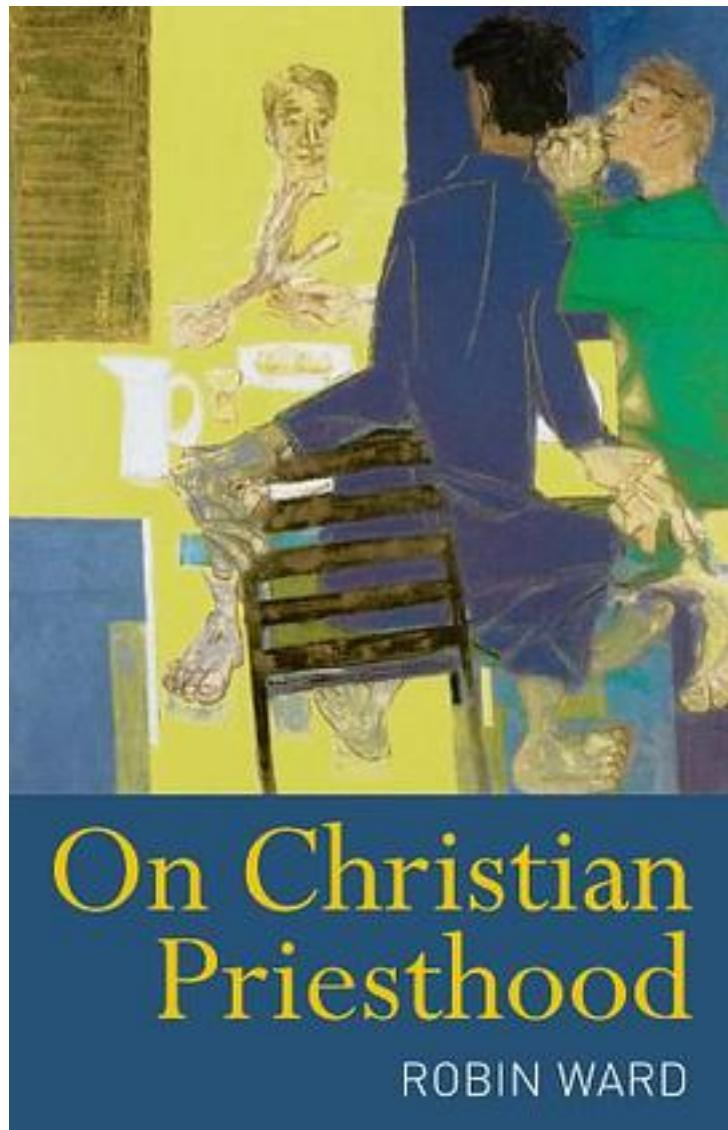


# On Christian Priesthood



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What is Christian priesthood? Contemporary pastoral theology is absorbed by the theory and practice of Christian ministry, but rarely sees it in terms of the exercise of ministerial priesthood. Contemporary liturgical practice emphasises participation and growth in discipleship, but not the offering of sacrifice or the anticipation of heaven. Contemporary spirituality encourages the pursuit of human flourishing, but not the need for sacramental reconciliation. This book seeks to restore the centrality of priesthood to the understanding of Christian ministry by setting it within the context of fundamental moral theology. Beginning with the importance of religion as a Christian virtue, it sets out the way in which the moral life is given a cultic setting by our participation in the sacraments. Priesthood and sacrifice are taken out of the setting of Reformation controversies and re-pristinated as key theological tools for understanding what ordination is for and how priesthood is a foundational characteristic of the Church. This has important and far-ranging consequences for ministerial formation, liturgical reform and ecumenical dialogue.

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