

**Discussion Questions For
“Claiming the Vision:
Baptismal Identity in the Episcopal Church”**

**Video 3: Understanding the Baptismal Ecclesiology of the
Episcopal Church**

Baptism as Incorporation into the Body of Christ

1. What were you taught about the meaning of baptism? Does this idea of incorporation into the Body of Christ fit with your community's sense of what is taking place at a baptism?
2. How are incorporation and personal salvation related to one another?
3. Dr. Weil implies that the Augustinian theory of original sin is not a fundamental doctrine of the church. What other understandings of sin might one hold?

Baptism and the Priesthood of All Believers

1. In what way has your own spiritual journey been a journey of climbing a mountain to be able to see the next peak?
2. How is one's life changed by putting our Christian baptismal identity at the center of our self-identity? What other aspects of one's self do you see people placing at their center instead?
3. How is your own vocational identity shaped and reshaped by placing it in a room constituted and structured by one's Christian identity?

Clericalism in the Church

1. How does clericalism hurt the church?
2. Describe a time in your own life when your gifts were acknowledged and affirmed within your faith community.
3. Are lay people's gifts more likely to be affirmed in our churches or in the secular world? How do you see that playing out in your own life?

The Omnivorous Priesthood

1. Dr. Mitchell describes an early church where the assumption was that all Christians are ministers. How do you see this understanding of ministry expressed in your faith community?
2. Many believe that one of the chief causes of the omnivorous priesthood was the increasingly limited education of the baptized regarding scripture and theology. How can we better address this important issue for our own day?
3. Why is it so invaluable for churches to have deacons? For dioceses to have bishops?

The Meaning of Ordination

1. How are our understandings of church governance changed if we look at the church as a circle rather than a pyramid?
2. What is different about leadership if we understand that no order is higher than another? That all orders are about utilizing particular gifts for the good of the church and the world.

The Laity as the Ministers of the Church

1. What ministries are important in your own life?
2. What might it mean for someone to be the servant of the assembly?
3. What responsibilities must the assembly embrace in this model of ministry?
4. How does a Christian treat a servant?

What is a Priest?

1. How does the definition of a priest as one whose primary ministry is about word and sacrament fit with the responsibilities of priests you have known?
2. What attributes make a person an effective minister of the Word and Sacraments?

What is a Deacon?

1. Who are the bridge people you have known who helped connect the church with the world and the world with the church?
2. If you were going to create a bridge between your church and some aspect of secular society, around what issue would you build it? How might it help to have a deacon involved?

What is a Bishop?

1. How would our church life be changed if bishops were seen as the chief pastors to their flocks?
2. What makes someone a good overseer? What particular skills are required to offer oversight?
3. Are overseer and pastor complementary or contradictory responsibilities?

Being an Episcopalian

1. How does our baptismal covenant help us understand and live out our faith?
2. What does the church gain by inviting all baptized persons of all ages to come to the communion table?
3. What do you think Dr. Weil means when he says Episcopalians have not yet fully embodied their own theology of baptism?
4. Does it surprise you to learn that all Anglicans do not share the same understanding of what it means to be a full member of the church? Is this a positive or a negative to you?

Mature Faith

1. Describe a situation in which your definition of justice and another person's definition clashed with one another. What can we or should we do in such a situation?
2. Through what means does the church teach us to participate in the kind of mature spiritual processes Bishop Griswold points us toward?

Life in Community

1. Describe a time in your own life when you have learned and grown through a process of communal dialog.

The Future of the Church

1. Describe a time in your own life when God has done something in a crooked way.
2. What do you believe the Spirit is doing within the Episcopal Church right now?
3. How do we embrace and prepare for our future?