

Session Outline

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Opening Comments
- ❖ Discussion
- ❖ Final Question // Closing blessing

Overview

Clericalism is an overriding set of beliefs and behaviors in which the clergy view themselves as different, separate, and exempt from the norms, rules and consequences that apply to everyone else in society, and the laity defer to that belief. Clericalism has fueled not just the cover-ups in the clergy sex-abuse scandals but also the other ills we confront today in the Church: from dwindling membership to financial scandals.

“Clericalism, far from giving impetus to various contributions and proposals, gradually extinguishes the prophetic flame to which the entire Church is called to bear witness in the heart of her peoples. Clericalism forgets that the visibility and sacramentality of the Church belong to all the People of God not only to the few chosen and enlightened.” – *Pope Francis*

“Clericalism should not have anything to do with Christianity.” – *Pope Francis*

“Understanding clericalism and transforming that mentality is the single most urgent priority for the coming Catholic Church ... the better our understanding of the meaning of the priesthood and the ways that it is changing, the better the chances of emerging from the dark night of the soul with a renewed church.”
– *David Gibson, The Coming Catholic Church*

[Clericalism is] “fundamentally an attitude found in clergy who have made their status as priests and bishops more important than their status as baptized disciples of Jesus Christ ... [It] is the almost inevitable outgrowth of clerical culture ... a culture deeply imbedded in the individual and collective unconscious of the clergy, and, by extension, in the unconscious of the laity who unwittingly support the cultures in which they live ... One sad, even tragic, effect of this ... is the curtailing of honest dialogue and conversation between laity and church authorities.” – *Donald Cozzens, Faith That Dares to Speak*