

XIII. SACRAMENT OF ORDERS

THESIS: mediante l'imposizione delle mani e l'invocazione dello Spirito, i vescovi ed i presbiteri sono ordinati al sacerdozio gerarchico ed i diaconi al ministero sacro sì che, per servire il sacerdozio comune, siano configurati a Cristo, capo della Chiesa. La grazia dell'Ordine. L'esercizio del triplice ufficio (profetico, culturale e pastorale). Il carattere speciale, che stabilisce la permanenza del loro rapporto sia con Cristo sia con le membra del Corpo mistico. Studio del fondamento biblico dello sviluppo storico della teologia e della prassi, e dell'insegnamento del magistero.

I. “Mediante l'imposizione delle mani e l'invocazione dello Spirito, i vescovi ed i presbiteri sono ordinati al sacerdozio gerarchico ed i diaconi al ministero sacro sì che, per servire il sacerdozio comune, siano configurati a Cristo, capo della Chiesa.”

A. The tripartite structure of leadership: Bishops, priest and deacons in the Scriptures:

1. Scriptural Elements:

a. Exousia: Christ's mission of salvation includes an exousia (authority and power) to forgive sins, preach, expel demons, etc.

1. 2 Cor. 10:8: the word exopusia is repeated speaking of the edification of the Church on the part of the apostles.

b. Calling: The Lord called some to partake in this mission (the 12, 72, etc). They have a pre-Paschal calling in the public life of the Lord.

1. Paul, being called, calls others to be his “collaboraters”. In a sense, they are also his successors. Thus, we have the root of the post-apostolic ministry: bishops and presbyters.

c. Apostles act in the name of Jesus -- In Rm 1:1, 1 Cor. 1:17; 2 Cor. 5:20 it becomes clear that the apostles act in the name of Christ or so to speak as “sacraments” of his presence to the community.

d. Other Citations in the New Testament:

1. The Priest is “before” his community (2 Thes. 3; 1 Cor. 5).

2. Acts 20: the work of the bishop is to be a shepherd of the flock of God that was won by his blood.

3. Christ the High Priest: (Hebrews): The idea introduced here is that the priest offers his own blood. The idea that Christ offered himself in sacrifice for all is presented in the Eucharistic celebration. “Do this in memory of me.” This affirmation of the sacramental presence of Christ is the reason why Trent choose this as the key to Christ's institution of the Sacrament of Orders.

4. 1 Peter 2:2-9: The Church is a real and holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices.

5. Rm. 15:16: Paul presents himself as the “liturgy” of the Lord

6. Rms. 12:1-2: The life of the baptized is a priestly life. We are to offer our life as a pleasing offering to the Lord.

2. Overall Pattern of the New Testament:

a. Christ as High Priest (Heb.): Priest and Sacrificed Victim: Priesthood = Priestly *Service (*to sacrifice himself) that is *eschatological (once and for all time). This is the basis of ministerial priesthood.

b. Paul: Apostolic Priestly Service: It is an announcement of the Gospel (ministerial and public) that reveals the crucified and risen Lord and makes Him present in anamnesis. It

includes apostolic works and suffering and eschatological service. Its characteristics include: vocation, mission, authorization by Jesus, public in nature.

c. Priestly People: as a service of sacrifice with the announcement of the Gospel.

d. Ministerial Priesthood: Fundamental elements are found in the New Testament.

1. There is a minister with a vocation, authorized, given a mission instituted by God through Jesus. It is not just charism but ministry within charism (that can betray a tension).

2. It is based on the priesthood of Jesus (priest and sacrifice). It is a ministry that is a service to the world and his salvation. It is based on Jesus' priesthood that fulfills all other priesthoods.

3. The Priesthood of Jesus continued in apostolic service announcement of Gospel, making present his holocaust, apostolic suffering).

4. Priesthood of Jesus culminates in priestly character of all for whom the minister is ordained. Such a priesthood testifies to it in faith, praise, Eucharist, sacrifice, martyrdom, etc.

5. Specific Ministry existed that tended towards hierarchical orders. It is rooted in Jesus, authorized by apostolic service and exercised in a variety of ways (Word, efficacious sign, interpretation of the Gospel patrimony, governance). Structure: diakonia (self-gift); Eschatological in origin and end.

3. Two Extremes for Scriptural Foundations for the present structures of the Church. Either:

The New Testament as offering a blueprint for all of the present structures of the Church. OR The leadership emerged from the Churches after the death of apostle.

a. Different Positions: "Charismatic" vs. "Hierarchical Order"

NB: Millas states that Schlier speaks of a charismatic origin to ministry. However, we are not dealing with a "charism" that exists without a "duty" [i.e. a transcendence that is public]. Thus, it is not a charism but it must be lived charismatically.

1. Charismatic Church Order is ideal: (1 Cor.) Rudolf Sohm and Emil Brunner say that the ideal of the Church as the Body of Christ excludes the idea of leadership that is based on office (the true gospel of freedom which is at variance with law, order, etc.). Thus, the evolution from a purely charismatic to a hierarchical Church order is seen as a falling away from the ideal of the gospel.

2. Hieranarchia, "a sacred anarchy" (G. Hasenhuttl) He argues that all formal authority in office necessarily involves the domination of one over another and that this is contrary to the gospel. The Corinthian church order is not a hierarchy but a hieranarchia, a sacred anarchy. This is the only "order" that is compatible to the idea of universal brotherhood in Christ.

3. Legitimacy of Church Hierarchy: (Hans von Campenhausen and Ernst Kasemann). These authors say that the purely charismatic church order corresponds most closely (not exclusively, however) to the Christian ideal, and it remains the ideal of Church order. They reject the idea that the Corinthian church order was temporary or less developed. Kung likewise comes close to the positions of these two theologians when he says that the Corinthian church order comes closest to the gospel ideal and therefore cannot be ruled out as a legitimate church order.

4. Legitimate Diversity of Church Orders in NT: Eduard Schweizer takes a more moderate position than the rest. He recognizes that there are differences in the church order from the Corinthians to the Pastorals, but the differences are not irreconcilable. All of them can lay claim to be manifestations of the Spirit. One cannot divide them into camps (those churches that are purely charismatic, devoid of all office, and those that are purely hierarchical, devoid of all charism).

b. The Judaeo-Christian tradition (marked by presbyters and ordination) and the Pauline communities (where presbyters are never mentioned).

1. However, the Jerusalem community had charismatic leaders, specifically prophets who are mentioned by name in the Acts of the Apostles (Agabus, Silas, Barsabbas). Thus, the earliest stages of the Jerusalem community had charismatic elements.

2. Likewise, we see authority and structure in the Pauline communities.

a. Paul himself is an authority, along with his co-workers; they were exercising oversight in an episcopal sort of way. [Paul's authority is given to him by the Lord himself -II Cor 13:10]. There is far less need for Paul to establish local authorities in these churches during his own lifetime, for Paul himself provided that ministry of oversight.

b. Paul did not leave the churches unattended without some form of local leadership. We saw at the conclusion of the letters to the Corinthians and the Thessalonians that there are certain people whose authority Paul backs with his own (for example, Stephanus and his household mentioned in I Cor 16).

3. Summary of New Testament witness:

a. The Twelve: The Lucan picture of the twelve presents **a unique body which provide the link between the public ministry of Christ, witnesses of the resurrection, and the foundation of the Church;** in Acts, theirs is specifically the Ministry of the Word. For Luke, the Twelve are the Apostles, par excellence. In the synoptics, the Twelve carry an **eschatological function** (twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes). In all gospels, the emphasis is on their being chosen, from the group of disciples, to be with the Lord, to receive special insight into the message of the Kingdom, to share in the work of **preaching** and healing. Part of that mandate also has a **sacramental aspect** to it (Mt 28 baptism; Acts 6 -- "prayer and ministry of the Word" -- a veiled reference to Eucharist?)

b. Apostle: In the Pauline sense, it means essentially, one who is commissioned by the risen Lord **to witness** on his behalf; obviously, the founding of Churches and care for their ongoing growth is seen by Paul as part of the carrying out of that **apostolic mandate**. Paul continued that ongoing care by backing the local leadership that was there with his own apostolic authority (cf. I Thes 5:12-13); no Pauline evidence of his having "ordained" presbyters (Acts 14:23 is Luke's account of Paul installing presbyters in every town). However, in Pastorals, we do have the evidence of Paul continuing his own overseeing through his delegates, Timothy and Titus (yet, these delegates are not to be seen as residential local bishops).

c. Episkopoi and Presbyteroi:

1. No real distinction in the New Testament

2. Principle functions are teaching (handing on deposit of faith) and **administration** (extended treatment in the pastorals).

3. They are appointed by Timothy and Titus through the laying on of hands.

In one sense, the role of the apostolic delegate (Tim/Titus) will be assumed by the “bishop” in overseeing the selection and ordination of presbyters, local leadership in the Church.

4. Diakonoi: The only extended treatment is in the Pastorals (I Tim 3:8-12) -- here, their function is one of “**service**”; certainly not teaching, preaching, or administration, but assistance to the presbyter-bishop. N.B. The reference to “Episkopoi kai Diakonoi” in Phil 1:1 ought not to be translated as “bishops and deacons” but rather “overseers and ministers.”

d. Deacons: The difference between deacons and priests/bishops is highlighted throughout the Tradition:

1. New Testament evidence (above)
2. Ignatius of Antioch: submit to latter; respect the former.
3. Hippolytus: Deacons were ordained in service to the bishops.
4. Trent: speaks of ministers
5. Rite itself:
 - a. no imposition except by bishop
 - b. no college of deacons
 - c. no anointing
 - d. no character
6. Vatican II: not ascribed to the will of Christ.

B. Tripartite Division in Church History:

1. First Three Centuries:

a. Post-New Testament Period: Collegial exercise of leadership: During the New Testament period and for the following generation or two, the important apostolic churches of Corinth and Philippi, as well as the Church of Rome were governed by a collegial exercise of leadership; however, in Syria and later in Asia Minor, an episcopate will already be established. The development was taking place at different rates in different geographic localities, so that in the Pauline churches of Greece and even in Rome there is a slower process of development.

b. Patristic witness

1. Diverse Grades of Order:

(a) The First Letter of Clement to the Corinthians: (#43) “One cannot forget the ministry instituted by Christ.” He refers to bishops and deacons.

(b) Ignatius of Antioch: The first real evidence of monarchical episcopate and a tripartite structure. In the letter to the Trallians, the **bishop** and the college of **presbyters** are to be “submitted to” while the **deacons** are to be “respected.” Ignatius sees the tripartite structure as normative.

(c) Irenaeus: 3 grades of Order and the importance of “apostolic succession”.

(d) Growth of minor Orders:

1. S. Cyprian: gives witness to the growth after the 3rd century of other “ranks” or “orders” that later become lector, exorcist, subdeacon, etc.

2. Tertullian

3. Hippolytus

4. Pope Cornelius

In this age, the question of the validity of the ordination of schismatics is also discussed. Cyprian held that the ordination of heretics and schismatics were invalid but Augustine held that they were “virtus sacramenti” (that is valid but not efficacious).

b. Rite of Ordination:

1. Traditio Apostolico of Hippolytus (c. 215): Description of ordination rite: (imposition of hands, prayer and consecration)

a. The bishop is chosen by the whole people, the consecratory prayer ultimately sees the candidate as chosen by God); the attending bishops (from the neighboring churches) are the ones to impose hands.

b. Priests were seen as collaborators with the bishop.

c. Deacons as ordained by the bishop alone because the deacon is ordained to the service of the bishop.

2. The Middle Age:

a. The various orders of ministry are clearly set at nine: cleric (tonsure), porter, lector, exorcist, acolyte, subdeacon, deacon, priest, bishop. The question arose is these were sacraments or not? In the Middle Ages, the theologians held that there were 7 sacraments (without tonsure and episcopacy) while the canonists held nine. The result was to hold one sacrament and the minor orders as sacramentals. [Vatican II suggested that the fullness of the sacrament is in the episcopacy].

b. The question concerned the foundation for the distinction between priest and bishop.

1. Some (as Albert the Great) said that the episcopacy was merely a power of jurisdiction. Thomas, on the other hand, said that the episcopate is not a separate “order” (in the sacramental sense); but, in another sense, the episcopacy is an order in that it is an empowerment with respect to the Mystical Body -- the bishop is empowered to do things that he may not entrust to priests.

2. Overall, the Medievals saw the **fullness** of the priesthood reside in the presbyterate. The reason was that they both had the power to consecrate the Eucharist. As such, the episcopacy was a “dignity” conferred by the Church. The canonists held that the episcopacy as an autonomous order diverse from priesthood.

3. Eventually, the position reached was to see that the episcopacy has, as its foundation, sacramental **ordination**; the sacramental foundation of the episcopacy is related to, but obviously distinct from, that of the presbyterate.

c. Related Questions dealt with in the Middle Ages:

1. What imparted character?

a. original position: giving of instruments

b. eventual change: imposition of hands

2. What was the effect of the sacrament? Twofold:

a. sanctifying grace: (worthy to administer the sacrament and holiness)

b. character: “capacity received, directed towards fulfilling actions ordained towards the Eucharist.

3. Teaching of Trent:

a. Canon 6: “If anyone says that in the Catholic Church there is no hierarchy instituted by divine ordinance, which consists of bishops, priests and ministers,

anathema sit.” **Two major questions:** A hierarchical church is de jure divino; however, does that mean that the episcopacy itself is de jure divino? And does it mean that Christ instituted the hierarchy?

b. Canon 7: “If anyone says that bishops are not superior to priests; or that they do not have the power to confirm or ordain... anathema sit.” Without detriment to the unity of the sacrament (there is one order), the powers of bishops is derived from the sacrament and not merely from jurisdiction. **NB: Trent speaks of bishop, priest and minister.**

4. Luther’s Teaching:

Luther spoke beautiful words about the “Ministry of the Word”. For Luther, the Mass was not a sacrifice and as such there is no need for a priesthood. 1 Cor. 11:26 speaks of the idea to announce the death of the Lord at the Lord’s supper. Thus, the supper itself is an announcement. In reaction to Luther, Trent emphasized ministry as concentrated upon the Mass as a sacrifice and the forgiveness of sins.

3. The Teaching of Vatican II: [LG 3, PO 1-6]

Key elements in Vatican II concerning the episcopacy:

- 1. collegiality**
- 2. indelible character**
- 3. apostolic succession**

Overall themes in Vatican II:

- 1. recovery of various functions of ministry (more than just Trent)**
- 2. recovery of episcopal structure of the Church**
- 3. reevaluation of the priesthood of the faithful (LG 10-12)**

a. L.G. 28: “Christ. . . has, through his apostles, made their successors, the bishops, partakers of His consecration and His mission. These in their turn have legitimately handed on to different individuals in the Church various degrees of participation in this ministry. Thus, the divinely established ecclesial ministry is exercised on different levels by those who from antiquity are called bishops, priests, deacons.”

b. The most significant advance in the doctrinal teaching of Vatican II is that the episcopate is a sacrament by which the bishop receives “the fullness of the sacrament of orders.” (LG 21) Not merely through jurisdiction but by virtue of ordination, the bishop is sacramentally configured to Christ as Priest, Prophet and King. Jurisdictionally, however, he exercises that office “in hierarchical communion with head and members of the body.” (LG 22) In this sense, the power of jurisdiction is implied by the power of order; jurisdiction, therefore, only indicates the field where the power of order is to be exercised.

c. Priests participate to a lesser degree in the fullness of the bishop’s priesthood and mission. Cf. Presbyterorum Ordinis #2. “So it was that Christ sent the apostles just as He Himself had been sent by the Father. Through these same apostles He made their successors, the bishops, sharers in his consecration and mission. Their ministerial role has been handed down to priests in a limited degree.”

d. The diaconate is restored “as a proper and permanent rank in the hierarchy.” (LG 29) Interestingly, while the council does attribute the establishment of the episcopacy and the presbyterate to the will of Christ and the apostles, it does **not** so attribute the establishment of the diaconate. Clearly too, the text of LG 29 says that the deacon is not ordained to the priesthood but “to the ministry of service.”

e. Other citations:

1. LG 3: Here it speaks of the hierarchy of the Church
2. LG 21: New idea: bishop= plenitude of priesthood
3. LG 25-27: three “munera”

4. Summary : Order is a sacrament, a constitutive act of the Church as the efficacious sign of salvation in Christ. The division of the one sacrament into priesthood (enjoyed in degrees) and ministry of service reflects the unity-in-diversity of the whole Church itself.

B. Configured to Christ, head of the Church:

1. The Christological element of priesthood entails an unfolding of the concept: Jesus as High Priest. In other words, if we are to speak of the priest as configured to Christ, we have to understand the nature of Christ’s priesthood:

a. Biblical affirmation: Jesus himself does not call himself “priest”; there is evidence of the self-designation of **shepherd**.

1. a sacrificial element to the shepherding.
2. a teaching role Cf. Mk 6:34
3. an authority of love

b. The early church considered the foundations of Christian leadership to be in the image of Christ, Shepherd.

2. Presbyterium Ordinis: “the sacerdotal office of priests, by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are marked with a special character and are so configured to Christ the Priest that they can act in the person of Christ the Head.” Acting in the person of Christ as Head, means not only the co-ordination of charisms for the sake of the unity of the body, but also the office of evangelization (the act by which the Word unites and constitutes a people of God) and sanctification (the Bridegroom who lays down his life for the Bride).

3. Rosato: “Alla luce dell’ot di servizio che Gesù eseguì mani svolta continuamente dalla Chiesa nella storia autorizza alcuni battezzati a seguirlo in modo specifico: **devono approfondire la loro configurazione sacramentale a Cristo capo mediante una conoscenza di lui ed un amore per lui e per le membra del suo corpo mistico, devono predicare la sua parola, prolungare i suoi gesti profetici, promuovere la sua giustizia e la sua carità mediante la direzione pastorale ed inaugurare il suo Regno per mezzo di tutte queste attività.**” (p. 97)

C. To serve the common priesthood

1. Scriptural affirmations of the priesthood of the faithful:

a. Rom 12: “offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, your spiritual worship.” Body = whole self; spiritual worship = literally, a thinking worship; a worship that involves the transformation of self.

b. Heb. 13:16: “Do not neglect good deeds and generosity; God is pleased with sacrifices of that kind.”

c. I Peter 2:5,9 expands the OT text of Exodus 19:6 -- “the holy priesthood that offers sacrifices which Jesus Christ has made acceptable to God. . . you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood a holy nation...” These sacrifices comprise the life of the Christian who, by virtue of his baptism, has become a member of this people. In that baptism, he is configured to Christ, imitating his self-offering.

d. Book of Revelation: (20:6) -- speaks of those who participate in the resurrection of Christ: "They shall serve God and Christ as priests and shall reign with him for a thousand years." -- This priesthood has no specific ecclesial functions, but speaks of service of God and reigning with Christ, participating in his kingship. It is essentially a participation in Christ's reign over sin and death.

Conclusion: From the New Testament, the priesthood of the faithful is a sharing in the priesthood of Christ, that is, a total consecration of self to the worship of the Father not only in prayer but in the life and works of charity. Of course there is a pneumatological element, namely a consecration which is a sealing of the Holy Spirit through baptism.

2. Is the universal priesthood of the Church the primary reality, established by Christ, from which emerges, in time, a ministerial priesthood? The New Testament evidence is that there are members of the community, specially consecrated and chosen to exercise those roles which are the foundational structures for the priesthood as we know it; furthermore, those who exercise that ministerial role are conscious of a particular and unique calling which comes from God in Christ Jesus and, while confirmed in the community (for example the selection of the "Seven" in Acts 6), **it does not emerge from the community as a "natural" form of leadership.**

3. Historical development:

a. For centuries, Christ's function as Head was sacramentalized in the various degrees of ministerial priesthood; the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial priesthood entrusted to the hierarchy are two inseparable and essentially related elements of her mystery. This doctrine was unchallenged for centuries.

b. Reformers were led to deny the sacramental orders in reaction to what they felt was the neglect of the common priesthood of the faithful.

c. Trent: 23rd session: "The Holy Council justly condemns the opinion...that all Christians are without distinction priests of the New Testament, or that they are equally endowed with the same spiritual power." [D.S. 1767]

d. Mediator Dei (Pius XII, 1947): "The Church is a society, and therefore must have its own authority and hierarchy. Although it is true that all members of the Mystical body share the same benefits and tend to the same end, this does not mean that they all enjoy the same powers or are competent to perform the same actions...The priesthood does not originate from the community nor is it derived by delegation from the people."

e. Lumen Gentium, 10: "Though the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood do, indeed, differ from each other in essence, and not only in degree, they are nonetheless ordained to each other; for both, in their respective manner share in the one priesthood of Christ. In virtue of the sacred power with which he is endowed, the ministerial priest instructs and rules the priestly people, performs in the person of Christ the eucharistic sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all; which the faithful, on their part, in virtue of their royal priesthood, join in the eucharistic offering, and exercise their priesthood in receiving the sacraments, in prayer and thanksgiving, in the witness of a holy life, in self-denial and active charity."

f. Apostolic exhortation of Paul VI on evangelization (Evangelii Nuntiandi) gives new impetus to lay ministries, while distinguishing them from the ordained ministries; these

ministries are the ecclesial recognition of the grace-gift given to laity for the sake of the Church.

g. J.P. II's "Christifideles Laici": In the synod on the laity, concern was voiced over a too-indiscriminate use of the word "ministry"; because of such confusion, the fear is that there may be an equating of the priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial priesthood. The tasks of the priesthood of the faithful, rooted in Baptism and confirmation. The interrelationship of the two priesthoods is expressed concisely: "For this reason, so as to assure and to increase communion in the Church, particularly in those places where there is a diversity and complementarity of ministries, Pastors must always acknowledge that their ministry is fundamentally ordered to the service of the entire people of God (Heb. 5:1); the lay faithful in turn must acknowledge that the ministerial priesthood is totally necessary for their participation in the mission in the Church."

4. Theological reflection on the interrelationship of the two priesthoods:

a. Both priesthoods are sourced in Christ, the great high priest. Both priesthoods are exercised through the power of the Holy Spirit offered sacramentally through Baptism, Confirmation and Orders. The sacramental character conferred by these rites (the *res et sacramentum*) is the way in which we traditionally have spoken of the permanent and real (ontological) determination of the person -- a consecration for a particular mission within the Church.

b. Recent documents (since L.G. 10) have spoken of the mutual relationship of the two priesthoods. Since the ministerial priesthood is a relationship to Christ as head of the Church, it follows that it is entrusted with the task of promoting the exercise of the universal priesthood. Likewise, the universal priesthood is exercised in accord with the ministerial priesthood. This does not diminish the importance of such statements as *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity): "The Laity derive the right and duty with respect to the apostolate from their union with Christ their Head. Incorporated into Christ's Mystical body through baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through confirmation, they are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord Himself. . . For the exercise of this apostolate the Holy Spirit who sanctifies the People of God through the ministry and the sacraments gives to the faithful special gifts as well. . . From the reception of these charisms or gifts, including those which are less dramatic, their arise for each believer the right and duty to use them in the Church and in the world for the good of mankind and for the upbuilding of the Church. . . At the same time, they must act in communion with their brothers in Christ, especially with their pastors. The latter must make a judgment about the true nature and proper use of these gifts, not in order to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and to hold onto what is good." (AA, #3)

c. Rosato: the interrelationship between the ordained priesthood and the priesthood of the faithful rooted in his notion of character (see notes on baptism):

a. Theme: two distinct modes of participating in the one priesthood of Jesus Christ (one mission/one being of Jesus)

b. Four-part schma:

1. Ontological: Participation in Christ's Mediation

a. Laity: partake in Christ's headship and power indirectly through incorporation into his body. It is a witness to his immanence to all the members of his body; salvific partaker of humanity; emphasis is upon action directed to the world.

b. Ordained: partake directly through a special, ontic, different configuration that is direct with Christ the Head; they witness to how he is transcendent to all the members of his Body; source of salvation; emphasis is upon support of the ecclesial community.

2. Existential: Communion in Fellowship

a. Laity: Loving Fellowship that is extra-ecclesial

b. Ordained: Stronger internal cohesion as the condition of possibility of the authenticity of the Church's outreach.

3. Socio-Practical: Promotion of Justice

a. Laity: Immanent Aspect of Justice: act on behalf of justice in temporal sphere.

b. Ordained: Transcendent Aspect: preach/sign to ecclesial communion of the need for justice.

4. Eschatological: Inauguration of the Kingdom:

a. Laity: (cosmic): develop in the temporal sphere the signs of the Kingdom.

b. Ordained: (Christocentric): develop in the baptized the divine life of Christ.

II. The Grace of Ordination:

“ The fact that the sacred Ministry is a sacrament of the Church says that it communicates not only a function but also a specific grace to those who receive it, they who are designated to participate in the holiness of the mystical body of Christ. The grace given to these sacred ministers reinforces them in their comportment with the baptized as a living memory of the first and final coming of Jesus Christ, the New Man, who has already realized a union between men through his being as the suffering and glorified servant, even if this is not yet fully revealed. For these reasons, the objective sanctity conceded to the ordained is manifested in the authoritative role to reveal the triple office of Christ: they are to be signs of his preaching, of his ritual and sanctifying acts and his being the shepherd of his flock.

III. The Exercise of the Triple Office: Prophetic, Cultic and Pastoral:

Rosato sees the preaching of the gospel as an activity that entails Word, gesture and authority. Here, the priestly, kingly and prophetic roles of Christ are participated in by the priest. This includes the relationship of the Eucharist and the work of evangelization. We can also add the function of governance which is principally the regulation of charisms in the community, enables that gospel message to be heard.

The three-fold function of priesthood is best understood within the context of the calling of the 12 and their eschatological mission to prolong, in history, the work of Jesus in eschatological service:

Cultic: celebration of the sacraments

Prophetic: announcement of the Word

Pastoral: guide the local community

A. Evangelization and priestly ministry in the writings of Vatican II.

1. Before Vatican II there was a noticeable tendency among theologians to stress the value of the ministry of the Word.

a. L. Bouyer: Christ entrusted to his apostles and to their successors and to the priests as co-workers the mission to proclaim the Word with authority. Thus it accomplishes what it proclaims. The sacramental aspects of the priesthood are seen, then as signs that God effects in deed what he signifies in Word.

b. Rahner has written that the cultic dimension is implied in the prophetic dimension. “The priest is the herald of God’s Word, but with this specification; he is related to a community (actual, or at least potential) and invested with this ministry with all the power of the Church. The priest has the mission to preach the gospel in the name of the Church. He does this at the highest level at which this Word can operate, in the anamnesis of Christ’s death and Resurrection through the celebration of the Eucharist.”

2. Vatican II: “The People of God finds its unity first of all through the Word of the living God.” (PO 4)

a. Bishops: LG 25: “Among the principle duties of bishops, the preaching of the gospel occupies an eminent place: they are authentic (that is authoritative) teachers on behalf of the Church.”

b. Priests: PO, 4: “Priests, as co-workers with their bishops, have as their primary duty the proclamation of the gospel of God to all.” P.O., 2: They (priests) shoulder the sacred task of the gospel, so that the offering of the people can be made acceptable through the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. For, through the apostolic proclamation of the gospel, the People of God is called together and assembled so that when all who belong to this people have been sanctified by the Holy Spirit, they can offer themselves as a “sacrifice, living, holy, pleasing to God.” The duty is not preaching their own wisdom but God’s word. Since the sacraments are sacraments of faith, the preaching of the Word has a priority in that it is the call to faith.

B. The Eucharist: “fons et apex” of evangelization (PO, 5):

1. It is difficult to trace in the New Testament Church the development of the celebration of the eucharist. There is evidence in Acts that both the Apostles as well as Paul celebrated the eucharist. Later, the Didache reflects that eucharist is not only celebrated by presbyter-bishops but also by the more charismatic “prophets” of the community.

2. **Early in the second century**, the celebration of the Eucharist is reserved to bishops and priests. It was the sacrificial understandings of the eucharist (principally understanding the eucharist in terms of Mal the pure sacrifice, acceptable to the Father) through which the appellation “priest” was attached to the presbyters.

3. **The Council of Trent** defines the priesthood in terms of the priest’s power to consecrate and to forgive sins; it even goes further by disavowing the opinion that those who do not preach are not priests at all. (However, one must not criticize Trent for omitting from consideration those things which were not being contested by the Reformation.) Thus, there was a radical separation of the role of evangelization and sacramental celebration which was only re-united in Vatican II.

4. Vatican II draws the link between the eucharistic offering and the work of evangelization:

a. Bishops: the local church, gathered around the altar and its bishop is the symbol of the Mystical Body.

b. Priests: (P.O. 2) For their ministry, which takes its start from the gospel message, derives its power and force from the sacrifice of Christ.

c. In terms of the other sacraments, they “are linked with the holy Eucharist and are directed toward it.” These other sacramental acts are actions designed to reconcile, unite and give nourishment to the People of God. The fullness of that mystery of union and reconciliation is the Eucharist -- hence, sacramentally, it is the fullest expression of the mystery of faith.

NB: Rosato holds the same opinion. The Eucharist is the summation of the four sacramental expressions of the act of justification of Jesus: “Per Gesù quindi l’azione simbolica dell’Ultima Cena giustifica i peccatori davanti al Padre, dona loro un’esperienza anticipativa della gioia del Regno, li unisce, riconciliandoli gli uni agli altri, e così offre loro il risanamento delle loro anime.” (p. 85)

C. The eschatological dimension:

1. Priestly activity in some way not only adds to, but also prefigures the reign of God:

a. The preaching of the gospel is a preaching of the reign of God, inaugurated by Jesus, present in anticipation, someday to be fully revealed.

b. The eucharist is the celebration of the death of the Lord until he comes. The spiritual authority is one of creating that One Body (neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female); it is also a ministry of liberation and transformation: The Kingship of Christ was fully manifested in that liberation from sin and death.

c. Not only in the forgiveness of sins, but in the ministry of reconciliation is this new creation not only proclaimed but actualized in the members of the Body.

2. Celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom (Mt 19:12).

Not only is celibacy a sign of the total dedication of the person for priestly ministry (it cannot just be a sign of dedication since it is in certain respects only extrinsically linked to the office of priesthood), but it is also, and primarily a sign of the Kingdom to come. As stated in PO, 16: “They therefore invoke that mysterious marriage which was established by God and will be fully manifested in the future, and by which the Church has Christ as her only spouse.

Moreover, they become a vivid sign of that future world which is already present through faith and charity, and in which the children of the resurrection will neither marry nor take wives.

IV. Theological reflection on “Character”

A. Historical Points:

1. Augustine is the first to speak of a permanent character in ordination as well as baptism. The sacraments cannot be repeated because **something real and permanent** takes place in the one who undergoes the rite of the Church.

2. Trent affirms “in three sacraments, namely baptism; confirmation and order, there is . . . imprinted on the soul a character that is, a **certain spiritual and indelible mark**, by

reason of which they cannot be repeated.” (Canon 7 on sacraments in general) The council had no intention of endorsing a particular scholastic theory as to the nature of this character that constitutes an essential difference. Yet, the council did mean to define that it was real and permanent and in some way related to the very being of the person who is so consecrated; yet, by saying that it **pertains to the order of being** is not to imply that it has nothing to do with **function**. A person so consecrated is consecrated in view of a mission for the Church on behalf of the Kingdom. **NB:** Kasper’s point is that the consequence of not having character is that we would be dependent upon the subjective holiness of the priest. The result would be the uncertainty of the offer of salvation.

B. Rosato’s notion (see notes on General Sacramental Theology)

I. The common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood (M. Hunt)

“... The common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood, though they differ in essence and not simply in degree, are nevertheless interrelated: each in its own particular way shares in the one priesthood of Christ...”

Lumen Gentium, 10

I. Introduction

The examinations of the nature of the common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood are essentially a single, interwoven study. Yet it is within the context of an interwoven study that a difficulty arises. How does one understand this interrelation while at the same time preserve the difference in essence that exists between the common and ministerial priesthood?

A study that is grounded in functionalism is doomed from the start. Hence, to examine the question from the standpoint of what the members of the common priesthood *do* and contrast that with what the members of the ministerial priesthood *do* will not provide adequate insight into the examination. Since “action follows being,” it is proper from a methodological viewpoint to start the consideration with a *being* of the members of the common priesthood and the members of the ministerial priesthood.

II. Common Priesthood of the Faithful

A. Baptism-Confirmation-Eucharist

1. characterizes all to carry out the mission of the entire people of God in the Church and in the world
2. called to offer God the prayers of the entire human family, a people giving thanks in Christ for the mystery of salvation by offering his sacrifice. [GIRM, 5]

B. Life of Worship/Service

1. join in the offering through receiving, prayer and thanksgiving
2. a life marked by holiness, self denial, active charity
3. witnesses to the Father’s unchanging love in the world
4. seeking “the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and ordering these in accordance with the will of God.” [LG 31]

C. Christological

1. witness to Christ’s work for all people

III. Ministerial or Hierarchical Priesthood

A. Orders

1. characterizes men “to preach the Gospel, to shepherd the faithful, and to celebrate divine worship as true priest of the New Testament.” [LG 28]

B. Life of Worship/Service

1. renew in Christ’s name the sacrifice of redemption
2. lead the People of God in love, nourish the People of God by the word, strengthen the People of God through sacraments
3. “by ordination and the mission they receive from the bishops, presbyters are promoted to the service of Christ the Teacher, Priest and King. They share in his ministry of unceasingly building up the Church on earth into the people of God, the Body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit.” [PO 1]

C. Christological

1. witness to the unique role of Christ in the Father’s plan of salvation

IV. Summary

A. People of God

1. a “priestly people on the move.” [MacLeod]
2. the pilgrims on the way are “sanctified, perfected and purified” as they move toward the Sabbath Rest.
3. access to the tabernacle of God through Jesus Christ

B. Complimentary

1. recognizing the vital unity of natures within the person Jesus Christ is a manner of understanding the relationship of the common and ministerial priesthood

C. Liturgically

1. diversity of ministries within the single act of worship
2. ministerial priest requires at least one minister in order to celebrate Eucharist

D. Priesthood of Jesus Christ

1. there is only one priesthood to speak of, the priesthood of Jesus Christ
2. members of both the common and ministerial priesthood **share** in this single priesthood
3. how one has been sacramentally ‘charactered’ or configured to the priest, Jesus Christ, forms and shapes the priestly being of the individual and the community

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