

## CHRIST THE PRIEST\*

*The office of a priest it is to be  
A mediator with the Deity:  
Men's prayer and sacrifice on high to bring,  
To speak God's law, and give men sacred things.*

*The priest, says Paul, is chosen from all men  
To make His people friends of God again.  
His satisfaction meets God's just decree  
Of punishment for man's iniquity.*

*Our Great High Priest is Jesus Christ, God's Son,  
Who, by His awful death, for us has won  
Admittance into heaven's tight-barred gate,  
Which He alone had strength to penetrate.*

*Through Him are gifts divine on us conferred;  
Through Him the Father spoke to us the word  
Of "great and precious promises," which make  
Us freely in His life divine partake.*

*All human kind, by Adam's sin defiled,  
Christ unto God the Father reconciled.  
It pleased the Father that in Him should dwell  
All grace and might to save all men from hell.*

*Though angels, too, are set 'tween men and God,  
Far greater than all angels is Our Lord,  
Not just according as He is divine,  
But even in His flesh—born midst the kine.*

*For with all grace and glory He was filled  
Who here on earth did what His Father willed;  
For "Angels came and ministered to Him,"  
Our High Priest, far above the Seraphim.*

*Yet could He feel the sting of fleshly pain,  
Which angels are not powered to sustain.  
Thus He became among all men the least,  
To show the way to every other priest.*

*The priests of old were figures of the true.  
From Juda's tribe, not Levi's, came the new,  
For Christ would show His priesthood not the same  
As had been held by those of Levi's name.*

*Among the Jews the priest could not be king,  
Nor legislate, nor judge in anything.  
But our High Priest is Head of all His race,  
For in Him is perfection of all grace.*

PETER COYNE, O.P.

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\* Based on *Summa Theologica* p. III Q. 22 a. 1.