

# APOSTOLIC OFFICE: SACRAMENT OF CHRIST

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THE FIFTH session of the International Theological Commission (ITC), October 5–11, 1973, discussed a document on the subject of the nature of apostolic office and non-Catholic ordained ministry. It was remanded to a subcommittee for revision and published by it with approval of the Holy See.<sup>1</sup> This text offers a traditional view of apostolic office, including several formulations which seem to favor physical succession through a chain of ordinations going back to the apostles. On the other hand, it contains a more positive assessment of Protestant ordained ministry than was made at Vatican II.<sup>2</sup>

While Vatican II recognized elements of church outside the structure of the Roman Catholic Church<sup>3</sup> and explicitly referred this to Protestant communities,<sup>4</sup> it only stated that ordained ministry in the Reformation tradition lacked the sacrament of orders.<sup>5</sup> The Council could have affirmed that in the measure these communities are churches, in an analogous sense, they have a correspondingly qualified ministry. An explicit denial of this would have made the ecclesiological statements about Protestant communities, especially the assertion that the Spirit uses them as “means of salvation,”<sup>6</sup> purely abstract and theoretical. Many Catholic theologians have pointed out that such statements are unintelligible, indeed contradictory, without a corresponding recognition of the ministry of word and sacrament.<sup>7</sup>

The ITC subcommittee, taking the logical step, affirms that Protestant ordained ministry possesses a truly spiritual content and participates in the apostolicity of the Church. However, it is not considered to be equivalent to apostolic office because of the lack of the sacrament of orders.<sup>8</sup> A key passage of the ITC text describes “apostolic succession” (of ministry) as “that aspect of the nature and life of the Church which shows the actual dependence of the community in relation to Christ

<sup>1</sup> “L’Apostolicité de l’église et la succession apostolique,” *Esprit et vie* 84 (1974) 433–40 (cf. also *Documentation catholique*, July 7, 1974, pp. 612–18). Approbation of the Holy See indicates that the content is not opposed to Catholic faith. Cf. introductory remark of Msgr. J. Medina Estevez (*ibid.*, p. 433).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 440.

<sup>3</sup> *Lumen gentium*, no. 8.

<sup>4</sup> *Unitatis reintegratio*, nos. 3, 19–23.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 22.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 3.

<sup>7</sup> E.g., W. Kasper, “Zur Frage der Anerkennung der Ämter in den lutherischen Kirchen,” *Theologische Quartalschrift* 151 (1971) 97–109.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. comments of Estevez (n. 1 above) p. 435.

through his delegates." Hence the conclusion is drawn: "The apostolic ministry is the sacrament of the efficacious presence of Christ and of the Spirit in the midst of the People of God . . ." The theological explanation of the latter statement is the theme of this essay. In what sense can apostolic office be called sacrament of Christ?

#### TRADITIONAL VIEW OF APOSTOLIC OFFICE

The ITC text speaks of apostolic office as a "sign and instrument," established by Christ, "by which he communicates the fruits of his life, of his death, and of his resurrection."<sup>10</sup> This explains the use of the term "sacrament" for ordained ministry. It is reminiscent of Vatican II's description of the Church as "sacrament . . . sign and instrument" of the union with God and the unity of all mankind because of its relationship to Christ.<sup>11</sup> It also relates to certain New Testament references to ecclesiastical office.

The leaders of the primitive Church were called shepherds.<sup>12</sup> Their task corresponds to that of the one Shepherd, Christ,<sup>13</sup> who has the role ascribed to God in the Old Testament.<sup>14</sup> Consequently they could be regarded as representing God or Christ. Paul understands that he represents God the Father in preaching the message of reconciliation and so acts in the place of Christ, *in persona Christi*.<sup>15</sup> At the beginning of the

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 439. The text affirms apostolic office as the third criterion of the unity of the Church. It was occasioned by the *Memorandum* of the German Universities Ecumenical Institutes, at least in great part (*ibid.*, p. 433). This document, acknowledging the real possibility of mutual recognition of Catholic and Lutheran ordained ministry, appeared to underestimate the role of the traditional form of apostolic office and so to accept implicitly the theory of two criteria of the unity of the Church, i.e., common faith and sacraments, as affirmed in *Confessio Augustana*, 7, *sensu exclusivo* (*Reform und Anerkennung kirchlicher Ämter: Ein Memorandum der Arbeitsgemeinschaft ökumenischer Universitätsinstitute* (Munich–Mainz, 1973).

<sup>10</sup> *Art. cit.*, p. 437.

<sup>11</sup> *Lumen gentium*, no. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Acts 20:28; Eph 4:11; 1 Pt 2:25; 5:2.

<sup>13</sup> Jn 10:7–30.

<sup>14</sup> Ps 94:7.

<sup>15</sup> Paul is sent by Jesus Christ and God the Father (Gal 1:1) or simply by the will of God (1 Cor 1:1, 2 Cor 1:1). Sensitive to the monarchian unity of God (1 Cor 15:28), Paul goes beyond such formulas as that of Mt 28:18–19. Referring once to the sending of Jesus by the Father (Gal 4:4), Paul otherwise preaches Jesus as God's Son through whom God acts immediately (Rom 1:3–6). The apostle has the ministry of reconciliation from God (2 Cor 5:18–19) and this means in the place of Christ, *in persona Christi*: God speaks through the apostle because Christ speaks therein (v. 20). While there is an inseparable unity of will and action of God and Christ, the emphasis falls on the appeal of God who is the goal of reconciliation; cf. E. Neuhäusler, *Der Bischof als geistlicher Vater* (Munich, 1964) 31–35.—Paul functions as a father in the service of the new Torah—a notion derived from rabbinic background, where the student called his rabbi father, and where the teaching of the Torah was viewed as midwifery (1 Cor 4:15; Gal 4:19).

second century Ignatius of Antioch views the bishop as spiritual father, representative of God. He does not develop the theme, as Paul does, from the procreative effect of the preaching of the gospel. Rather he speaks of the bishop as representative of the Father because he is like-minded with the will of the Father.<sup>16</sup> The Ignatian ordering of the bishop to the Father may have been directly rooted in a charismatic experience.<sup>17</sup> At least it was partially determined by the type of mission Christology found in the Fourth Gospel, where Jesus is one sent to reveal and lead to the Father. Ignatius lists Christ among those sent.<sup>18</sup>

The viewpoint of Ignatius is found elsewhere in the Syrian tradition as late as the anonymous *Didascalia* of the third century. However, this author bases the like-mindedness of the bishop with the will of the Father on his study of Scripture and openness to God's word. The bishop is father of the faithful because each owes his sonship to the bishop's baptism and because the bishop teaches and judges in the place of the Father.<sup>19</sup>

The Syrian tradition is sensitive to the ultimate goal of history: the Father, who in the measure that He gives Himself to the Church must be represented in it by the bishop. Another viewpoint is offered by *1 Clement* 42:1-4. Here church leaders are described as successors of the apostles sent by Christ, who in turn is sent by God.<sup>20</sup> This outlook, differing from that of Ignatius and *Didascalia*, where the presbyterate represents the apostles and the diaconate Christ's ministry, eventually leads to the explicit affirmation that the bishop represents Christ.<sup>21</sup> As

<sup>16</sup> Neuhäusler, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>18</sup> E.g., *Ep. to Magnesians* 8, 2.

<sup>19</sup> Neuhäusler, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-96. Within the same tradition *Epistula apostolorum* 42 (c. 150) awards the title of father to the apostles, who reveal Jesus' teaching of God's Lordship in obedience to the Father's will (W. Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha* 1 [Philadelphia, 1963] 220-21). It reflects the usage of the community, probably Syrian, where the document originated.

<sup>20</sup> As in Lk 10:16; Mk 9:37; Mt 10:40; Jn 13:20, where a line is drawn from the apostles beyond Jesus to God. Here, however, the second member does not appear as having a special and basically different position from the first member. The difference is brought out by the Pauline concept of the indwelling of Christ "through faith" in the believer (cf. n. 15 above).

<sup>21</sup> Tertullian first uses the term *vicarius Christi* for the bishop. He also uses *vicarius Petri* or *apostolorum*; cf. M. Maccarrone, *Vicarius Christi: Storia del titolo papale* (Rome, 1952) pp. 26 f. Cyprian uses the latter titles (*ibid.*, p. 45) and also refers to the bishop acting *vice Christi* (*Ep.* 63, 14; 59, 5).—The concept *vicarius Christi*, a legal and military term, later provided the theological basis for grounding the triple office of the bishop in the triple office of Christ. Originally the unity of the ministry of preaching, sacraments, and government in apostolic office derived from the special ministry of the gospel, which includes leadership of worship and discipline. N. Lohfink's objection to the theological argument on the grounds that the functions of king, priest, and prophet are not predicated of Christ in the New Testament in a sociological sense has some merit. But his observation that the exercise of

the presbyterate came to share more and more in the teaching office of bishop and leadership of local communities, it also was awarded the same function. Traces of this can be found at least as early as the late fourth century.<sup>22</sup> This view became the common understanding of the role of bishop and priest in Western and Eastern theology.<sup>23</sup>

In recent papal encyclicals this explanation of the priest's role is used especially in a Eucharistic context: the priest is said to represent Christ the Head in the offering of the sacrifice of the cross, and so the whole Church.<sup>24</sup> The most detailed analysis of this role is found in *Mediator*

these functions normally by different persons in the Old Testament is indicative of what could be done in the Church is hardly persuasive. Lohfink's rather sketchy presentation ("Das alte Testament und die Krise des kirchlichen Amts," *Stimmen der Zeit* 185 [1970] 268-76) has received favorable comment (M. Houdijk, "A Recent Discussion about the New Testament Basis of the Priestly Office," *Concilium* 80 [1970] 137-47). But it fails to think through sufficiently the consequences of the fact that the differences between the NT and OT triple function of office are greater than the correspondences and that the latter are not so directly forms of expression of the word of God.

<sup>22</sup>The early history of the *vicarius Christi* concept needs further study, especially with regard to the presbyteral office. Aponius, a Syrian-Jewish Christian writing in Italy, 405-15, used the title for priests (*In canticum canticorum explanatio* 2 [PL, Suppl. 1, 838]), who are also called *vicarius apostolorum* (*ibid.* 8 [PL, Suppl. 1, 937]), just as are the *doctores* (*ibid.* 3 and 12 [849, 1017]), who are identified with *sacerdotes*; cf. B. Jaspert, "'Stellvertreter Christi' bei Aponius, einem unbekanntem 'Magister' und Benedikt von Nursia," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 71 [1974] 296-301, who also refers to the use of *vicarius Christi* for *sacerdotes-doctores* in the late-fourth century *Ambrosiaster* (*ibid.*, p. 299).

<sup>23</sup>For the Eastern view of apostolic office, cf. J. Madey, "Das Charisma des apostolischen Amtes im Denken und Beten der Ostkirchen," *Catholica* 27 (1973) 263-79; "Das apostolische Sukzession in der Sicht der Orthodoxie," in K. Schuh, *Amt im Widerstreit* (Berlin, 1973) pp. 46-51. In the West the conceptual separation of the office of presbyter from bishop with emphasis on the former's sacramental functions and not on the leadership of the Eucharistic community—as witnessed in the rites of ordination from the eighth to the thirteenth century (H.-J. Schulz, "Das liturgisch-sacramental übertragene Hirtenamt in seiner eucharistischen Selbstverwirklichung nach dem Zeugnis der liturgischen Überlieferung," in P. Blaser, *Amt und Eucharistie* [Paderborn, 1973] pp. 237-42)—led to the distinction between the priest acting *in persona Christi* in virtue of the power of Eucharistic consecration given at ordination and the bishop so acting in virtue of his pastoral office (thus Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 82, a. 1; cf. Bonaventure, *Sent.* 4, d. 25, a. 2, q. 1: priesthood signifies *Christus mediator*). The representative role of the priest was obscured by the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century speculation on the efficacy of the Mass, which resulted in the view, accepted by the few theologians who dealt with this subject, that the Mass is a work of the office of priest and of limited value for satisfaction for sins *ex opere operato*, i.e., independently of the merits of the priest and in isolation from the work of Christ and the Church (cf. E. Iserloh, "Der Wert der Messe in der Diskussion der Theologen vom Mittelalter bis zum 16. Jahrhundert," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 83 [1961] 61-67).

<sup>24</sup>Pius XII, *Mystici corporis* (AAS 35 [1943] 232-33); *Mediator Dei* (AAS 39 [1947] 556); Paul VI, *Mysterium fidei* (AAS 57 [1965] 761-63).

*Dei*. It states that the unbloody immolation, occurring at the words of consecration, is a ritual act of the priest alone. Through it Christ is made present on the altar (consecratory aspect) and offered to God (oblatory aspect). Here the priest acts alone as representative of Christ, who as principal agent consecrates the gifts and offers the sacrifice of the cross in the name of all his members. The faithful are said to offer "through the hands of the priest" acting as minister of Christ and with the priest in so far as they unite their prayers and intentions with his.<sup>25</sup>

A clear distinction is thus made between the priest's institutional and personal role. Because of the former role the rite is objectively the sacrifice of the whole Christ, since the principal agent is Christ, the Head of the Church. This presentation could imply the theory that the institutional role of the priest is able to draw the prayerful intention of Christians throughout the world into direct participation in the celebration. *Mediator Dei* does not say this. Furthermore, none of the modern papal encyclicals which affirm that the Eucharist is sacrifice of the Church explains how the Church throughout the world offers individual Eucharists.<sup>26</sup> Still it was the prevailing view of Catholic theology when *Mediator Dei* was published.<sup>27</sup>

The attempt to show the solid foundation in tradition for the theory of direct participation of the prayerful Church throughout the world in

<sup>25</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 552-56.

<sup>26</sup> The allocution of Pius XII, Nov. 2, 1954, refers to the importance of "establishing the nature of the act of hearing and celebrating the Mass, from which the *other* fruits of the sacrifice flow" (AAS 46 [1954] 669). This has been interpreted to imply that such activity should be distinguished from "the nature of the act itself" as act of the Church (cf. D. Burrell, "Many Masses and One Sacrifice," *Yearbook of Liturgical Studies* [Notre Dame, 1962] p. 114). However, Pius XII only wishes to insist on the difference between the Mass at which many priests *assist* and the Mass at which many *concelebrate* (cf. K. Rahner, "Die vielen Messen als die vielen Opfer Christi," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 77 [1955] 94-101). With reference to the theme of this paper, it should be noted that the distinction made by Pius XII is based on the view that the priest directly represents Christ.

<sup>27</sup> G. de Broglie's elucidation of the relationship of the priest to the universal Church, based on the nature of the action of Christ in the Eucharist never being independent of his Mystical Body, leads him to the conclusion that every valid Mass is fruitful because of the devotion of the faithful throughout the world who intentionally unite themselves with every Mass ("Du rôle de l'église dans le sacrifice eucharistique," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 70 [1948] 449-60; "La messe, oblation collective de la communauté," *Gregorianum* 30 [1949] 534-61). J. A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite* 1 (tr. F. A. Brunner, C.S.S.R.; New York, 1950) 191, n. 48, agrees with de Broglie. But the conclusion does not follow from the arguments. Rather the arguments afford a reasonable explanation of an accepted fact. If the theological perspective of *Mystici corporis* on the relation of the whole Church to each Eucharist (AAS 35 [1943] 232) had been developed, it would have followed along the same lines and undoubtedly in the style of S. Tromp's "Quo sensu in sacrificio Missae offert ecclesia, offerunt fideles," *Periodica* 30 (1941) 265-73.

concrete Eucharists has failed.<sup>28</sup> On theoretical grounds it was refuted by Karl Rahner. Despite initial opposition, he was able to establish the now prevailing view that the whole Church can only participate indirectly through the active devotion of the actual participants of a concrete Eucharistic celebration.<sup>29</sup> As a logical consequence of this thesis, it follows that no Eucharist is possible without the presence of faith on the part of some participant physically present at the concrete Eucharist. This alone assures the presence of that element which is essential for the realization of "the sacrament of faith."

While some differences of opinion may still exist about the relationship of the whole Church to concrete Eucharists, all schools of thought agree that the faith of the Church must be present for the celebration of a true Eucharist. Christ's presence as victim and offerer does not occur because he binds himself to an institution independently of the exercise of faith. This consensus should lead us to ask: Does not the priest, directly representing the faith of the Church somehow actualized in the celebration, serve as transparency of the grounds of faith: Christ?

Modern papal encyclicals favor the theory of direct representation of Christ by the priest. This holds true for Vatican II. *Lumen gentium*, summarizing the teaching of *Mediator Dei* on the priest's role in the Eucharist, states: "Acting in the person of Christ, he brings about the Eucharistic sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of the people. For their part, the faithful join in the offering of the Eucharist in virtue of their royal priesthood."<sup>30</sup> This notion of the priest as representative of Christ is repeated elsewhere in Vatican II, especially with reference to the Eucharistic sacrifice.<sup>31</sup> Bishops, sharing in the triple office of Christ, are also described as acting "in his person."<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless we do not find a

<sup>28</sup> For example, P. R. Schulte's careful study of medieval writers from Isidore of Seville (d. 636) to Remigius of Auxerre (d. ca. 908) merely shows an awareness that the Church as a whole is implicated in each Eucharist. It does not show, as he contends, that it was understood to occupy a place between Christ and the actual participants of a Mass "quasi persona" (*Die Messe als Opfer der Kirche: Die Lehre frühmittelalterlichen Autoren über das eucharistische Opfer* [Münster, 1959] p. 72, n. 280).

<sup>29</sup> K. Rahner and A. Häussling, *The Celebration of the Eucharist* (New York, 1968). M. Schmaus, "Christus, Kirche und Eucharistie," in Schmaus, *Actuelle Fragen zur Eucharistie* (Munich, 1960) p. 69, summarizes the currently accepted position of Catholic theologians: "In each Eucharistic celebration the whole Church shares as offerer . . . The actual sharers of a definite Mass are the representatives of the whole Church. On their faith and devotion depends in what measure not only they themselves but the whole Church in its transindividual subjectivity enters into the sacrifice of Christ."

<sup>30</sup> *Lumen gentium*, no. 10.

<sup>31</sup> *Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 7; *Lumen gentium*, no. 28; *Presbyterorum ordinis*, nos. 2 and 13.

<sup>32</sup> *Lumen gentium*, nos. 21 and 37. Priests are also said to share in the triple office of Christ (*Presbyterorum ordinis*, no. 1) in communion with the bishop (*ibid.*, no. 6).

genuine theological explanation of this representative function in any of these sources.

The debate over the *Memorandum* of the German Universities Ecumenical Institutes has occasioned a new theological discussion of the role of apostolic office.<sup>33</sup> H. Mühlen, for example, concludes that the central issue in the ecumenical dialogue is the "mediation of salvation through men, in which Christ himself effects the salvation of others."<sup>34</sup> He understands this to be the kernel of the Roman Catholic understanding of office. Consequently he finds promising the Dombes document, which characterizes the office bearer as representative of Christ over against the community.<sup>35</sup> Along the same lines, L. Scheffczyk elaborates on the thesis that the *Christusrepräsentation* is the essential aspect of the priestly office.<sup>36</sup>

Scheffczyk's brief historical outline of the traditional view of pastoral office is somewhat oversimplified. Moreover, his theological reflections leave much to be desired. He assumes that one can explain the representative role of the priest in relation to Christ in isolation from his representative role with respect to the Church as Body of Christ. At the end of his article the statement is made that a full development of the

<sup>33</sup> For a critical evaluation of this document by Catholic theologians, cf. K. Lehmann, "Ämteranerkennung und Ordinationsverständnis," *Catholica* 27 (1973) 248-62; L. Scheffczyk, "Die Christusrepräsentation als Wesensmoment des Priesteramtes," *ibid.*, pp. 293-311; H. Mühlen, "Das mögliche Zentrum der Amtsfrage," *ibid.*, pp. 329-58; K. Schuh *et al.*, *op. cit.*; H. Schütte, *Amt, Ordination und Sukzession im Verständnis evangelischer und katholischer Exegeten und Dogmatiker der Gegenwart sowie in Dokumenten ökumenischer Gespräche* (Düsseldorf, 1974) pp. 404-10. Clarification of the *Memorandum* is offered by two of its authors: H. Fries, "Reform und Anerkennung kirchlicher Ämter," *Catholica* 27 (1973) 188-208; W. Pannenberg, "Ökumenische Einigung über die gegenseitige Anerkennung der kirchlichen Ämter," *Catholica* 28 (1974) 140-55.

<sup>34</sup> *Art. cit.*, p. 343.

<sup>35</sup> The Dombes group, composed of Catholic, Lutheran, and Reform theologians of France and French-speaking Switzerland, locates the specificity of pastoral office in the task of securing and symbolically representing the dependence of the Church on Christ (*Pour une réconciliation des ministères: Éléments d'accord entre catholiques et protestants* [Taizé, 1973] 1/4).

<sup>36</sup> *Art. cit.* See also a briefer version of this article: "Das kirchliche Amt im Verständnis der katholischen Theologie," *Amt im Widerstreit*, pp. 17-25. A similar presentation is found in W. H. Dodd's "Toward a Theology of Priesthood," *Theological Studies* 28 (1967) 683-705. Dodd distinguishes between the hierarchy as sacrament of Christ and the faithful as sacrament of "Christ the already redeemed community." Both function to give visibility to the Church as sacrament of the whole Christ, Head and members (p. 696). The distinction is based on ordination, which gives the priest powers to represent Christ in the service of his word and sacrament (p. 699). This presentation proceeds from the traditional distinction between Christ's presence by institution *and* by faith, in which the *et* signifies a disjunction. As with Scheffczyk, Dodd fails to consider the implications of the twofold role of the priest (representative of Christ *and* the Church) as a source of clarification of both.

representative concept must take into consideration the priest's role in regard to the community as Body of Christ.<sup>37</sup> But he does not attempt to point out how the linking of the priest to the community is to be newly set forth.

The methodology of this author, which is typical of Catholic theological presentations of this theme, implies that the priest represents Christ *and* the Church in such a way that the *et* signifies a disjunction. Sometime ago Karl Barth called attention to the problem of the theological *et* and spoke of the "accursed *et* of Catholic theology." He did not seem to appreciate the fact that in this theology it normally signifies not a disjunction but a co-ordination of magnitudes. For example, "Christ *and* the Church offer the Eucharistic sacrifice" means that the Church offers in union with Christ as source of the possibility of acceptable worship. The *et* signifies that the act of the Church and the act of Christ are bound together unconfused and unseparated. But what is the theological significance of the *et* used in connection with the priest's two representative roles?

As an essential aspect of the sacramental reality of the Church, ministerial office represents Christ. But the priesthood of all believers is another form of representation of Christ. As Vatican II affirms, all believers share in the mission of Christ.<sup>38</sup> Both representative functions derive from the sacramental nature of the Church, in which Christ is present as sharing source of faith in his abiding presence. It follows that one cannot situate the peculiarity of ordained ministry in the unqualified concept of representation of Christ. One can only ask how this function is shared by ordained ministry in a way which is distinct from the common priesthood of all believers. Such a question would seem to imply that the theological *et* does not signify a disjunction between the ordained ministry's representative roles but rather that the minister represents Christ in representing the Church and represents the Church in representing Christ. However, this is only possible if the minister directly represents the Church in a special way and so serves as transparency for Christ.

In reaction to Scheffczyk's criticism of the *Memorandum*, W. Pannenberg shows the way to a solution of the problem of this theological *et*. He situates the peculiarity and task of office in the official caring for the common matter of all believers. Through the office bearer the common matter of the Church, the mission of Christ, confronts the rest of the community: "In this sense one can say...the bearer of office, over

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311, n. 54.

<sup>38</sup> *Lumen gentium*, no. 10; *Apostolicam actuositatem*, nos. 2-8.



against the rest of the members of the Church, acts as representative of Christ, *in persona Christi*.”<sup>39</sup>

Pannenberg describes the task of office, in terms of the *Memorandum*, as one of stimulating the believers, of opening them to the content of their faith, and of co-ordinating and integrating the different gifts of the members of the community. He then concludes: “To this extent the ordained office thus shows itself finally as *Repräsentation* of the common matter of the faith over against the believers themselves and outwardly.”<sup>40</sup>

This position does not hesitate to speak of office as representation of Christ from the fear that it implies a conceptual separation between the divine and human in the saving work of Christ, which in turn founds the idea of a human co-operation with God.<sup>41</sup> It confidently asserts this on the grounds of the awareness of the active presence of Christ in the life of the faith of the Church. This presentation rejects a narrow sacral view of office and a corresponding isolation of office from the concrete daily life of the Church. On the other hand, it is not opposed to the ordering of office to the sacramental life of the Church as understood in the sense of the New Testament concept of the mystery of salvation which brings together Christ and the Church.

Responding to Pannenberg’s article, Karl Lehmann sympathizes with his attempt to determine the peculiarity of office by the combination of elements of leadership and publicity. Still he doubts that the concept of public guardianship is so original that it can fulfil the basic function intended for it. He asks for a clarification of the authority for this function.<sup>42</sup>

The ITC text bases the authority on the “charism of apostolic succession . . . received in the visible community . . . accorded in an act which is the visible and efficacious sign of the gift of the Spirit, an act which has as instrument one or some ministers, themselves inserted into apostolic succession.”<sup>43</sup>

On this point all Catholics should agree, though they may dispute about the fact of “physical” succession of apostolic office in an unbroken chain going back to the apostles. The New Testament knows of a direct

<sup>39</sup> *Art. cit.*, p. 151.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 151–52.

<sup>41</sup> A viewpoint expressed frequently in the old Reformation polemics and newly developed by P. E. Persson, *Kyrkans ambete som Kristusrepresentation: En kritisk analys av nyare ambetsteologi* (Lund, 1961) to explain how the office bearer became understood as representative of Christ.

<sup>42</sup> “Nach dem Streit um das Ämtermemorandum,” *Catholica* 28 (1974) 157–59.

<sup>43</sup> *Art. cit.*, p. 439.

bestowal of the charism of leadership by God through a personal, immediate call, as in the case of Matthew<sup>44</sup> or Paul. It also knows of a bestowal through persons capable of this charismatic activity in a rite which conforms to contemporary rabbinic ordination.<sup>45</sup> However, in this latter case the bestowal was not understood to be effected through a magical flowing over of the charism from one to the other—a concept which apparently did exist in the later patristic tradition under the influence of Stoic philosophy.<sup>46</sup> Rather the ordination of the candidate, presented by the community, served to render visible the charismatic power acquired by the bestowal of the Spirit.

Equipped with the power of the Spirit for the work of the gospel, the ordaining minister must function in such a way that his instrumental task is not separated from an ecclesial context. In other words, the minister must represent the faith of the Church in order to serve as minister of Christ. In Scholastic theology, from the thirteenth century onward, this condition was described in terms of the minister's intention *faciendi quod facit ecclesia*. Although this dictum has been interpreted in various ways in the history of School theology, one point has always been agreed on by the "externalists" and "internalists": the external rite must be placed in a context in which it can serve as representation of the faith of the Church. Thus a public disavowal of the minister to serve this representative role would be judged by all schools to render the sacrament null and void. This would seem to imply that a representation of Christ by the minister takes place only through the direct representation of the faith of the Church.

The qualification of the ordaining minister simply as "instrument" in the ITC document does not reflect sufficient sensitivity in regard to the ecclesial aspect of sacramental activity. This is characteristic of Scholastic theology. In the presentation of the sacraments as *causae instrumentales gratiae* established by Christ and a corresponding neglect of the role of faith in the realization of sacramental events, Christ's presence is depicted as somehow bound to institutions independently of the exercise of the faith of the Church.<sup>47</sup> Within this narrow view one is

<sup>44</sup> Acts 1:24–26.

<sup>45</sup> For the concept and practice of rabbinic ordination in early Judaism, cf. K. Hruby, "La notion d'ordination dans la tradition juive," *Maison Dieu* 103 (1970) 30–56.

<sup>46</sup> B. Kötting, "Zur Frage der 'successio apostolica' in frühchristlicher Sicht," *Catholica* 27 (1973) 240, refers to the baptismal controversy between Cyprian and Rome, which shows that the Africans had a Stoic concept of *pneuma*.

<sup>47</sup> The use of "instrument" for the ordaining minister in the text of the ITC is unfortunate. Thomas Aquinas was more sensitive to the personal dimension of sacramental acts and speaks of them as *causae ministeriales*: ritual acts performed by men acting as ministers of Christ and so analogous to impersonal instruments used by a principal agent (*Sum. theol.* 3, q. 64, aa. 1, 5). Cf. A. Skowronek, *Sakrament in der evangelischen*

easily led to the conclusion that the ordaining minister, as institutional person, directly represents Christ.

#### APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM

The problem of the relationship between the representative functions of apostolic office with respect to Christ *and* the Church is only part of a larger problem which surfaced at Vatican II. The architects of the Constitution on the Liturgy were concerned, among other things, with the truth that the Church's activity in word and sacrament is a means of salvation because of the abiding, active presence of Christ and the Spirit in the Church. The original schema of this Constitution attempted, to some degree, a theological ordering of Christ's presence in the Church. It proceeded from his abiding presence in the liturgical community to his activity in word, prayer, sacraments, and sacrifice of the Mass.<sup>48</sup> This passage, which provoked considerable discussion, did not receive a sufficient majority of votes. It was rejected by many of the fathers, who wished to give first place to Christ's presence through the Eucharistic minister and under the Eucharistic species.<sup>49</sup> Thus the approved text, art. 7, refers to Christ's presence in the Church, especially in its liturgical celebrations: in the person of the minister at the sacrifice of the Mass; "especially" under the Eucharistic species; in the sacraments "by his power"; in the reading of Scripture; in the praying Church.

The encyclical letter *Mysterium fidei* also discusses the modes of Christ's presence in the Church.<sup>50</sup> Significantly Paul VI prefers the direction of the original schema of the Constitution on the Liturgy and amplifies it. He speaks of Christ's presence in the community, in works of mercy, preaching of the word, exercise of authority, the sacrifice of the Mass "in a more sublime way" through the minister, in the administration of the sacraments, and under the Eucharistic species. Still a true theological ordering and explanation of the modes of presence of Christ is not attempted.

An approach to this problem cannot begin with the mere promise of

*Theologie der Gegenwart* (Munich, 1971) 257-58; he refers to the contribution which Evangelical theology has made and can make to rectify the neglect of the personal dimension in Catholic sacramental theology.

<sup>48</sup> "Schema Constitutionis de sacra liturgia" 1, 3, *Acta synodalia sacrosancti Concilii oecumenici Vaticani secundi* 1/1 (Vatican City, 1970) 265.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. the commentary of J. A. Jungmann, "Konstitution über die heilige Liturgie," *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche: Das zweite vatikanische Konzil* 1 (Freiburg, 1966) 21, who notes that the opposition came from a theological frame of reference which was not accustomed to consider the various modes of real presence of the glorified Lord in the Church.

<sup>50</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 762-64.

Jesus to be with his own as recorded in the New Testament.<sup>51</sup> These texts do not give us information about the peculiar nature of Christ's presence. It is also clear that one cannot begin with an analysis of the elements of liturgical events and other types of ecclesiastical activity. This consideration only gains meaning when supported by a theological determination of the peculiarity of Christ's presence in the Church. Finally, the attempt to construct a theological explanation of Christ's presences in the Church from a consideration of the institutional will of Christ in the case of the sacraments or the authority bestowed by Christ on office for the exercise of ecclesiastical activity is not sufficiently basic. It leaves out of consideration the concrete way in which the will of Christ was first realized and its implications for all the other modes of his presence.

Christ's presence to the Church was realized through the Resurrection, as Mt 28:20 indicates. The Resurrection, in virtue of the transforming power of the Spirit, makes Christ's personal presence possible for all times and among all peoples. Hence it is with the fact of the Resurrection, as B. Langemeyer observes,<sup>52</sup> that one must begin a theological presentation of the modes of Christ's presences in the Church.

#### APOSTOLIC MINISTRY AS REPRESENTATION OF THE FAITH

In virtue of the Resurrection, Christ is present to the world in power. This cosmic presence should be distinguished from his personal presence to the believers, which originates through the indwelling of the Spirit of God and Christ.<sup>53</sup> The life of faith, as Paul calls it, includes the presence of Christ in the Christian<sup>54</sup> and the personal laying hold of Christ in such a way that he becomes the principle of life. It is a presence analogous to intentional presence experienced by man through memory, but comes about only through the Spirit<sup>55</sup> and results in the believer and Christ being two in one Spirit. The believer is thus able to live out of the mystery of Christ "in us."

The theological problem of the integration of Christ's presence through faith with his presence in the sacraments has been dealt with especially in recent years. Typically it is resolved by pointing out that the objective presence of Christ in the sacraments becomes a personal presence to the believer through faith, which recognizes this presence and draws nourishment from it.<sup>56</sup> But the role of faith in effecting Christ's pres-

<sup>51</sup> Mt 18:20; 25:35-45, etc.

<sup>52</sup> "Die Weisen der Gegenwart Christi im liturgischen Geschehen," in O. Semmelroth, *Martyria, Liturgia, Diakonia* (Mainz, 1968) p. 289.

<sup>53</sup> Eph 3:16-19; Gal 4:4-7; Rom 8:8-17.

<sup>54</sup> Col 1:27.

<sup>55</sup> 1 Cor 2:11-16.

<sup>56</sup> Thus G. Söhngen, "Christi Gegenwart durch den Glauben," in F. X. Arnold, *Die Messe in der Glaubensverkündigung* (Munich, 1954) pp. 14-28.

ence, or in the case of the Eucharistic celebration the sacrifice of Christ, has not received much attention.

Recently a number of authors have dealt with the relationship of faith, memory, and presence especially with a view to explaining the Eucharistic presence of the *passio Christi*. Characteristically they are critical of traditional explanations overlaid with a certain objectivism which neglects the proper field of investigation: the Christian conscience. Emphasis is placed on the fact that memory is presence and memory in the Spirit causes the Church to participate in the memory of Christ. Recalling Christ's sacrifice in the power of the Spirit, the community is rendered present to the sacrifice of the cross. The anamnesis thus appears as a work of the Church, an act of faith: faith in the dimension of memory. It is an integrating part of the Eucharist, without which there can be no Eucharist.<sup>57</sup>

What these works say about the Eucharist can also be applied to all the sacraments of faith. Without the exercise of the faith no sacramental presence of Christ or the *passio Christi* is possible. And this means, as will be pointed out in more detail later, that no word of God can be preached in the Church which is not derived from the exercise of the faith of the Church.

These considerations are germane to the question of the representative role of apostolic office. They point to the conclusion that office directly represents the faith of the Church and only to this extent can represent Christ. However, this conclusion should be tested by a systematic consideration of how Christ became personally present to the disciples after the Resurrection and how this presence was mediated to the followers of the "chosen witnesses."<sup>58</sup>

After the Resurrection Christ had to make himself accessible, since he was situated outside the confines of space and time. His presence was first effected through the "Resurrection appearances," which, however described phenomenologically, are the inner-worldly aspect of the eschatological act by which the Lord created faith in his abiding presence among the "chosen witnesses." In allowing himself to be seen, Christ was present to the disciples as source of their faith in his enduring presence and, at the same time, as the conscious content of their act of faith.

From this consideration we can draw the conclusion that basic to all

<sup>57</sup> B. Faure, "Eucharistie et mémoire," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 90 (1968) 278-90; R. Didier, "L'Eucharistie et le temps des hommes," *Lumière et vie* 18 (1969) 27-49; J. M. R. Tillard, "Le mémorial dans la vie de l'église," *Maison Dieu* 106 (1971) 27; M. Bellet, "Anamnèse 1: La mémoire du Christ," *Christus* 76 (1972) 520-32. Cf. also M.-J. Dubois, "Mémoire et présence dans la prière," *Vie spirituelle* 54 (1972) 544-55, who treats of the spiritual structure of memory and its role in prayer.

<sup>58</sup> Acts 1:8.

other modes of presence of Christ in the Church is his presence as sharing source of faith in his abiding presence. Furthermore, we can say that the exercise of the obedience of faith of the apostles is one way by which Christ's personal presence is mediated in the world. This also holds for the exercise of the faith of all believers. But do all the modes of Christ's presence in the Church depend on the exercise of apostolic faith? Can we say that Christ's presence is effected by way of the exercise of faith *and* by way of institutions to which Christ binds his presence by institutional act? What is the relationship between apostolic faith and institutions which are considered by the Catholic Church as constitutive of the structure of church and so mediate Christ's presence? Are the personal presences of Christ in the Church mediated through the obedient exercise of faith of the Church and separately by institutions? Do such institutions function as substitutes for the direct appearances of Christ to the disciples? Are there such institutional words of God, office, and sacraments?

The tendency toward objectification of means of salvation in Western theology (and also Eastern theology) has led to an implicit, largely unreflective acceptance of the view that Christ somehow binds his presence to institutions which operate independently of the faith of the Church. The traditional insistence placed on "physical succession" of ordination going back to the apostles and on the institution of sacraments by Jesus during his earthly life by an explicit or implicit word points in this direction.<sup>59</sup> It appears to be connected with the desire to secure not so much a more general Christological as an institutional basis for the sacraments which would guarantee Christ's presence over against the vicissitudes of the faith of the community. Correspondingly, school theology only found need to state that faith is required not in the minister of a sacrament but in the recipient for a fruitful reception. The role of faith in the actualization of the sacramental presence of Christ was not given due consideration.

The concept of two kinds of mediation of Christ's personal presence appears to be the implicit presupposition of familiar explanations of the dynamics of liturgical celebrations which present them almost exclusively as representations of Christ along the lines of the rites of the old mystery religions. This holds especially for explanations of the Eucha-

<sup>59</sup> W. Van Roo, "Reflections on Karl Rahner's 'Kirche und Sakramente,'" *Gregorianum* 44 (1963) 493-98, correctly objects to Rahner's insufficient attention to the Christological basis of the sacraments in his *The Church and the Sacraments* (tr. W. J. O'Hara; New York, 1963). Yet the basis ought not to be sought, as Van Roo insists, in "some word" (p. 497), "some obscure word of Christ," (p. 498) about each and every sacrament. It can be derived from a consideration of the implications of the Incarnation for the human situation in general (cf. W. Kasper, "Wort und Sakrament," *Martyria, Leitura, Diakonia*, pp. 260-85).

ristic celebration where the priest is described as directly representing Christ and acting thus *in persona Christi* in an activity to which the community *then* relates itself. In this presentation it is difficult to avoid the impression that liturgical actions are really sacred dramas with the goal of merely communicating something to the audience. The conceptual separation of the central action of the Mass from the participation of the faithful leads logically to the impression that the laity are an audience invited to identify with the drama vicariously in a way analogous to "live theatre."

Such a view is not admitted by Catholic theology, which teaches that the Eucharist is the sacramental coaccomplishment of the sacrifice of the cross in and by the *Church*. Christian liturgy differs from sacred drama not merely because of the mystery content but because the presence of Christ and his saving work takes place through rites which are a form of expression of the faith of the Church. But how are the dynamics of liturgical actions to be presented in such a way that they are clearly seen as *social actions* in which there is no complete disjunction between the representation of the mystery of salvation and the private lives of those involved in the action, the "actors," both minister and faithful?

The proper approach to the problem of the relation between faith and institution should begin with the fact that the content of office of the "chosen witnesses" of the Resurrection is the obedient exercise of their faith in Christ.<sup>60</sup> Through the gift of faith Christ formed these witnesses into the community of believers sent in full power. By witnessing to their faith, the apostles are the way by which Christ becomes personally present to others and draws them into his Church.

Those who succeed the apostles as leaders of the Church derive their faith from the faith of the Church, which has its apostolic succession or tradition from apostolic office and the witness of all believers to their faith. Thus apostolic office, strengthened by the gift of the Spirit in ordination, is a special mode of exercise of the faith of the Church.<sup>61</sup>

Christ's personal presence in word and sacrament is inwardly dependent on the exercise of this faith of the Church. This becomes clear when it

<sup>60</sup> Langemeyer, *op. cit.* (n. 52 above) pp. 292-93.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 293. Y. Congar states that apostolic office does not mediate between Christ and the Church but represents Christ in his quality of standing over against the community which he animates ("Ministères et structuration de l'église," *Maison Dieu* 102 [1970] 7-20). But it should be added that apostolic office represents Christ by representing the faith of which Christ is the source. The biblical concept of stewardship of tradition, both creative and faithful, is applicable here (cf. W. Tooley, "Stewards of God," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 19 [1966] 74-86; R. J. Dillon, "Ministry as Stewardship of the Tradition in the New Testament," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 24 [1969] 10-62).

is recognized that the apostles themselves were, properly speaking, not servants of the *ipsissima verba Christi* but servants of the word of God through the obedient exercise of their faith. The apostles—Paul especially makes this clear—recognized that they preached the word of God if they witnessed to their faith. Christ was understood to be present and acting because the preacher exercised the faith in which Christ is present as sharing source of faith.

The word of God exists in this world only in the form of a believing “Ant-Wort,” as Langemeyer expresses it,<sup>62</sup> and this holds for the sacraments of Christ. The *forma sacramenti* is the expression of the faith of the Church. Sacraments do not exist without the “ecclesial word of faith” which draws gestures of ordinary life into the realm of the celebration of the life of faith. The exercise of the faith is the way by which the symbolic representations of Christ’s special presence, derived from Christ as formative norm of its self-expression, are executed.

Within this perspective one sees clearly that pastoral office, by its mere presence, cannot account for a special presence of Christ in liturgical celebrations. The special presence of Christ is derived from what the community with its leadership does to express its faith. We can speak of the need for office in the celebration of the Eucharist in view of the fact that here the Church most perfectly manifests and realizes its true being.<sup>63</sup> In the old Church it was the requirement of the symbolic correspondence between the comprehensive ecclesial reality of the community and the Eucharist which dictated the presence of the pastoral office.<sup>64</sup> Still office is inserted into this special ecclesial activity and so obtains a special qualification.

Of itself, office does not qualify the symbolic action in its symbolic function. Rather the function of office to represent, foster, and maintain the unity of the Church becomes through its liturgical activity in a special way transparency for the proper grounds of the unity of the Church: Christ. Because the office bearer represents the Church united in faith and love in his role as leader, he represents Christ. Consequently he acts in the name of but not by the commission of the local community, which is not completely identified with the Church eschatologically sanctified.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>62</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 294.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. this writer’s “Eucharist: Nourishment for Communion,” in J. D’Ercole, *Populus Dei 2: Ecclesia* (Rome, 1969) 1043–85.

<sup>64</sup> Schulz, *op. cit.* (n. 23 above) pp. 243–46, concludes that it would not be in keeping with patristic tradition to argue for the necessity of the presence of a priest at the Eucharist on the grounds of a *potestas ordinis* independent of the pastoral office of this ministry.

<sup>65</sup> The Eucharistic assembly does not represent and act as proxy for the baptized who are in a state of true excommunication (cf. my remarks, *op. cit.*, p. 1084, n. 184) but rather the Church united in faith and love—the Church which in the event of faith affirms the



Liturgical actions are, first and foremost, a special form of expression of the faith of the Church. Through this representation Christ's presence as source of the faith is mediated—a presence more real and efficacious than the community's presence to itself. The special mode of Christ's presence derives from the fact that the liturgy is a festive exercise of the faith.<sup>66</sup> Analogous to feasts of daily life, which serve as transparency for the permanent values hidden in ordinary living, the liturgy highlights the graceful realities less clearly recognized in the daily life of faith. Moreover, just as a family feast represents the whole family even in the absence of some members, so the ecclesial assembly represents the whole Church first and foremost by its festive character. The official servant of the unity of the Church, much in the way of a father of a family, becomes in a special way transparency for the grounds of the unity of the church: Christ. Yet, as Langemeyer states, "As servant and representative of the one Church the priest acts in the celebration in a specific way *in persona Christi*. But he represents Christ, since he represents the Church united in faith and love."<sup>67</sup>

The presence of Christ is given as personal presence through the faith of the Church. Therefore it obtains a certain objectivity. It is neither dependent on the faith of the minister nor on the faith of any particular community. But it is not independently linked to definite institutions or actions. The obedience of Christ is the way by which the Lordship of God was fully inserted into the world, and the obedience of faith of the Church is the way by which Christ remains personally present and effective in the Church. The apostolic officer is a sacrament of the efficacious presence of Christ and the Spirit. But taking this statement a step further, and employing the Scholastic distinction between *sacra-*

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revelation in Jesus Christ that God is love (1 Jn 4:8) and responds with love of God and mankind, placing its hope on the future of love (I. Willig, "Glaube, Hoffnung und Liebe als Antwort auf die Offenbarkeit Gottes in Jesus Christus," *Martyria, Leiturgia, Diakonia*, pp. 92–115). Faith is not love, which has to do with choice, but trust on the future of love—on God's love, which never ceases because God is love. To answer this choice requires faith, because one can only believe that one is loved (E. Jüngel, "Gott ist Liebe: zur Unterscheidung von Glaube und Liebe," in G. Ebeling *et al.*, *Festschrift für Ernst Fuchs* [Tübingen, 1973] pp. 193–202). The Church which believes that God is love and responds with the display of love is the Church which offers acceptable worship to God; for acceptable worship is the actualization of faith, in which the unity of word and act of God creating faith is mirrored in the unity of word and act of the worshiping community (E. Fuchs, "Die sakramentale Einheit von Wort und Tat," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 68 [1971] 213–26).

<sup>66</sup>Langemeyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 295–99. The author adds the final consideration that the specific modes of Christ's presence in the different elements of the liturgical feasts correspond to the anthropological-personal content of expression of these elements (*ibid.*, pp. 300–307).

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 298.

*mentum, res et sacramentum, et res tantum* to express levels of signification, we should more accurately say: The apostolic officer is *sacramentum* of the Church united in faith and love, which in turn as *res* is also *sacramentum* of Christ and the Spirit, the *res tantum*. In this way apostolic office is correctly ordered to the Church, sacrament of Christ, and to Christ, sacrament of God.

#### APOSTOLIC OFFICE AS DIRECT REPRESENTATION OF CHRIST

A direct representation of Christ through the ministry of the Church would be possible only if there existed a ministry which could operate independently of the faith of the Church. The practical separation of *potestas ordinis* from *potestas jurisdictionis* in the West led to the theory of a complete disjunction between the two powers in the course of the Middle Ages. This theology contributed to the argument against the sacramental nature of the episcopal office and to the narrow cultic view of priesthood. In modern times, especially with the support of Vatican II,<sup>68</sup> apostolic office is recognized as a pastoral office and ordination is not conceived as bestowing an office of priest independently of it.

As an activity of the Church, pastoral office can only represent and act in the name of the Lord when it represents the life of faith of the Church. Outside the ecclesial context, apostolic office cannot represent Christ. This statement is accepted today without question by Catholic theologians, many of whom, however, are unaware of the consequences for the representative role of office. Yet it was not always a working principle in School theology. The bizarre *casus conscientiae* concerning the consecration of bread in a shopwindow is a case in point. It was discussed at length by the respected medieval theologian Robert Holkot (d. 1349)<sup>69</sup> and repeated down to this century in moral-theology textbooks. Holkot accepted the possibility of such a consecration without question because he isolated the Mass from the Church. He made it a work of the priest, who exercises the power of orders independently of the faith of the Church.<sup>70</sup> This perspective on the relation of the priest to the Mass was repeated by the few theologians who dealt with this theme during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>71</sup>

The failure to recognize the necessity of a proper ecclesial context for the exercise of apostolic office also resulted in the acceptance of the theory of "absolute ordination" by medieval theologians and the

<sup>68</sup> *Christus Dominus* (On the Pastoral Office of Bishops); *Presbyterorum ordinis* (On the Ministry and Life of Priests).

<sup>69</sup> Iserloh, *art. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. n. 23 above.

magisterium of the West. Before the thirteenth century a whole series of ecclesiastical and canonical conditions, involving both the bishop and the candidate, entered into the question of the validity of ordination, as C. Vogel has shown.<sup>72</sup> Commenting on Vogel's analysis of the historical data concerning the relative importance of the rite of ordination, J. Ratzinger says that it does not "speak, as Vogel seems to accept, against the meaning of the laying on of hands, but for the indispensability of the sacrament; because it expresses the binding of office to the faith of the whole Church and the binding of the whole Church to the faith going beyond its own authority."<sup>73</sup> This is correct and leads to the conclusion that apostolic office directly represents the faith of the Church.

#### SOME THEOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Many theological conclusions follow from the foregoing presentation of the role of apostolic office. We can mention only a few by way of examples.

1) The narrow concept of priestly character as participation in the priesthood of Christ with special reference to the power of consecrating and offering the Eucharistic sacrifice as "instrument of Christ"<sup>74</sup> is unsatisfactory. It does not sufficiently consider the levels of signification of the rite of ordination and their proper ordering. The rite signifies, first of all, a human and social reality: the designation of a candidate to pastoral office in the Church. This in turn signifies the special bestowal of the Spirit to accomplish the task.

The term "character" can be used to express the fact that the ordained is claimed permanently for the service of the Church and so cannot be reordained; is placed over against the community separated but not disconnected, since he serves the common matter of the faith of the Church; does not depend merely on his subjective capabilities for the exercise of his service, since he receives the special bestowal of the Spirit in ordination.<sup>75</sup>

2) Apostolic office is obviously not required for the liturgy, simply because social rites demand diversity of roles along with a circuit of communication between persons holding these roles: speaker and hearers

<sup>72</sup> "Chirotonie et chirothésie: Importance et relativité du geste de l'imposition des mains dans la collation des ordres," *Irénikon* 45 (1972) 7-21, 207-35; "L'Imposition des mains dans les rites d'ordination en orient et en occident," *Maison Dieu* 102 (1970) 57-72; "Titre d'ordination et lien du presbytère à la communauté locale dans l'église ancienne," *Maison Dieu* 105 (1973) 70-85.

<sup>73</sup> "Bemerkungen zur Frage der apostolischen Sukzession," *Amt im Widerstreit*, p. 43.

<sup>74</sup> Thus W. Van Roo, *De sacramentis in genere* (Rome, 1957) pp. 253-54.

<sup>75</sup> For a similar presentation, cf. H. Meyer, *Luthertum und Katholizismus im Gespräch* (Frankfurt, 1973) p. 183, and V. Pfnur, "Das Problem des Amtes in heutiger Lutherisch/katholischer Begegnung," *Catholica* 28 (1974) 123-24.

of the common faith; leadership of participation in mutually understood symbolic actions. Neither is apostolic office required because of a *potestas ordinis* unconnected with pastoral office which would make the office bearer direct representative of Christ.

It is required because the liturgy does not simply symbolize but points to a historical reality with which it has a real relation: Christ and his saving work. Apostolic office is an index of the relationship of the liturgy to Christ, because ordination by a bishop links the candidate to a ministry grounded in Christ and bestows the gift of the Spirit of Christ for the fruitful exercise of the stewardship over apostolic faith through which Christ's personal presence is communicated. It is not the only index. The assembly of believers around the officer is a fundamental index. Yet this assembly is not completely referred to its origin without the pastoral office—a constitutive element of the sacramental structure of the Church.

3) Because apostolic office directly represents the faith of the Church in the Eucharistic celebration, the Eucharistic event only takes place when that faith is actually present in some member or members of the concrete celebration. The Eucharist is thus offered through the exercise of the faith of the Church ritually expressed by the priest.

4) As direct representation of the faith of the Church, apostolic office cannot confer ordination outside the proper ecclesial context. Thus, in accord with the old Church view of the first thousand years or more, an ordination is invalid without some concrete "mandate, the mission which the Church confides to one or other of its faithful in view of a ministry."<sup>76</sup> This may have some application in the case of the ordination of women which took place in Philadelphia, July 29, 1974. At least some doubt has been expressed about the competence of the ordaining bishops to confer a concrete mandate or mission.

5) Because the priest does not directly represent Christ, he cannot act to distribute the spiritual blessing derived from the Mass as affirmed in the traditional Scholastic theology of the fruits of the Mass. In this connection much still needs to be clarified for the faithful by the magisterium of the West about the meaning of Mass stipends.

6) Because the priest does not directly represent Christ, one should not argue that Protestant Eucharists are defective because of the necessity of the sacrament of orders to effect a Eucharistic consecration. The quality of Protestant Eucharists should be judged in the light of the necessity of the symbolic correspondence between the comprehensive sacramental ecclesial reality, of which the ordained minister is constitutive part, and the Eucharist.

<sup>76</sup> Vogel, *Irenikon* 45 (1972) 235.

7) Since the priest directly represents the Church united in faith and love, the old argument against the ordination of women to the priesthood, based on the presupposition that the priest directly represents Christ and so should be male, becomes untenable. Logically the representative role of priest seems to demand both male and female office bearers in the proper cultural context; for the priest represents the one Church, in which distinctions of race, class, and sex have been transcended, where all are measured by the one norm: faith in Christ.<sup>77</sup>

8) The original use of the term *vicarius Christi* for apostolic office, as well as for superiors of religious communities,<sup>78</sup> implied that Christ is present when the ministry of the gospel is exercised. It served as substitute for *Christus praesens*. The extension of the juridical implications of *vicarius* is found in papal documents from the time of Felix III (483-92). Here it is employed to assert the primacy of the Roman bishop over other bishops partially or completely independent of Rome.<sup>79</sup> Other bishops were still called by the title, but it was used with reference to the Roman bishop in a more juridical sense. The exclusive appropriation of the title by the pope came with the victory over the emperor in the twelfth century. From the time of Innocent III (1198-1216) it is used to assert the primacy of the pope over temporal and spiritual spheres.<sup>80</sup>

In the measure that the juridical concept is applied to bishops or religious superiors in such a way that they become the last court of appeal and so are effectively viewed as playing the role of Christ, the concept lies outside the sphere of the Christian economy of salvation. A *vicarius Christi*, in the ancient understanding of the term, has a role to play not because Christ links his destiny to men but because man's destiny is bound to Christ. Only in so far as Christ has laid claim to man in the event of faith can he lay claim to others for Christ and Christ for others.

Lk 10:16, so often used to affirm the authority of *vicarii Christi*, does not say that everything spoken by religious superiors or ecclesiastical officers is Christ's word and must be believed or that to disobey them is always to disobey Christ. The text has its *Sitz im Leben* in a missionary context in which disciples are given the task of confronting others with the claim of Jesus. Thus everything depends on whether the message

<sup>77</sup> Gal 4:28.

<sup>78</sup> Horsiesius (d. 380), successor of Pachomius after Petronius, witnesses to this understanding of religious superiors (A. de Vogüé, "Le monastère, église du Christ," *Studia Anselmiana* 42 [1957] 23-46), as does *Regula magistri* and its successor, *Regula Benedicti* of the early sixth century (Jaspert, *art. cit.*, pp. 302-15).

<sup>79</sup> Jaspert, *ibid.*, p. 294.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 294-295.

serves as transparency for Christ, i.e., brings the hearer into contact with Christ.

A reconsideration of ecclesiastical office (and the role of religious superiors) must maintain a proper perspective on the unity of the service of the word and authority. When a dissolution of this unity takes place in practice, it can only result in the obscuring of the proper role of Christian leadership: to represent the faith of the Church and so render Christ personally present. The object of saving faith is not the Church or apostolic office, but Christ. He becomes so through the exercise of the obedience of faith, in which apostolic office has an important though not exclusive role to play. All believers have, according to their gifts and station in life, the task of representing Christ before each other and the world by expressing their faith in word and deed.