

Symposium: Year for Priests

Michael Sean Winters | Oct. 5, 2009 NCR Today

The Catholic University of America, in conjunction with Theological College, the national seminary at CUA, will be sponsoring a [two day symposium](#) [1] starting tomorrow on the Year for Priests, announced by Pope Benedict XVI. The symposium will feature speakers from the Society of St. Sulpice which runs Theological College, as well as from the university's Department of Theology.

The Society of St. Sulpice, diocesan clergy who join the society specifically to work in seminaries, has a long history in priestly formation, especially in America. Fleeing the horrors of the French Revolution, a band of Sulpicians came to these shores at the invitation of Bishop John Carroll to open the first seminary in America, St. Mary's in Baltimore in 1791. When Catholic University started a seminary, it was natural to entrust it to their care. I attended TC in the mid-1980s and they had the foresight and wisdom to direct me towards an alternate career path!

The Year for Priests has not garnered a great deal of attention, still less theological reflection, so this symposium is especially important. The Church is still very much in the process of "receiving" the Second Vatican Council, and while the episcopacy garnered the lion's share of attention at that Council, how such important decrees as the Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, affect our understanding of priests is still a matter of some debate. Additionally, the decline in priestly vocations is causing everyone in the Church to re-examine the priest's role, the need for more vocations, and the training and formation that we provide to our clergy. Whatever one's ecclesiology, if it is a Catholic ecclesiology, the role of priests can scarcely be a matter of indifference.

The topics range from insights into the priesthood drawn from the ordination ritual itself to the role of priest as evangelizer. Msgr. Kevin Irwin, the Dean of the School of Theology and Religious Studies at CUA, will deliver a much anticipated lecture on priestly spirituality, the subject of a forthcoming book.

The symposium will be live webcast at <http://live.cua.edu>.

Source URL (retrieved on 06/26/2017 - 20:45): <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/symposium-year-priests>

Links:

[1] <http://yearforpriests.cua.edu/index.cfm>