Biblical Heritage' argues that all biblical reflection upon the Christian life — including priesthood and leadership in the church — must start with the person and message of Jesus of Nazareth; while Chapter Three develops this challenge to contemporary Catholicism, asking where we find access to this Jesus Christ whose memory we recall at the breaking of the bread and the pouring out of the cup.

Fundamental to this search for access to the Christ is the need to take seriously the centrality of Scripture, an appeal that has been emphasised in the Catholic Church since Pope Leo XIII's enyclical Providentissimus Deus in 1893. Subsequent popes, synods and councils have continued to teach that message and the present Pope Francis constantly demonstrates in his ministry a deep appeal to Scripture, especially to the gospels whose message resonates in everything he says and does.

Although the focus and the central piece of this collection is the Catholic priesthood, the message at the heart of the three chapters is directed to everyone in the church, asserting — against the scourge of clericalism — that there is no class distinction among the people of God who look to Jesus Christ as their guide, light and hope.

Francis J. Moloney, Catholic priest and scholar, is a Salesian of Don Bosco. Following studies in Rome and Oxford, he taught in Europe, Israel, the USA, South East Asia and Australia. The author of many books and shorter studies, he is currently a Senior Professorial Fellow at the Catholic Theological College in Melbourne, part of the ecumenical University of Divinity.


FRANCIS J. MOLOONEY

COVENTRY PRESS
BROKEN
FOR YOU

JESUS CHRIST
THE CATHOLIC PRIESTHOOD
& THE WORD OF GOD

FRANCIS J. MOLONEY

COVENTRY PRESS
# Contents

## Foreword

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter One</th>
<th>Encountering Jesus: Exploring Our Biblical Heritage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two</td>
<td>The Catholic Priesthood: A New Testament Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three</td>
<td>Pope Francis and the Word of God in the Catholic Tradition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chapter One: Encountering Jesus: Exploring Our Biblical Heritage

- What did Jesus think he was doing? ........................................ 11
- Jesus and his Father ............................................................. 18
- Jesus as the Son of Man .......................................................... 22
- Conclusion ................................................................................. 27

### Chapter Two: The Catholic Priesthood: A New Testament Reflection

- The problem .............................................................................. 30
- Some history ............................................................................. 32
- Eucharist: from Jesus to the early church ................................ 35
- A Eucharistic Priesthood ......................................................... 40
- Conclusion ................................................................................. 48

### Chapter Three: Pope Francis and the Word of God in the Catholic Tradition

- The context .................................................................................. 53
- Magisterial preparation for Pope Francis .................................. 54
- Enter Pope Francis ..................................................................... 58
- Conclusion ................................................................................... 64
Foreword

The three studies collected here have their own history. I have gathered them to make them available to a broader reading public because they are united by the Gospel sentiment of the book's title, intimately associated with the celebration of the Eucharist: 'Broken for you' (see 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Mark 14:22-25; Matthew 26:20-25; John 6:51). From earliest times, a feature of the life and practice of Christians has been the close association — still central to the Catholic Tradition — between a Priesthood and the celebration of the Eucharist. The centre-piece of this collection is thus the second essay 'A New Testament Reflection on the Catholic Priesthood'. It was originally written at the request of the Catholic Biblical Association of the Philippines (CBAP) for delivery at its 2018 annual conference in Makati, Manila (11-13 August 2018).

The CBAP focused on a theme provided by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines for a 'year of Priests and Consecrated Persons'. This theme was part of a nine-year preparation for the celebration of an event central to the history and culture of the Philippines, and the Filipino people: the five hundredth anniversary of the first Christian Baptism in the Philippines in 1521. It is timely, given the crises facing the institution and the practice of the Catholic Priesthood, as the stories of serious failures among many Catholic Priests dominate international news. In assessing the ongoing viability of an institution, it is always helpful to study its origins.

The first and the third essays serve as a 'frame' around the reflection on the contemporary Catholic Priesthood. They have their origins in my own local Church in Melbourne, Australia. The opening essay 'Encountering Jesus: Exploring our Biblical Heritage' was a response to the request from the Office of Evangelisation of the Archdiocese of Melbourne. It formed part of a series of lectures focusing upon Catholic Leadership.
All biblical reflection upon the Christian life must start with the person and message of Jesus of Nazareth. All conversation about leadership in the Christian tradition must begin and end with the figure of Jesus of Nazareth. Words of Jesus from Saint Paul and the Gospel remind us that this is the case every time we celebrate Eucharist and are called to a life that is Eucharistic: ‘Do this in memory of me’ (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24, 25). Eucharist is not only a cultic activity, it is also a way of life, but it is fanciful to suggest that we celebrate Eucharist ‘in memory’ of Jesus without a knowledge of the man and his story.

The second essay in the ‘frame’ looks at a further challenge to contemporary Catholicism. Where do we find access to the Jesus Christ whose memory we recall at the breaking of the bread and the pouring out of the cup at each Eucharist? Despite a long hiatus – generated by the defensive Catholic response to the passion for the sacred Scriptures generated by the sixteenth century European Reformation – since Leo XIII in 1893, the leadership of the Catholic Church has repeatedly asked that Catholic believers return to the sacred Scriptures. The importance of Leo’s epoch-making encyclical Providentissimus Deus was marked by the equally important biblical Encyclical of Pope Pius XII in 1943 Divino Afflante Spiritu. Much has been said and written in the Catholic Church since those days at Vatican II, Episcopal Synods and Pontifical Exhortations. Pope Francis has continued this plea that the Word of God be made available to all believers. But he has done more. He has set the example for this process as the message of the Gospel resonates in everything he says and does.

I delivered the final essay ‘Pope Francis and the Word of God in the Catholic Tradition’ at a conference dedicated to an assessment of the contribution of our current Pope. The Holy Father provides an inspiring interpretative principle for any approach to the Sacred Text: understand what you read and hear, preach it, and practise what you preach. It was with pride that I shared a platform on that day with another Catholic leader who puts his life where his words are: Cardinal Charles Bo, SDB, Archbishop of Yangon, Myanmar.

Although the focus and the centre-piece of this collection is the Catholic Priesthood, the message at the heart of the three essays is directed to all who look to Jesus Christ as their guide, light and hope. There can be no ‘class distinctions’ among believers (see Lumen Gentium 39-42 [Vatican II]; Exsultate et Gaudete [Pope Francis]). That, of course, is an issue that is addressed in later pages of this book, given the scourge of clericalism that haunts the Catholic Priesthood.

Jesus Christ calls all his followers to ‘do this in memory of me’. Break your bodies and spill your blood in memory of me. ‘As often as you eat the bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes’ (1 Corinthians 11:26). All Christians are called in their many ministries to be followers of Christ, ‘who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father’ (Revelation 1:5-6).

Francis J. Moloney, SDB, AM, FAHA
Catholic Theological College
University of Divinity
Melbourne, Australia

1 Biblical citations are the author’s translation; or from the New Revised Standard Version.