

19TH CENTURY FRENCH RELIGIOUS OIL PAINTING OF FIVE PRIESTS IN GILTWOOD FRAME

$3,200

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An unusual and historically evocative work of religious portraiture, this antique oil painting depicts five members of a French family who devoted their lives to the Catholic priesthood. Painted in France and dated 1862, the oil on canvas is presented in a richly carved giltwood frame adorned with intricate floral and foliate motifs.

The composition, titled Les Quatre Frères et un Neveu (The Four Brothers and a Nephew), features five individual portraits of clergymen dressed in traditional black cassocks with white clerical bands. Four older priests are arranged in opposing pairs within a celestial setting of softly rendered clouds, while a younger priest occupies the central foreground. Their carefully painted facial features, distinctive hairstyles, and solemn expressions lend individuality to each portrait.

The figures are enclosed within a large circular rainbow, symbolizing divine promise and spiritual unity. At the top of the composition, a delicate white ribbon tied in a bow bears the Latin inscription Elegi Eos Mihi in Sacerdotes, meaning “I have chosen them for myself as priests.” The inscription reinforces the painting’s religious significance, celebrating the family’s shared vocation and dedication to the Church.

The richly colored rainbow contrasts with the muted gray and rose tones of the clouds and the deep black clerical garments. The portraits are executed with fine attention to detail, while the symmetrical arrangement creates a harmonious and deeply personal commemorative composition.

The painting is housed in an ornate 19th-century carved giltwood frame featuring deeply sculpted acanthus leaves, flowers, and scrolling foliage, complemented by delicate inner moldings and a warm gold leaf finish.

The antique painting is in excellent condition commensurate with age and use, retaining its warm palette, detailed portraiture, and attractive aged surface. A distinctive example of French Catholic devotional art, this unusual family portrait would make a meaningful addition to a library, study, chapel, or collection of historical religious paintings.

Dimensions: 28” W x 32.25” H.

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