

Dear Padre,

I thought only priests and bishops should distribute Holy Communion at Mass. In my parish, the priest allows laypeople to help him, and I thought laypeople couldn't because our hands are not consecrated.

You're not the only person with this concern, so thank you for taking the time to write. The distribution of holy Communion has nothing to do with "consecrated hands." Ordinary ministers of Communion include bishops and priests, as you rightly identify, but also deacons and installed acolytes. Of the four ordinary ministers, only the hands of bishops and priests are consecrated. Laypeople are extraordinary ministers and are installed to help the priest so that everyone can receive holy Communion without long lines or wearying the (sometimes elderly) priest. Most extraordinary ministers of Communion approach this ministry very prayerfully.

Your question brings up the subject of the full participation of the laity in the Mass, which is part of a highly contentious theological discussion on social media. There is an unfortunate conflict between so-called "traditional Catholics" and "Vatican II Catholics" or, as they are often misrepresented, "Novus Ordo" Catholics. Some Catholics are led to believe that the "new Mass" is not authentic, even though it has been the ordinary form of the Mass for well over fifty years—that is, since the authoritative Second Vatican Council. Many good and faithful people suffer with doubt and anxiety as a result of this confusion. ●

Fr. Thomas M. Santa, CSSR / DearPadre.org

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|---|--|
| January 19 | January 20 | January 21 | January 22 | January 23 | January 24 | January 25 |
| Weekday | Weekday | St. Agnes, Virgin and Martyr | Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children | Weekday | St. Francis de Sales, Bishop and Doctor of the Church | Third Sunday in Ordinary Time |
| 1 Sm 15:16-23 Mk 2:18-22 | 1 Sm 16:1-13 Mk 2:23-28 | 1 Sm 17:32-33, 37, 40-51 Mk 3:1-6 | 1 Sm 18:6-9; 19:1-7 Mk 3:7-12 | 1 Sm 24:3-21 Mk 3:13-19 | 2 Sm 1:1-4, 11-12, 19, 23-27 Mk 3:20-21 | Is 8:23-9:3 1 Cor 1:10-13, 17 Mt 4:12-23 or 4:12-17 |



A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV

Ours is a time marked by a growing search for spirituality, particularly evident in young people, who are longing for authentic relationships and guides in life. Hence, it is important that the Christian community be farsighted in discerning the challenges of today's world and in nurturing the desire for faith present in the heart of every man and woman.

MESSAGE TO SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS, ROME, MAY 28, 2025



THOMAS ORRICO / CATHOPIC

Our Parish COMMUNITY

January 18, 2026
Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
Isaiah 49:3, 5-6 / 1 Corinthians 1:1-3 / John 1:29-34



Behold the Lamb of God!

ANN M. GARRIDO

Of the many names Scripture provides to help us ponder the mystery of Jesus, one of the most intriguing is the name that John the Baptist offers at the opening of today's gospel: "Behold the Lamb of God!" (John 1:29).

Scripture scholars debate what John means here. Is he alluding to the Passover lamb—that unblemished lamb whose blood the enslaved Israelites were to post over their doorways? The angel of death knew to "pass over" these homes. Perhaps John was saying that by Jesus' blood, the people would be freed from death.

Or was John thinking about the guilt offerings mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures when priests offered animal sacrifices to God as a way of seeking the removal of their sins? Leviticus mentions use of a scapegoat who would carry the sins of the people away into the desert. (See Leviticus 20-28.) Could John have understood that Jesus would bear the sins of the world?

Or did John have in mind the great constellation Aries, the ram, considered the prince of the stars of the sky, the center from whom all the other constellations were mapped in ancient times? Perhaps John was pointing out that Jesus was the center around whom heaven and earth revolve, like the ruling lamb mentioned in the Book of Revelation.

Today at Mass, when the host is elevated and you hear John's words again—"Behold the Lamb of God!"—take a moment to savor these words anew. ●



LEARN ABOUT THE AUTHORS OF OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

Reflect

Which understanding of the "Lamb of God" resonates with me?

