

[PDF] Why Priests?: A Failed Tradition

Garry Wills - pdf download free book

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Author: Garry Wills
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Description:

From As a boy caddying at a local golf course, Wills marveled at how overawed golfers would surrender their tee times to any Catholic priest showing up with a golf bag. Now a mature author, Wills explains such deference to clerics as a trivial but telling instance of priestly privilege. That privilege, Wills argues, reflects the position of the priest as the singularly holy figure who presides over the ritual of transforming the consecrated host and wine into Christ's flesh and blood through the miracle of transubstantiation. Wills sees no trace of this miracle in the gospel account of the Lord's Supper, nor any evidence of priests' leading the church of the New Testament. The scriptural text typically cited to justify the Catholic understanding of the eucharist and the priesthood—namely, the Epistle to the Hebrews—here receives skeptical scrutiny as a dubious late addition to the canon. Professing faith in the Catholic creed but attacking the Catholic priesthood with Protestant zeal, Wills invites readers into a dialogue outside of ecclesiastical boundaries. --Bryce Christensen

Review A *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER

Praise for *Why Priests?* by Garry Wills:

"Wills draws on his expertise in classical languages and his wide reading in ecclesiastical history to argue that the Catholic/Orthodox priesthood has been one long mistake."

—*The Washington Post*

"Wills sets out to persuade his fellow-Catholics that the priesthood is both unnecessary and un-Christian. . . . Wills is not attempting to break with the Church or to dismantle it. Rather, he wants to assure the faithful that they can get by without priests. 'If we need fellowship in belief,' he writes, 'we have each other.'"

—*The New Yorker*

"How. . . did priests become dominant and then essential in Catholic Christianity? And why, Wills asks, in this provocative [and] historically rich . . . book, does the Vatican continue to sustain such falsehoods? . . . Wills's demolition of the many myths surrounding the origins of priestly status and function is in itself crucially informative and enlightening."

—*The New Republic*

"Pulitzer Prize winner Wills, a venerable voice on church history, thought and practice, provides a stunning critique of the Roman Catholic priesthood."

—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred)

"Using his linguistic skills and his impressive command of both secondary literature and patristic sources, Wills raises doubts aplenty about 'the Melchizedek myth,' and the priestly claims for Jesus in the 'idiosyncratic' Epistle to the Hebrews . . . His final chapter is a model of elegant simplicity, a contrast (intended or not) to the flummery often associated with his own church . . . 'There is one God, and Jesus is one of his prophets,' Wills concludes, 'and I am one of his millions of followers.' For those millions, scattered across time and space, that's an affirmation worthy of celebration."

—*The New York Times Book Review*

"Do we really need Catholic Priests? Wills, Pulitzer Prize winner and author of *Why I Am a Catholic*, dares to pose this controversial question[.] . . . One cannot help but be impressed with this brilliant work written by a scholar whose love for the Church compels him to make it better."

—*Publishers Weekly*

"Clearly a thought-provoker destined to inspire debate."

—*Library Journal*

"Wills's . . . position is . . . original and insightful . . . [and his] task is a worthy one, namely to bring the institution of the priesthood under the gaze of historical and theological scrutiny. . . . Through his erudite scholarship and his compelling argumentation Wills has made an important contribution to this field of study and, in the process, has written a book that is thoroughly absorbing and engaging."

—*Irish Times*

"[Wills] combin[es] historical and literary analysis with journalistic observations on the present Catholic church. . . . *Why Priests?* should be required of all seminarians."

—*National Catholic Reporter*

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