



# DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

## Sunday, October 23-29 (B) – Hebrews 7:23-28

**Focus:** *Christ as our Intercessor*

### **word of life**

**“Consequently he (Jesus) is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.”** Hebrews 7:25 (NRSV)

Read Hebrews 7:23-28

The theme of Jesus as the great high priest continues in the readings for today. The author of Hebrews makes the case for the designation of Jesus as the great high priest by contrasting Jesus with human priests. There were many human priests because they were mortal; death ended their continuance in the priestly role. But Jesus as the high priest will continue to serve forever because he has been raised from death and lives forever. (Hebrews 7:23-24) Unlike the earthly priests, who are required to offer sacrifices for sin day after day, Jesus’ sacrifice of himself is a “once-and-for-all” offering (a word used frequently in Hebrews). Its effect lasts forever. (Hebrews 7:27)

1. *What does it mean to you to think of Jesus as the great high priest?*
2. *What is the significance of Jesus’ death and resurrection being a “once-and-for-all” event?*

Having established that Jesus is the only true continual high priest, he is able for all time and all people to save “...those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.” Hebrews 7:25 (NRSV)

Serving as mediator or intercessor is the central role of the high priest. He is to act on behalf of the faith community to serve as a bridge between God and humanity. The imagery of Jesus interceding to God on our behalf is also found in Paul’s letter to the Romans: “It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.” (Romans 8:34 NRSV)

3. *Is it comforting to know that Jesus intercedes for us?*
4. *How do you experience that intercession?*

The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus uniquely qualify him to serve as intercessor. He identifies with humanity because, like earthly priests, he suffered death; but unlike earthly priests, in his resurrection, he always lives. His intercession, therefore, for those who follow him is unceasing and serves as the permanent bridge between God and us.

5. *Which imagery – intercessor, mediator, or bridge – do you find most helpful? Why?*
6. *Do you find this comparison of Jesus to a high priest helpful or not? Explain your answer.*
7. *Do you feel you need someone to intercede on your behalf? Explain your answer.*

The author of Hebrews enumerates in eloquent language the attributes of Jesus as high priest: “holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.” (Hebrews 7:26 NRSV) Many scholars believe that this verse was an early Christian hymn. Jesus is not portrayed as a high priest with faults and blemishes, having to seek forgiveness for his sins, meekly on his knees interceding for us. Rather, his attributes are those of God, holy and exalted above the heavens. His intercession on our behalf thereby brings forgiveness, life, and salvation.

8. *What are other attributes of Jesus?*
9. *When you describe Jesus, how quickly do you mention his role as high priest? Why do you think that is so?*

## **word among us**

There are distinct advantages to being a part of a large family with many brothers and sisters. One such advantage is having a variety of strategies available when asking a parent for permission to go somewhere or do something special. If an older sibling could be enlisted to ask on your behalf, there might be a better chance at getting the desired response. When asked by an older sibling “Can John and I go to the ball game?” the parent might be more inclined to say, “Yes” than asking to go alone. It’s always good to have an ally to intercede on your behalf!

1. *What are other examples of intercession in your daily life?*
2. *Does having an ally to intercede always “work”? Why? Or why not?*

“Put in a good word for me.” Requests such as these remind us of the power of intercession. To have someone in your corner – someone who has your best interests in mind, someone who is willing to risk on your behalf – can make all the difference in the world.

The author of Hebrews recognized the power of Jesus as intercessor for us: “...he (Jesus) is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.” (Hebrews 7:25 NRSV) Unlike our human intercessors, whose effectiveness and power to intercede is limited, Jesus as our risen Lord always lives to intercede on our behalf. His intercession is not bound by time and place. It always brings salvation to those who approach God through him.

3. *What difference does it make to know that Jesus is interceding to God for you?*

## **faith practice in daily life**

### **Serve all people, following the example of Jesus**

There is a time in almost every worship service for intercessory prayer. Names of those in the community who have special needs – those who are ill or homebound, those grieving, those dealing with difficult life circumstances – are read as a part of the prayer. Sometimes silence is observed and names of those in need are spoken spontaneously during the prayer. The gathered community prays for creation and for the needs of the whole world.

4. *How are prayers of intercession offered in your worship service? Who reads them?*
5. *What does it mean to you when you are in need to know that your congregation is praying for you?*

Some have said that the time of intercessory prayer is when the faithful “roll up their sleeves while they are on their knees.” We are giving “marching orders” for our ministry together. Living among God’s faithful people, we are reminded in prayer of our call to serve – a call begun in baptism.

6. *How does intercessory prayer give us “marching orders”?*
7. *How do we live out our baptismal calling to serve?*

### **Prayer**

Gracious God, what a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and grief to bear. We give thanks for his intercession on our behalf. Empower us to intercede for others, following his example. Amen

### ***last word***

Pray this week  
for those in need.

*Daily Faith Practices*

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