



Mary and Bob often find themselves sharing common ground when it comes to philosophy and ministry. When approaching ministerial concerns from different angles, He Said - She Said is a venue to share differing perspectives.

## The Church: A “For Prophet” Organization

*Bob’s Perspective:*

### Anointing After Baptism

*The God of power and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ  
has freed you from sin,  
given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit,  
and welcomed you into his holy people.  
He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation.  
As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King,  
so may you live always as a member of his body,  
sharing everlasting life.*

A few weeks ago on a beautiful Sunday afternoon, I attended the Baptism of a new great-nephew. It wasn't unlike the many I've attended over the years. The deacon did a wonderful job in making everyone feel welcomed. He was also very articulate in his instruction and praying of the texts. So articulate, in fact, that during the anointing, he accented the words, “As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet and King, so may **you** live **always...**” Now I've heard those words many times over the years, but never before have they resonated so deeply within me. As I glanced about the other attendees, I began to wonder if anyone was aware of what that really meant.

These roles aren't necessarily meant to be understood in literal terms. But by virtue of our own Baptism, this is what each of us is called to be and do. Granted, not all of us are called to Ordination, many won't rise to the stature of Isaiah or Jeremiah, and it's highly unlikely that most of us will be called upon to rule a nation. So, if this is the case, how exactly do we live out this anointed baptismal calling?

I recently came upon a talk by Bishop Robert Barron, in which he suggests the following:

1. Our priestly role is when we offer praise, thanksgiving, and sacrifice.
2. Our role as prophet is when we articulate the word and teachings of God and his Church.
3. Our role as king is apparent in the way we lead others to follow God's way.

I have spent an ample amount of time in pondering his observation:



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### **Priest**

A significant element to this role is mindfulness (about which Mary and I have spoken on numerous occasions). When we mindfully offer praise, thanksgiving, and sacrifice to God, whether it is in the privacy of our own home, in Church, or in any public place, we are exercising our priestly role. Praying and offering thanks is self-evident, but what about offering sacrifice? Sacrifice is in any offering we make throughout the day. When we mindfully say grace before a meal, we are offering a sacrifice insofar as we take the time to recognize that our food is a gift from God. When we mindfully give of our time or allow ourselves to be inconvenienced for the good of someone else, again we are exercising our priestly role as conferred upon us in the reception of the Sacrament of Baptism.

### **Prophet**

As I mentioned before, most of us won't rise to the stature of Isaiah or Jeremiah. However, that doesn't diminish our baptismal call to be prophet. It should be stated that the Prophets weren't fortune tellers. They didn't have crystal balls that allowed them to see future events. Rather, they learned the word of God through their study of the Torah and other sacred writings. They observed the signs of the times and through God's inspiration, offered their people paths to repentance and hope in the promise of salvation.

Pope Francis recently defined a prophet as a person that "shows Jesus to others, who witnesses him, who helps live today and build tomorrow according to his design." This certainly doesn't mean that we all need to stand on a crate in the middle of Downtown and blurt out Bible verses and threats of doom. Instead, we can do this in more subtle and sociable ways. We can exercise patience and respect for others when we disagree, while at the same time taking a stance and living out the things in which we believe. An argument or fight rarely, if ever, solves a dispute. The tools to be used are love, understanding, patience, and perseverance. Remember the model that Jesus gave us. He welcomed everyone, never turned anyone away. However, he never negotiated or watered down his position. In his exchange with the rich man, who wasn't willing to do what Jesus asked of him ("sell all your belongings...and follow me") Jesus didn't run after him and say, "OK, I was just kidding. Let's see if we can compromise." Rather, Jesus didn't say another word. He just let him go on his way. Note that Jesus didn't turn his back, the rich man did. Then, Jesus still offered hope for salvation by indicating that the man's situation didn't look promising, but in God all things are possible.

### **King**

Just as anointing takes place during an ordination or in a proclamation by a prophet, it also plays a significant role in the coronation of a king. In the same way, after being baptized, the person is anointed



with Sacred Chrism, which is a fragranced oil that is consecrated (not just blessed) by a bishop. The word Chrism is a derivative of “Christ,” meaning the anointed one of God. When one is anointed with Sacred Chrism, it is a sign and symbol of being imbued with power and authority from God. Over the course of history, when a King was anointed, he was viewed as having been granted the responsibility, authority, and power of leadership, directly from God. In the case of Baptism, we too are given the responsibility of encouraging and leading others (family, friends, etc.) in the way of Christian ethos.

### Conclusion

We all understand Baptism as the sacrament that takes away Original Sin and begins the initiation process into full communion with the Church. That is absolutely true and not to be diminished in any way. But there’s more to it than that. In receiving the sacrament, or (as a Parent or Godparent) requesting and authorizing its conferral, we undertake a huge responsibility, which I fear is overlooked by many. At our baptism, we were anointed as Priest, Prophet, and King; and as Parents and Godparents, our role is to nurture the newly anointed into those roles, as well.

Whew! Who would have ever thought that on a Sunday afternoon so much could be made of pouring a little water and oil on a baby?

#### *Mary’s Perspective:*

Bob has always been a pretty smart guy, and I think part of what brings *He Said-She Said* to life is our balance of esoteric and more accessible or concrete thinking. Prior to the baptism, he might have grumbled a bit about having yet one more event on his calendar (which is now electronic, stored in his “smart”-droid-no-longer-flip-phone!), but after attending the baptism, he was so enthusiastic that his experience energized several of our walks over the next week – such that I suggested he try to capture his thoughts into a blog. Let this be a lesson: be careful what you wish for!

I think his reflections are thought-provoking and right on the money. However, as a friend once used to say a lot, SO WHAT? In response, I offer the following (slightly less esoteric) musings...

First, as I spend more time with families who are preparing the funeral of a loved one, I am drawn more deeply into the connections between the Rite of Baptism and the Mass of Christian Burial. Both celebrations utilize symbols of water, the white garment, and the Paschal candle. Prayers at each talk about birth and rebirth. We have a priest friend who used to make the comparison in his funeral homily of trying to describe to an unborn baby



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how, in just a few months, its entire experience of life will radically change. I believe (and hope) that is true of new life in heaven, also.

When I meet with the grieving families, we talk about our faith – that this life is not the end. That there are better things to come. And because of that, our funeral is, in part, a joyful celebration because we are confident of new life in Christ. Simply shifting your mindset about a funeral can make it a time that reaches beyond grief to hope – just like the hope we experience being in the presence of a newborn.

Shifting your mindset can be the first step in a powerful transformation. Next, I'd like to share a vision that I know I've written a bit about previously, but that bears repeating. Consider a life where attending Mass on the weekend was not an obligation or a task to cross off some imaginary list, but rather more like a pitstop on the journey. As one who travels somewhat regularly, I can attest to the fact that I require stops along the turnpike to stretch, refresh, restock, and find relief. After my rest stop, I'm good to go for a while. What if Mass were like that?

What if we spent our whole week living the life of a disciple, and then regrouped on the weekend? We would come to Mass to let go of our burdens, stretch our minds, be nourished and energized, so that we could hit the ground running when it comes to the next week. What if our week was more like a series of encounters with others where we shared our faith, our beliefs, our values, and encouraged others to seek a deeper relationship with the Divine? This doesn't mean we ignore some of the necessities of life. We still could do our work, earn a living, manage the household, etc. It just means that the "to-do" part isn't as important as the "to-be" part. What do I mean by that?

When you meet someone for the first time and introduce yourself, what do you choose to point out? My name is Mary, and I'm a musician. Or my name is Toby and I'm an electrician. Or my name is Margaret, and I'm a mom. What if, instead of identifying our occupation, we introduced ourselves as a Christian? Or as a member of a specific Catholic parish? Or what if we simply said, I believe in some pretty powerful stuff! Pretty radical, huh? A little daunting? Maybe out of your comfort zone?

Let's take that just a step farther. We all know that motivational speakers talk about having your elevator speech – that is, your 30-second sales pitch in case you have opportunity to speak briefly with someone, as you might when in an elevator. (And now I'm visualizing



those commercials where they're trying to get you to not be your old fuddy-duddy parents and the participants get reprimanded for speaking to the others in the elevator... but I digress.) For the sake of argument, let's say that rather than in an elevator, you bump into someone you might casually know while waiting in line at the grocery store. Does your conversation turn to politics? Sports? The weather? How about something transformational happening in your life? What if you were so energized by living the life of a Christian that you just needed to share it? Maybe that feels uncomfortable, but, as with the elevator speech, the more you do it, the easier it gets.

So, let's say you have tried this technique of sharing your faith a little bit each day. Maybe a little bit turns into a little more. Maybe our attitudes become less burdened by the annoyances of our to-do list, and more encouraged by the positivity that is drawn to our energy. While this is good, it feels like a lot, and by the end of the week, you may feel somewhat spent. Then, let's say you go to church for a fill-up, or a rest stop of sorts. You spend time with like minds, are fed by the Word and nourished by the Eucharist, are energized by the awesome music, and your cup is once again filled as you are missioned to continue to glorify the Lord by your life.

That sure changes the mindset of fulfilling an obligation, doesn't it?

What if we took our baptismal call THAT seriously?

Maybe then we would actually become a "for Prophet" community – or better yet, a Church of prophets!