Reflection Thursday Week 8 Our Lord Jesus Christ Eternal High Priest Year A 2023

This feast focuses on Jesus' Priestly Office. Jesus is the model for all believers, and especially for the clergy. Priests act *In persona Christi* ("In the person of Christ"). The lay faithful are urged to pray that priests will become more like Christ, the compassionate and trustworthy high priest (Heb 2:17), who is ever-living to intercede for us before the Father (Heb 7:25). It also reminds us that the 2nd Vatican Council taught many things about the Priesthood of Christ, and that **all the baptised** share in that one priesthood through the sacrament of Baptism. This understanding has been reflected in many subsequent documents. It was decided, therefore, that an effective way to build upon this teaching was to establish the feast of **Christ the Eternal High Priest** more widely. What Pope Pius XI wrote about the feast in honour of Christ's Kingly Office can be said just as truly about this feast in honour of Our Lord's Priesthood: *For people are instructed in the truths of the faith, and brought to appreciate the inner joys of religion far more effectively by the annual celebration of our sacred mysteries than by any official pronouncement of the teaching of the Church. Such pronouncements usually reach only a few and the more learned among the faithful; feasts reach them all; the former speak but once, the latter speak every year - in fact, forever.* Quas Primas 21

Our readings for the feast today remind us that Jesus was not only the priest but also the sacrificial victim and that, through his offering of himself, we have been set free from the clutches of evil. Having made this great sacrifice, Jesus invites us to share in this sacrifice of the mass together: priest and people. In sharing in the priesthood of Christ we share with him in establishing more fully the Kingdom of God on earth. At mass we accept and welcome our mission to be instruments of salvation by inviting Christ to work in us and through us. (Westminster Diocese)