

THE COMMON AND THE ORDAINED PRIESTHOOD

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[Editor's Note: The author first attempts to reconcile the two perspectives, christological and pneumatological, in which Vatican II presented its teaching on the ordained and the common priesthood. This he does in reference to the Spirit-Christology that he has developed in previous writings. He then addresses the priesthood of the Church, arguing that it consists not in the common priesthood alone but in the integration of the ordained and the common priesthood. The way is thus cleared for a proposal about their relationship in both christological and ecclesiological terms.]

DESPITE THE FACT that the common priesthood of the faithful had already been taught in Pius XII's encyclical *Mediator Dei* (1947) and in Vatican II's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum concilium* (1963), there were still misgivings about it when the doctrine came up again for discussion at the council in the context of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*.¹ It was judged, however, that the doctrine was sufficiently grounded in Scripture and tradition to permit a forthright statement, which accordingly was made in no. 10 of that dogmatic constitution. Naturally, this raised the question of the relation of this form of the priesthood to the ministerial priesthood, the topic of the present article.² The council took care to

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¹ See Aloys Grillmeier, "The People of God," in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler, 5 vols. (London: Burns & Oates, 1967) 1.153–85, at 156.

² See also Georges Chantraine, "Synodalité, expression du sacerdoce commun et du sacerdoce ministeriel?" *Nouvelle revue théologique* 113 (1991) 340–62; Peter Drilling, "Common and Ministerial Priesthood: *Lumen Gentium*, Article Ten," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 53 (1987) 81–99; Georg Hintzen, "Das gemeinsame Priestertum aller Gläubigen und das besondere Priestertum des Dienstes in der ökumenischen Diskussion," *Catholica* 45 (1991) 44–77; Philip Rosato, "Priesthood of the Baptized and Priesthood of the Ordained," *Gregorianum* 68 (1987) 215–66. Note also the doctoral dissertation of Melvin Michalski, published after this article was completed, *The Relation between the Universal Priesthood of the Baptized and the Ministerial Priesthood of the Ordained in*

present the two forms as not in competition but in cooperation, particularly in their highest exercise, the celebration of the Eucharist. On their relationship it made the following nuanced statement: "Although they differ essentially and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are none the less ordered to each other; each in its own way participates in the one priesthood of Christ."³

Apologists for this teaching justify it by pointing to the centrality of the priesthood of Christ, of which the two forms of priesthood in the Church are participations, each in its own way. That they are participations in the one priesthood of Christ shows clearly that they must be intrinsically ordered or related to each other; but that they are genuinely different ways of participating in this priesthood must mean that they differ not just by degree, in fact not by degree at all, but by essence. That they differ thus is borne out by the fact that each depends on a different sacrament, baptism in the one case and ordination in the other, and that each is oriented to a different set of activities. This gives the lie to those critics who say that the teaching is illogical, i.e., that it is impossible for A and B to participate ontologically in C without being essentially the same and therefore, if different in any way, different only by degree.

As it stands, however, the argument is less than satisfactory. Through focusing on the priesthood of Christ himself, the argument is placed at a disadvantage to explain how the two forms of the priesthood in the Church are related to each other, even though it can show that they are related, even intrinsically related. Perhaps this explains the sense of frustration that is engendered by the teaching in some quarters and of which we have already met an example in the charge of illogicality. The teaching is sometimes seen as little more than a ploy for maintaining a rigid distinction of clergy and laity and thereby reinforcing clerical control in the Church. It is apprehended as a throwback from the conciliar ecclesiology of the People of God to the pre-conciliar theology of a perfect—and therefore strongly regimented—society.

In this article, therefore, I shall attempt the task of developing the argument of the teaching in a positive way so as to overcome the difficulties associated with it, at the same time leaving the teaching itself intact. In one respect, however, it is preferable to depart from its terminology. While the common priesthood may continue to be so called, this is not the case for the ministerial or hierarchical priest-

Vatican II and in Subsequent Theology: Understanding "Essentia et non Gradu Tantum," Lumen Gentium No. 10 (Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen, 1996).

³ *Lumen gentium* no. 10, my translation. Unless otherwise stated, translations are those of Austin Flannery, O.P., gen. ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-conciliar Documents* (Northport, N.Y.: Costello, 1975).

hood. The expression "hierarchical priesthood" seems no longer suitable, because it conveys, to the popular mind at least, overtones of domination that are counterproductive, particularly in this context. Nor is "ministerial priesthood" entirely suitable, because in the interval since Vatican II lay ministers have been awarded a place, and an honored one, in the Church and particularly in its liturgy. No longer, therefore, is the term "ministerial" simply as such a means of distinguishing between clergy and laity. For these reasons I have adopted "ordained priesthood" as the most appropriate expression.

The council presented the ordained priesthood as a share in the priesthood of Christ considered precisely as head, i.e. head of his body, which is the Church. This teaching does not occur in *Lumen gentium* apart from a passing and theologically insignificant reference in no. 28, but in the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum ordinis* no. 2: "Through that sacrament [Holy Orders] priests by the anointing of the Holy Spirit are signed with a special character and are so configured to Christ the priest that they are able to act in the person of Christ the head." It is clear, both in this text and in subsequent magisterial texts that refer the ordained priesthood to the headship of Christ,⁴ that the ordained priesthood is assumed by the author or authors to be intelligible immediately in "christological" terms. (Here, and throughout this article, I use "christological" not in its proper sense but as expressive of the priest's special relation to and participation in Christ). But reflection shows that this assumption cannot be correct. For the headship of Christ as exercised in the only place where it can be exercised, namely the Church, is clearly an ecclesial function, and therefore statements about it, even ones invoking Christ the priest, whether they be magisterial or simply theological, are directly ecclesiological and only indirectly christological. This becomes obvious when one inquires about the christological nature of the common priesthood, a subject on which, significantly, the council was silent.⁵ But if one draws the conclusion not drawn by the council⁶ that the common priesthood is that of the members of the Mystical Body, it is clear, since the Mystical Body is the Church, that this is directly an ecclesiological, not a christological, statement.⁷ Its indirect christologi-

⁴ See Synod of Bishops, *The Ministerial Priesthood; Justice in the World* (Washington: USCC, 1972), and the encyclical of Pope John Paul II on priestly formation, *Pastores dabo vobis* (Boston: St. Paul, 1992).

⁵ From what has just been said it is clear that the proper nature of both the ordained and the common priesthood is ecclesiological. Each is christological, not properly but by participation. To bring this out in our terminology, it would be preferable to use some other word than "nature" when speaking of them christologically, but unfortunately no other suitable word is available.

⁶ The reticence of Vatican II at this point was deliberate. The council wanted to avoid imagery belonging to the theology of the Mystical Body, and to use language directly fitted to the title and dominant idea of the chapter "The People of God"; see Drilling, "Common and Ministerial Priesthood" 87.

⁷ Why is it clear that to speak of the priesthood of membership of the Mystical Body is

cal counterpart would be that the common priesthood is that of those who are united with Christ the priest in the mystical union of faith and baptism, without however sharing in his headship. While both forms of priesthood in the Church have Christ's priesthood as their ontological ground, they exist and operate as gifts of God to the Church, and indeed as different gifts.

What I have presented is borne out more clearly in the encyclical *Mediator Dei*. Of the ordained priest it says that "the minister at the altar acts in the person of Christ considered as head and as offering in the name of all the members."⁸ Though unacknowledged, this statement was clearly an influence on the doctrine of *Presbyterorum ordinis*. In it we find the same tendency to understand the ordained priesthood directly in christological terms. But of the common priesthood it says that, "by reason of their baptism Christians are in the Mystical Body and become by a common title members of Christ the Priest; by the character that is graven upon their souls they are appointed to the worship of God, and therefore, according to their condition, share in the priesthood of Christ himself."⁹ Here the encyclical makes the unequivocally ecclesiological statement that by baptism the faithful are in the Mystical Body, and from it, it infers the christological statement that by a common title they are members of the Christ the priest. The exercise is then repeated in that from the baptismal character as deputa- tion to ecclesial worship the conclusion of participation in Christ's priesthood is drawn.

Despite its limitations, *Presbyterorum ordinis* no. 2 offers a potentially rich theology of the ordained priesthood. I now present the salient points from this section of the document. The first paragraph essays a pneumatological understanding of the priesthood of Christ himself, and goes on to speak of this priesthood as communicated from Christ to the Church:

The Lord Jesus "whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world" (John 10:36) makes his whole Mystical Body sharer in the anointing of the Spirit wherewith he was anointed: for in that Body all the faithful are made a holy and kingly priesthood, they offer spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ, and they proclaim the virtues of him who has called them out of darkness into his admirable light (1 Peter 2:5, 9).

to make an ecclesiological statement, but not so clear that to speak of the priesthood of headship of the same body is to make the same kind of statement? The answer is surely that in the first case the members are the faithful themselves, but in the second the head is not the priest but Christ. The priest is head only in a sacramental sense, by sacramental participation in Christ the head. But this is still an ecclesial reality and function.

⁸ *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 39 (1947) 521-600, at 556; English translation, *Christian Worship: Encyclical Letter ("Mediator Dei") of His Holiness Pius XII*, tr. G. S. Smith (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1947).

⁹ *Ibid.* 555.

In speaking of the priesthood of Christ in an ascending scheme as an anointing of the Holy Spirit, the council makes a significant advance over the previous theology that had interpreted Christ's priesthood simply in terms of the Incarnation in a descending scheme in which the Holy Spirit played no part. Yet there are problems to which I shall draw attention in the course of this article. The second point, that there exists such a reality as the priesthood of the Church, is something that has scarcely been noticed since the council and which even there was left unexploited and undeveloped. Proof of this is seen in the overquick identification of the priesthood of the Church with the common priesthood of the faithful that is made both in this text and in the one on which in some respects it depends, *Lumen gentium* no. 10. It should be noted, however, that the priesthood of the Church, and with it the common priesthood, are declared to share in the pneumatological nature of the priesthood of Christ.

The second paragraph of *Presbyterorum ordinis* rapidly sketches the manner of derivation of the ordained priesthood from the ministry of the apostles via their successors, the bishops. This leads into the third paragraph, which I have already quoted for its statement on headship. Here too the ordained priesthood is explicitly asserted to be pneumatological. This has now been said of all four instances of the priesthood, that of Christ, that of the Church, that of the ordained, and that of the faithful (except that the second and the last of these have been identified.) The fourth and final paragraph repeats the pneumatological understanding of the ordained priesthood, relates it to the mission of the Church, affirms as its goal in-gathering for the Eucharist and its accomplishment, and concludes by placing all in an eschatological setting. This it does by presenting the ordained priesthood as being at the service of the common priesthood for the achievement of the unified and ultimate worship of God. "The ministry of priests," says the decree, "is directed to this and finds its consummation in it." This statement is important, because it defines the ordained priesthood in terms of its service of the common priesthood, but it does so without specifying the nature of the intrinsic bond between them.

In this article I aim to develop the two points highlighted above, the pneumatological understanding of the priesthood of Christ, and the priesthood of the Church as a distinct category, so that thereby the relation of the ordained and the common priesthood in the Church can emerge with new clarity. I point out that in seeking to clarify this relationship I am concerned mainly with the narrower, cultic sense of the word "priesthood." In the case of the ordained, the word has in addition a broader sense, which includes prophetic and pastoral elements, and it will be necessary to address this sense as well. The 1971 Synod of Bishops used the broader sense also in relation to the priesthood of Christ himself. While this mode of expression may be unusual in this particular application, at least it serves to express the unified character of Christ's total ministry.

The Incarnational Perspective

Prior to the "pneumatological" understanding, as I have noted, the commonly received understanding of the priesthood of Christ himself was simply "incarnational." That is to say, it depended for its intelligibility on the Incarnation as the union of divine and human nature in the person of Christ whereby he was constituted the perfect mediator between God and human beings. This, for example, was the position of Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa theologiae* in dependence on Hebrews 5:1, 2 Peter 1:4, and Colossians 1:19–20.¹⁰ This idea was capable of explaining the ministry of Christ not just in its cultic sense, but in its pastoral and prophetic senses as well. Thus the 1971 Synod of Bishops on the Ministerial Priesthood said that, "when we speak of the priesthood of Christ, we should have before our eyes a unique, incomparable reality, which includes the prophetic and kingly office of the Incarnate Word of God."¹¹

For our purposes it is necessary to gain as adequate as possible an understanding of the priesthood of Christ himself, i.e. in the broad sense. Not only is the person of Christ a reference point for all theology, but the other three forms of the priesthood are understood, either immediately or ultimately, as participations in his. In scriptural terms, if Christ is priest, prophet, and king, as *Lumen gentium* chap. 2 asserts, the unifying and explanatory ontological ground of this can only be his unique divine Sonship.¹² For as beloved and only-begotten Son of God, he is the perfect mediator between God and human beings, and is therefore fitted to be our high priest in the cultic sense; again, as unique Son he has full authority to speak and act on behalf of God, and so is both the prophet par excellence and the Christ, anointed King. In the teaching and theology of the Church after the Council of Chalcedon this divine Sonship was interpreted as the union of the divine and a created human nature in the person of the pre-existent divine Word, the hypostatic union or the Incarnation. If one reads the Scriptures in the light of the teaching of the Church, one should therefore understand the total ministry of Christ as an aspect of the Incarnation, indeed as the Incarnation in its inherent dynamism. Accordingly, the same must be said of the three particularizations of this ministry, Christ's priestly, prophetic, and kingly roles. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that, whatever advances may be made from other points of departure, the incarnational sense of Christ's priesthood remains indispensable.

Before proceeding, I wish to subject to a closer examination *Lumen*

¹⁰ See *ST* 3, q. 22, a. 1.

¹¹ *The Ministerial Priesthood* 12.

¹² See Chantraine, "Synodalité" 340–41.

gentium's favored designation of Christ as priest, prophet, and king.¹³ Of these functions the only one that Christ exercised and was recognized to have exercised during his earthly life was that of prophet. The other two he entered upon through his death and Resurrection, though the foundations for them were present in his ministry. Thus the priesthood that he exercised on the cross was the flowering of the total dedication of his will to that of the Father during his lifetime, and the kingship attained through the Resurrection was the completion of the authority he had already manifested in his preaching and mighty works. Further, the ministry of Jesus was entirely charismatic—in the sense of noninstitutional—for he had no institutional base to invoke in its support. This corresponded to the proper function of a Hebrew prophet, though admittedly there existed also a certain institutionalization of this function.¹⁴

By contrast, the other two functions, priest and king in the full sense, are clearly institutional. Jesus became “institutionalized” through his Resurrection, in the sense that he became the normative figure for the life of the Church, the base and essential content of the authoritative apostolic preaching. Through his priesthood exercised on the cross, he completed on behalf of all women and men the movement, the return, of human beings to God the Father; through the kingship attained through his Resurrection, a kingship under God the Father, he distributed the blessings of the kingdom through the ministry of the Church. Thus the charismatic ministry of prophet during his life led him to his priestly death, which in turn introduced him to his kingship. Exalted to God’s right hand, he remained priest, interceding for the Church, and became king. But he could no longer be called a prophet in the strict sense. His ministry of word continued now through the apostolic preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit, but this was official teaching, not prophecy. In the risen Christ, the prophet was transformed into the teacher. Prophecy, of course, continued in the Church, and indeed in dependence on Christ, but as a different charism from that of apostle (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:28).¹⁵ Note that when the council invoked the triad, priest, prophet, and king, it evinced some sensitivity to this state of affairs. While Christ is called prophet in *Lumen gentium* in contexts in which all the baptized are said to share in this function,

¹³ See Peter Drilling, “The Priest, Prophet and King Trilogy: Elements of its Meaning in *Lumen Gentium* and for Today,” *Eglise et théologie* 19 (1988) 179–206.

¹⁴ See John Barton, “Prophecy (Postexilic Hebrew),” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, 6 volumes (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 5.492–93.

¹⁵ Jerome Murphy-O’Connor speculates that the role of teacher, here mentioned in third place after those of apostle and prophet, “may have differed from that of prophets by being exercised outside the framework of the liturgical assembly” (“The First Letter to the Corinthians,” in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* 798–815, at 810). In the light of Ephesians 4:11, where teachers are mentioned along with “pastors,” a further difference could be that, whereas prophecy was thoroughly charismatic, teaching was more institutional and official.

in similar contexts in both *Lumen gentium* and *Presbyterorum ordinis* relating to bishops and priests, the reference is to teaching rather than prophecy.¹⁶ This raises the question whether the gift of prophecy belongs to the ordained ministry as such, or whether this gift as possessed by bishops, priests, and deacons is to be referred to their baptism and confirmation rather than to their ordination. This is not to underrate the gift of prophecy in the ordained, but rather to acknowledge their rightful value to baptism and confirmation.

Advantages of a Pneumatological Perspective

I will now look now at the advantages claimed for the pneumatological understanding of Christ's priesthood. One advantage is that it is *ex professo* functional, and as such corresponds better to the concerns of the present day. This functionalism flows naturally from the nature of the Holy Spirit as power (*dynamis*). Another advantage is that it is readily seen how the priesthood is communicated from Christ to the Church, by the gift at Pentecost of the same Spirit whom he had received in all fullness in his earthly life. Luke and John provide ample New Testament evidence for the statement that Christ through his cross and Resurrection sent the Spirit upon the Church. A third advantage depends on the Lukan theology that by his anointing with the Holy Spirit Jesus was constituted as prophet at his baptism. This advantage, if it truly be one in the light of the above remarks, is that a connection is established between the prophetic role of Jesus as the distinguishing mark of his ministry and the function that *Lumen gentium* no. 25 and *Presbyterorum ordinis* no. 4 single out as the most important of the duties of bishops and priests respectively, that of preaching the gospel. Lastly, there is an ecumenical advantage, in regard to both the Orthodox and Protestants, though for different reasons. This has to do with the connection of the priesthood of Christ with the ordained ministry. The Orthodox have always regarded the ordained ministry as pneumatological; and Protestants would be gratified to see stressed as the central role of the minister not that of sacrificing priest but that of preacher.

Some perceive a further advantage here. Whereas the cultic sense of Christ's priesthood understood incarnationally cannot assimilate the other two dimensions of this ministry at the purely functional level, this is not the case with the pneumatological theology that culminates in his prophetic ministry. The functional connection from prophet to

¹⁶ Compare passages in *Lumen gentium* where the People of God are said to share in Christ's priestly, prophetic, and kingly roles (nos. 10, 12–13) and where the same is specifically said of the laity (nos. 34–36) with statements that bishops are preachers and teachers, celebrants of the Eucharist, and rulers of their churches (nos. 25–27) and with *Presbyterorum ordinis* nos. 4–6 where similar statements are made of priests. Note that when *Lumen gentium* speaks only of the exalted Christ himself, it calls him teacher, king, and priest (no. 13).

king is made by recourse to their common feature: authority. But this can be done from prophet to priest too, though not quite as easily. Thus Friedrich Wulf wrote:

As his word was essentially a deed-word (he himself was God's final, irrevocable deed-word to human beings and the only valid reply of them to God) and his witness the witness of life, therefore the sacrifice of his life was all part and parcel of his mission; it sealed the word of the Father and the response of humankind in blood—the perfect *martyria*.¹⁷

It must be said, however, that these connections are relatively superficial in comparison with those determined at the ontological level in the incarnational theology. Moreover, they disregard the obstacle discussed above, that the prophetic ministry, being charismatic, cannot be categorized without further ado along with the priestly and kingly ministries that are institutional. Thus, for example, the authority of a prophet is different from that of a king. More problematically, they collapse the priestly and kingly aspects into the prophetic, reducing them to mere variations of the latter. In other words, in this understanding the three functions are not really distinct from each other. In the incarnational theology, on the other hand, the three functions are genuinely distinct, but are unified at a deeper, ontological level.

Seeming Disadvantages of the Pneumatological Perspective

I have moved from advantages to apparent disadvantages. There are others as well. An immediate problem is that in *Presbyterorum ordinis* no. 2 the pneumatological understanding of Christ's priesthood is presented as a mix of Johannine and Lukan elements that do not fit well together. After a Johannine statement, complete with reference, at the beginning of the exposition, four non-Johannine references are given in a footnote: Matthew 3:16 (the baptism of Jesus as a revelation of his divine Sonship), Luke 4:18 (where Jesus in the synagogue quotes Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor," in reference to his baptism as an appointment to prophethood), Acts 4:27 (the baptism again, this time as a consecration to death), and Acts 10:38 (a further reference to the baptism as appointment to prophethood). While all four references are to the baptism, the Matthean text is more out of step with the general message of the set than is Acts 4:27, the only other one out of step. The Matthean text alone is non-Lukan; only it does not refer to the baptism in terms other than appointment to prophethood. However, the combination of the texts conveys a clear message: by these references the council, like modern scholarship, locates the anointing of Jesus at his baptism and interprets it as appointment to prophethood, with this as

¹⁷ Friedrich Wulf, "The Priesthood in the Mission of the Church," in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II* 4.218–27, at 219.

the distinguishing mark of his ministry. Admittedly, on this interpretation it is rather strange that the prophetic theme does not figure more prominently in the text itself. But then, one would have to ask what the council intended in choosing this particular set of references.

In any case, we are now in a position to see the disharmony that exists between the Johannine "consecration" with which the exposition begins and the Lukan "anointing" with which it continues. The consecration is the dedication of the pre-existent Jesus by the Father, without benefit of the Holy Spirit, to his revelatory and saving mission. It is a Johannine statement about Jesus as the new Tabernacle and the new Temple, and it belongs to the setting of incarnational theology.¹⁸ The anointing, on the other hand, is the appointment of Jesus, at his baptism and through the action of the Holy Spirit, to a predominantly prophetic ministry, and it belongs to the setting of pneumatological theology. Clearly, the council has combined the Johannine material with the Lukan in order to embrace a pneumatological theology of Christ's priesthood without surrendering the traditional incarnational theology. The intention is obvious enough and admirable enough. Its accomplishment, however, is beset with difficulties.

If despite its good intentions the council could not reconcile the pneumatological theology with the incarnational, it unwittingly left the former in a rather vulnerable position. The priesthood in the broad sense now appears as not fundamental to the being of Christ, but as something added on to it after its essential constitution, which means that it no longer deserves to be viewed as a matter of first importance. The priesthood of Christ is detached from the Incarnation. His baptism is detached theologically (and not just historically) from his conception. And the mission of the Holy Spirit is detached from that of the Son. The advantages listed above for the pneumatological theology of the priesthood of Christ now begin to look less assured.

Toward Integration

These unfortunate disjunctions are overcome by a theology that integrates the descending, incarnational, ontological, Johannine Christology with the ascending, pneumatological, functional, Lukan Christology. I shall now give, because of the constraints of space, only the barest outline of what has been for me a major research project issuing in a number of publications.¹⁹ My intention here is to apply the findings of my previous work to the question under discussion. In the process it will be necessary to show how a Synoptic-type Spirit-

¹⁸ See Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John, i-xii* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966) 411.

¹⁹ See David Coffey, *Grace: The Gift of the Holy Spirit* (Sydney: Faith and Culture, 1979); "The 'Incarnation' of the Holy Spirit in Christ," *TS* 45 (1984) 466-80; "A Proper Mission of the Holy Spirit," *TS* 47 (1986) 227-50; and "The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love of the Father and the Son," *TS* 51 (1990) 193-229.

Christology, admissible in the first century, can escape the charge of adoptionism when propounded seriously in the 20th century. The integrating thesis is as follows: God the Father bestows the Holy Spirit in the most radical possible way on Jesus, in the one act calling him into human existence, conferring on him the fullness of grace, and drawing him into hypostatic union with the pre-existent divine Son. The Spirit thus accomplishes in a single act three works in regard to Jesus: creation, assimilation, and union—all of them by definition as radical as possible. In this scheme the Spirit must be understood as the Father's love for the Son, first in the immanent Trinity, and then in the economic Trinity. The scheme itself is taken from the Augustinian model of the Holy Spirit as the mutual love of the Father and the Son. If this is correct (and it can be shown from Scripture to be so), the mutual love depends on its constituent elements: the Father's love for the Son and the Son's love for the Father. And because the Father is the source of the Son, the one from whom the Son proceeds, the Father's love for the Son takes precedence over the Son's love for the Father, which must be seen as an answering love.

All love for human beings exhibits the three features named above: it will be creative, assimilative, and unitive. Because the Father's love for the Son is now bestowed outside the Trinity and because it is bestowed in this case in all radicality, first, the creation thus affected will be utterly radical, i.e., it will call the humanity of Christ into existence; second, the assimilation or sanctification will constitute Christ in the very fullness of grace; and third, the union will be not just any union but a hypostatic union. But why a union precisely with the Son? Because the Son is the object of the Father's love in the immanent Trinity. Bestowed in all fullness outside the Trinity, the Spirit will draw the one thus created, Jesus, by sanctification, into hypostatic union with that one who in the Trinity itself is the sole proper object of the Father's love. Adoptionism is ruled out because there are not three acts, but just one act—assumption into hypostatic union—which contains creation and sanctification within itself. As Augustine wrote, "He [the man Jesus] was not assumed [into hypostatic union] in the sense that he was first created and then assumed, but by the very assumption he was created (*ipsa assumptione crearetur*)."²⁰ According to the requirements of developed Catholic doctrine, this statement has to be expanded to include sanctification as an intermediate stage. Thus, incidentally, we reverse the Thomistic logical order of Incarnation and grace in the hypostatic union: where Aquinas had the descending order (Incarnation, grace), we have the ascending order (creation, grace, Incarnation.)²¹

²⁰ Augustine, *Contra sermonem Arianorum* 8.6 (PL 42.688).

²¹ Thomas Weinandy in his review of Ralph del Colle's *Christ and the Spirit: Spirit-Christology in Trinitarian Perspective* (New York: Oxford University, 1994) criticizes me for the claim that creation, sanctification, union is a correct logical order. He writes, "It

The first stage in ascending order, creation, viewed in isolation, must be seen as a work *ad extra* and hence as common to the whole Trinity, as Augustine also held. The remaining stages, sanctification and union, are performed by the Spirit alone. To borrow a phrase of Teilhard de Chardin, the assimilation is brought to the point where a "critical threshold" is crossed and union takes place. And, to invoke now a theological scheme of Karl Rahner, these latter stages, grace and Incarnation, are modalities of the "self-communication of God." They are not just works of efficient causality, not just operations *ad extra*, but works of "quasi-formal causality" and, as such, participations in the operations *ad intra*. Two further things need to be said. First, with Rahner I insist that quasi-formal and efficient causality are not two distinct acts, but rather a single act in which the formal causality contains the efficient within itself as its "deficient mode."²² And second (and here I go beyond Rahner), as operations *ad intra* in the predicated sense, grace and Incarnation are not common to the three divine persons but are proper to the Holy Spirit alone. This, in brief, is my thesis. And in its exposition I have invoked both Augustine and Rahner to support my contention that it is not adoptionist.

One clarification is called for immediately. I am not suggesting a hypostatic union of the Holy Spirit with the humanity of Christ, but I am suggesting that in the economic Trinity the Holy Spirit and the Son work always together, though each in his proper way. Whereas in the immanent Trinity the Son is the "treasurer" of the Holy Spirit (to use a typically Eastern expression), in the economic Trinity the Spirit is always, as Paul says, the "Spirit of sonship" (Romans 8:15) (and daugh-

is not possible for the Holy Spirit to sanctify the humanity of Jesus prior to the union, for the humanity never exists separate or apart from the Son. Even on the level of logical priority, it is through the grace of union that the Holy Spirit sanctifies the humanity" (*The Thomist* 59 [1995] 656-59, at 658). If one grants that a logical order exists among the three elements, what comes first in an ascending order must be creation, and what comes last, that is third, must be union. One cannot conceive a union of divinity and humanity apart from a humanity that *logically* already exists, and indeed exists as supernaturally disposed for union. Sanctification or assimilation by sanctifying grace is precisely this disposition, and hence logically assumes mid-place between creation and union. Unlike Augustine's scheme, Weinandy's overlooks creation; but, with it included in Weinandy's scheme, there would be from creation to union an ascending order, which would then be reversed, moving back from union to sanctification. This would not be logical. Weinandy's statement that the Holy Spirit can sanctify the humanity of Jesus only in consequence of the union reflects the Thomistic theology that is precisely the object of my criticism. This operates out of a descending scheme. My proposal on the other hand, in line with ascending synoptic theology, has in the case of Jesus, Son of God, the Holy Spirit as "the power of the Most High" (Luke 1:35), i.e., the Spirit of the Father bringing the Son into existence not in the immanent Trinity but in the economy of salvation. From all this it will be clear that logical priority is determined by the context in which the ordering is done. In the ascending theology with which we are dealing here the correct logical order is therefore, contrary to the view of Weinandy, creation, sanctification, union.

²² See Karl Rahner, "Selbstmitteilung Gottes," in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 2nd ed. (Freiburg: Herder, 1964) 9.627.

terhood too), drawing humanity into union, whether hypostatic or non-hypostatic, precisely with the Son. This union is either radical and therefore hypostatic, in the case of Christ, or less than radical and therefore non-hypostatic, in the case of Christians. They become, in a phrase beloved of the Eastern Fathers, "sons in the Son." Therefore in the hypostatic union it is the Son who ultimately is united to the humanity of Christ, and hence the Son who there exercises quasi-formal causality. But in the case of Christians, because there is no hypostatic union, it is the Spirit who by a proper title is united to them, and hence the Spirit who exercises quasi-formal causality in their regard. In each case it is the Spirit who performs the work. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of sonship not just for us: he is this also for Christ. But this is to put matters the wrong way round. Because he is the Spirit of Sonship for Christ the paradigm, he is the Spirit of sonship and daughterhood for us. That the divine Sonship of Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit is an idea frequently encountered in Protestant works of biblical Christology, but not in Catholic ones.²³ The reason, presumably, is twofold: first, the fear of adoptionism; and secondly, an inability to square such a theology with standard Catholic theology of the Trinity. These obstacles cause Catholic theologians simply to overlook what is, after all, a plain statement of synoptic Christology.

This is not the place for a defense of the mutual-love theology as an acceptable alternative to models of the Trinity that hitherto have reigned supreme in East and West (even if in opposition to each other). It is not being suggested that the traditional models are wrong in any way. It is just that they come out of the purely descending Johannine Christology, which is not the only Christology known to the New Testament. There is also an ascending, synoptic one, and that is where the mutual-love theology really comes from, even if it did not do so for Augustine. But I can point to a certain advantage of the mutual-love theology: its comprehensiveness. If John represents an advance on the Synoptics, this is because through his theology of the Incarnation he was able to embrace a new theological method that allowed him to dispense with the hard-won stages through which the synoptic theology had to work. But the mutual-love theology in its modern form is not pegged back to the relatively unsophisticated level of the Synoptics, for it expressly takes the Johannine achievement into account. The difference, therefore, is that it incorporates the earlier stages of development, whereas the Johannine theology does not. These earlier stages are by no means insignificant. The most important outcome for the modern mutual-love theology is that in it the Holy Spirit, far from being perceived as irrelevant to the Incarnation as in both traditional

²³ Two relevant examples of Protestant works are Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus: God and Man*, trans. Lewis L. Wilkins and Duane A. Priebe (London: SCM, 1968) 119–20, and James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: An Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (London: SCM, 1980) 46–60.

models (the Eastern and the Western), is revealed as the agent of the Incarnation. It affirms all that the traditional models affirm and more besides. It is therefore comprehensive.

We are now in a position to see that the intention of the council in *Presbyterorum ordinis* no. 2 to affirm in a theologically valid and convincing way a pneumatological understanding of the priesthood of Christ himself, and along with it a similar understanding of the other three forms of the priesthood in the Church, without sacrificing the traditional incarnational understanding, is possible, even though the council lacked the means to accomplish the task itself. The key is to see the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Sonship for Christ himself. This integrates the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit, overcoming their mutual detachment, which is a legacy of Thomistic theology. This means that the priesthood of Christ can continue to be seen as the Incarnation in its inherent dynamism, with, however, the Incarnation itself seen as brought about by the radical bestowal of the Holy Spirit by the Father on Jesus at his conception. Of course, his priesthood, like his humanity itself, had a history of growth and development, attaining its completion in his death on the cross, for it was ontologically constituted as a dimension of his humanity at his conception. No longer, therefore, is the priesthood seen as something added on to the being of Christ after its essential constitution and hence as secondary and relatively unimportant. And the advantages discerned earlier for the pneumatological understanding can be allowed to stand after all.

There remains a problem of the use of the word "anointing" for the priesthood of Christ when the locus of this is understood to be his conception. In 1958 the New Testament scholar Ignace de la Potterie published an article on the anointing of Christ; all subsequent theology on the subject has had to reckon with it.²⁴ There he showed that the locus of the anointing was not the conception but the baptism, and that it was directed not to the Incarnation but to Jesus' prophethood. He went on to complain about a generalizing tendency found as far back as the Greek Fathers, some of whom (particularly Cyril of Alexandria) were wont to speak of the Incarnation as an anointing of Jesus by the Father with the Holy Spirit.²⁵ De la Potterie was concerned that the baptismal anointing would be robbed of its true content if it were seen as nothing more than "a simple external manifestation of an already actualized consecration."²⁶

One must sympathize with de la Potterie's concern, but on the other hand it should be pointed out that "generalizing" is a suitable word for what theology does when it goes about its business in the way commended by Vatican I, i.e. taking into account both "the analogy with

²⁴ Ignace de la Potterie, "L'onction du Christ: Etude de théologie biblique," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 80 (1958) 225-52.

²⁵ Ibid. 251-52; and Coffey, *Grace* 130-43.

²⁶ De la Potterie, "L'onction du Christ" 252.

the objects of [reason's] natural knowledge" and "the connection of these mysteries [of revelation] with one another and with the ultimate end of human beings."²⁷ "Anointing" is a perfectly good word for what happened at the moment of Jesus' conception. It would be hard to find a more apt term for the radical bestowal of the Holy Spirit on his humanity by the Father that took place there. And to borrow the word from Luke's theology of the baptism for use in regard to the Incarnation seems entirely in line with Vatican I's recommendation. Ancient Greek theology applied the word "anointing" to the Incarnation; and now Vatican II applies it to the priesthood of Christ. Both applications are justified in the light of analogy and the interconnection of the mysteries of faith. Nor is it entirely true to say that the baptismal anointing becomes "a simple external manifestation of an already actualized consecration." True, if we need to reinterpret the baptismal anointing in the light of Incarnation theology, it has become a revelation, but a revelation of what Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, became in the interval between his conception and his baptism: a person who had reached the point of human and spiritual development of being able and ready to assume the ministry of preaching the good news of the kingdom. He was not that already at the time of his conception. De la Potterie's objection smacks of an excessively static conception of the sacred humanity.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE CHURCH

I move on now to address our second major theme, the priesthood of the Church as a distinct category. In order to do this properly I must first address a problem already noted, namely the tendency to identify the priesthood of the Church with the common priesthood. Because the ordained and the common priesthood are functions existing in the Church, whenever they are spoken of, this happens necessarily within an ecclesiological framework. One way of attempting to understand them while remaining consciously within this framework is to look upwards to Christ and relate them, at least initially, to him, i.e., by means of what one may call a christological reference. This exercise is already begun when we say with *Presbyterorum ordinis* that ordained priests "act in the person of Christ the head." Though the initial point of reference is Christ, the expression in its totality and therefore the framework remains ecclesiological, for priests are said only to act in the person of Christ. So to act is to perform an ecclesial function. The exercise is completed when we add that through the common priesthood the faithful act by virtue of their union with Christ the priest. Because these statements are de facto ecclesiological, it would be theoretically possible to clarify the relationship of the two forms by means of them, but we cannot do so as long as we allow the christological

²⁷ See Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Filius*, DS 3016.

references to obscure their true ecclesiological nature. To work out satisfactorily the mutual relation of the two forms it is not enough to operate in a framework that is de facto ecclesiological; we also need to be aware that we are operating at this level and to respect the methodology that it implies.

Another way of attempting to understand the two forms is to look downwards and avail ourselves of sociological categories inasmuch as the Church is also a social entity. On its own this method could not do justice to the theological character of the Church, but we must remember that here too we retain the ecclesiological framework and so draw the sociological categories into it, thus subtly changing (i.e. elevating) their meaning. In so doing we identify the ordained priesthood as the ministry of leadership of the Church, and the common priesthood as the dynamism of belonging to the Church (i.e., to the group that is the Church.) While at times it will be useful to distinguish between sociological and ecclesiological references, this will not always be necessary, for the Church must always be viewed as a society, as a community. The necessary elevation of sociological meaning referred to above will often be enough to indicate the ecclesiological framework.

Historically, as noted, the problem has been that the christological reference of the ordained priest, according to which he is recognized as acting in the person of Christ and even as being "another Christ" (*alter Christus*), has had the effect of lifting the ordained priesthood out of the ecclesiological framework altogether and situating it in the christological framework.²⁸ This did not have to happen because of the christological reference, but it is what happened in fact. As a result,

²⁸ *Presbyterorum ordinis* mentions the "special character" of the ordained priest by which he acts in the person of Christ. Thus conceived, it may be thought to set the priest in direct relation to Christ apart from and above the Church. This tendency is certainly countered by the opinion of Piet Fransen, who attempted to revive the opinion of Augustine that the character had no such connotation but consisted in the rite of ordination itself as a permanent consecration to the life thus signified (see *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology*, 6 vols. (London: Burns & Oates, 1969) 4.305-27, at 324-25). Yet, as Eliseo Ruffini pointed out in regard to baptism, it was for good reason that Scholasticism abandoned this conception: "the baptismal rite is transitory whereas baptism remains" ("Character as a Concrete Visible Element of the Sacrament in Relation to the Church," in *The Sacraments in General: A New Perspective*, ed. E. Schillebeeckx and B. Willems, Concilium 31 [New York: Paulist, 1967] 101-14, at 104). And the Council of Trent emphasized the interior, spiritual nature of the character when it canonized the Scholastic teaching that it was "a certain spiritual and indelible sign whereby they [the three sacraments that confer it] cannot be repeated" (DS 1609), a stand incompatible with the Augustinian view. However, in the same article Ruffini points out that the very fact that according to the Tridentine teaching the character is a sign means that it must possess a certain visibility (102). His proposal is that the visibility of the character consists in the fact that as a deputation to worship it is "a visible prolongation of the three sacraments which structure the Church" (112). In the case of ordination this would indicate the role and activity proper to the priest in the Church. Could we not combine these three contributions and say that the character is in the first instance the rite by which a person is "characterized" in a particular way in and for the Church, secondly, the permanent, interior, spiritual characterization that this entails, and thirdly, the fruit of

only the common priesthood was left in the ecclesiological framework. Though *Lumen gentium* taught that the common priesthood along with the ordained was a participation in the priesthood of Christ, this did not have the effect, in this case, of transferring the common priesthood to the christological framework. For one thing, in its case the official doctrine did not provide a model of understanding comparable to that for the ordained priesthood, namely that the priest acts in the person of Christ the head. Second, even if the conclusion were reached that through the common priesthood the faithful act by virtue of their union with Christ, this would still not be readily recognized as a christological reference, since in the body-metaphor that it implies only the head was identified as Christ, and therefore the members almost by definition would be seen as other than him. But in fact, *Mediator Dei* gave an unambiguously ecclesiological immediate reference for the common priesthood. No doubt all this paved the way for the unreflective identification, even in official documents, of the priesthood of the Church with the common priesthood alone. It is only when one is brought to see that, while the ordained and the common priesthood can each have a christological reference and in a certain sense a christological nature,²⁹ each possesses properly an ecclesiological nature, that one realizes that the priesthood of the Church consists fully in neither alone but in their integration into a single organic entity. Only this insight enables one to reach a clear understanding of their mutual relationship.

Clearly, the next step should be to investigate the nature of the ordained and the common priesthood with the aid of ecclesiological terms of reference, for such terms are best suited for grasping and expressing them in their intrinsic relationship. This done, it should be possible to construct from them an adequate understanding of the priesthood of the Church. But all three levels of reference remain essential for a complete understanding of the two forms of priesthood: the christological, because the priesthood of Christ provides their ontological ground; the sociological, because the Church, in which they exist, is in all circumstances a society; and the ecclesiological, because the Church is the proper frame for both their existence and their operation.

The Ordained Priesthood

We begin with the ordained priesthood. I have already shown that the priesthood of the ordained (in the broad sense) derives from the apostolate, the concept of which is clearly ecclesiological. This prompts the question: What, then, did it mean to be an apostle? To this, Scrip-

this in the subsequent proper activity of the characterized person in the Church? At least such a proposal, bringing together as it does the elements of the tradition, shows up the inadequacy of understanding the character exclusively in terms of a reference to Christ (though this of course is part of it).

²⁹ See n. 5 above.

ture replies: it meant being an official witness to Christ. Addressing the brethren for the purpose of selecting someone to replace Judas and thus make up the full complement of the Twelve, Peter said, "So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his Resurrection" (Acts 1:21–22). "Official witness to Christ" can serve as a definition of an ordained person, i.e. of all ordained bishops, priests, and deacons, though we are here concerned primarily with priests, only secondarily with bishops and not with deacons.

For this primary purpose, it is helpful to bear in mind the following statement of *Presbyterorum ordinis* no. 2: "The function of the bishops' ministry was handed over in a subordinate degree to priests so that they might be appointed in the order of the priesthood and be co-workers of the episcopal order for the proper fulfillment of the apostolic mission that had been entrusted to it by Christ," as well as the statement of *Lumen gentium* no. 29 that deacons "receive the imposition of hands 'not unto the priesthood, but unto the ministry.'" While the latter statement admittedly does not in a positive way clarify the nature of their cultic ministry (though a number of specific tasks are listed), at least negatively it declares deacons, in the clearest possible terms, excluded from the priesthood that is proper to bishops and priests. The deacon, then, is an official witness to Christ in a different way from bishops and priests. Later in this article I shall offer a suggestion as to what this way might be. For the present, one can be satisfied with the following definition of an ordained priest: he is an official witness to Christ in a way proper to his order and sharing in that of the order of bishops. In this statement it is clear not only that the framework or context of discourse is ecclesiological, but also that the immediate reference is ecclesiological, for witnessing is an act performed in and for the Church. However, the necessary christological reference is suggested in the fact that the witnessing is to Christ.

The Laity

The lay person, on the other hand, is not at all an official witness to Christ. A witness to Christ he or she certainly is, but not an official witness. But even witness to Christ is not the definition of a lay person. To have recourse to Scholastic categories (which because of their clarity can sometimes be helpful), witness to Christ expresses a property of a lay person but not his or her essence, and therefore not his or her definition. How, then, does one define a lay person? *Lumen gentium* no. 31 recognizes two components, positive and negative, to the definition. Positively, a lay person is one who responds with faith to the official witness and is therefore filled with faith, one of the "faithful," a

believer, someone who therefore belongs to the Church and to Christ by faith and by what faith implies, baptism. This is not a passive conception of the lay person, for his or her faith is not simply a response to the ministry of the official witness. By his grace God has already been active in the heart of the lay person, arousing there an "anonymous" faith, to which the official witness brings correction (if needed), direction, completion, and orientation to community. For the lay person, then, there is a necessary step that is prior to the reception of official witness, one that takes place in the encounter with it, namely "recognition." By this is meant recognition, by the lay person, in the official witness, of the direction in which God is already moving his or her heart.³⁰ This part of the definition is the correlate to the concept of official witness to Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, living faith in Christ brings about the state of sonship or daughterhood of God. Hence at the ontological level these faithful are "sons and daughters of the kingdom" (cf. Matt 13:38), "sons and daughters in the Son." Therefore, this concept too belongs to the positive part of our definition. And because the ordained are also believers and sons, it is important to add the negative component, that a lay person is someone who has not been ordained. Obviously, the lay person will give witness to Christ, indeed prophetic witness, but this will flow from, rather than be identical with, his or her essence as a lay person. In the case of the laity too it is clear that this definition is ecclesiological both in its framework of discourse and its immediate terms of reference. But here too it is clear that a christological reference is implied, in that lay people's faith in the official witness is also faith in Christ and their sonship or daughterhood is that of God in Christ, factors that we have included in our definition. The common priesthood is nothing other than the cultic specification of this essence in action.

The priest, then, is someone chosen by God out of the body of those who belong to Christ to be for the rest of his life an official witness to Christ for that body and for the world. What hitherto has been for him a property of his Christian existence now becomes the essence of his state of life. Clearly, then, the ordained priesthood is a charism, as the 1971 Synod of Bishops asserted.³¹ This conclusion is manifestly in line with the pneumatological character of the priesthood as considered in the first part of this article. And in the New Testament "charism" is the word used for the gift imparted to Timothy at his "ordination": "Do not neglect the charism you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the council of elders laid their hands upon you" (1 Tim 4:14). Admittedly, here the word is used not for a noninstitutional gift

³⁰ For a systematic development of the relation of recognition and reception, see Gerard Kelly, *Recognition: Advancing Ecumenical Thinking* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996).

³¹ See *The Ministerial Priesthood* 13; Chantraine makes the same point ("Synodalité" 342).

but for an institutional one. Vatican II twice used the word in this latter sense, once for the gift of papal infallibility in *Lumen gentium* no. 25, and once for the preaching of bishops in *Dei Verbum* no. 8. There can be no problem in principle about this. The essence of a charism is that it be a gift of the Holy Spirit to an individual for the building up of the Church. Whether it be institutional or not is of secondary importance. Both kinds of charism are essential to the good order of the Church.

The common priesthood, on the other hand, though a gift of grace, is not a charism, for a charism is always a particular gift, whereas the grace of faith or of sonship or daughterhood, from which the common priesthood derives, is universal in the Church. Lay people, of course, possess a whole range of charisms, but as lay people they possess no particular role, no single charism. This means that their mission coincides with that of the Church itself.³² Georges Chantraine is correct in his view that the common priesthood is the dynamism of the divine sonship or daughterhood of the faithful just as Christ's priesthood is the dynamism of his own unique Sonship, which of course is the source of their sonship or daughterhood.³³ Because their sonship or daughterhood is personal to each one of them, so too, Chantraine argues, is their priesthood. For this reason he prefers the term "personal priesthood" to "common priesthood."³⁴ One can see his point. It is supported by the fact that, in expressing the exercise of the common priesthood in *Lumen gentium* no. 10, the Council Fathers, between the first draft and the final text, changed the verbs from singulars to plurals, so that instead of reading, "the priestly people concurs (*concurrat*) in the offering of the sacrifice and becomes active (*exerceatur*) in prayer, witness, self-denial and charity," the text reads, "the faithful, by virtue of their royal priesthood, concur (*concurrunt*) in the eucharistic sacrifice, and exercise (*exercent*) [the priesthood] by receiving the sacraments, by prayer and thanksgiving, by the witness of a holy life, by self-denial and fervent charity."³⁵ Though cognizant of the problem, the council retained the expression "the common priesthood." Further, the common priesthood is not just personal but communal also, and the ordained priesthood, though oriented to ministry, is also personal in that it is possessed by individual persons. What emerges from our study of the two forms is a clear perception of their essential difference. The common priesthood, like that of Christ, is a dynamism of faith, of divine sonship or daughterhood, which the ordained priesthood is not. And the ordained priesthood is a charism, of official witness, which the common priesthood is not.

³² See Leonard Doohan, "Contemporary Theologies of the Laity: An Overview since Vatican II," *Communio* 7 (1980) 225-42, at 241.

³³ See Chantraine, "Synodalité" 340-41.

³⁴ See *ibid.* 341.

³⁵ See Drilling, "Common and Ministerial Priesthood" 88-89.

For the laity the broad sense of priesthood (as I have used "broad" in regard to the priesthood of Christ and the ordained) is normally called the lay apostolate. On this subject, Rahner wrote that when the hierarchy recruit lay people to help them, e.g., when there is a shortage of priests, this, properly speaking, is not the lay apostolate.³⁶ Rather, it is the hierarchical apostolate, into which the laity, while remaining such, are co-opted. In this situation the laity work under the direction of bishops and priests. This co-operation has recently been given a new name, "collaborative ministry," and it is a positive development, but it is not the lay apostolate. For one thing, not all the laity are invited to participate, nor are all suited to it. For the laity it implies a genuine "ministry," i.e., an official task for which on the basis of charisms discerned in them they are selected and commissioned. It is not so with the lay apostolate, for this belongs to all and comes with baptism and confirmation. Nor does it imply clerical control. This remains so whether the lay apostolate be taken up on an individual or an organized basis. Works of the lay apostolate in Rahner's sense imply initiative, and certainly not passivity on the part of the laity. It is these works (along with others) that, according to both *Lumen gentium* and *Presbyterorum ordinis*, get brought to the Eucharist and transformed into works of the common priesthood in the cultic sense, placed there in co-ordination with the priesthood of the ordained.³⁷

Identity

The next step is to explain the identity that exists among headship, official witness, and leadership in the Church on the one hand, and among union with Christ, faith in the official witness, and belonging on the other.³⁸ The whole mission of Christ himself was formative of community, i.e. of the kingdom of God, the community of salvation. Therefore the witness of the apostles to him, insofar as it was official, could not be other than community-forming and salvific. But that the new community, or rather communion of communities, namely the Church,

³⁶ See Karl Rahner, "Notes on the Lay Apostolate," in *Theological Investigations* 2, trans. Karl H. Kruger (Baltimore: Helicon, 1963) 332.

³⁷ See *Lumen gentium* no. 34, *Presbyterorum ordinis* no. 2.

³⁸ The contrast as here expressed between the ordained and the common priesthood may seem to assign too passive a condition to the laity. To this it should be replied that it all depends on what concept of authority one has. Christian authority is not supposed to consign people to passivity, though in an aberrant form it may do so. *Lumen gentium* gives an excellent account of what Church leadership should be when it says that "those who have charge over the Church should judge the genuineness and proper use of these gifts (i.e. the charisms of the faithful), through their office not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to what is good" (no. 12). In other words, Christian leadership should discern and facilitate the gifts which the Holy Spirit has given to people in the Church. If the Church has not been very democratic in the past, this is no reason why it should not be more so in the future, provided ultimate responsibility be allowed to rest with its official leaders. Note also what I have written above about the lay apostolate.

be preserved in fidelity to Christ, the apostolic witness had to be both authoritative and, by divine guarantee, immune from error. In other words, the apostles had to be the leaders of the Church and leaders unique in kind. The same, with appropriate qualifications, must be said of their successors as official witnesses to Christ, the ordained, bishops, priests, and deacons. And obviously, a similar connection exists between "acting in the person of Christ the head" and church leadership. Headship, official witness, and leadership, all being properly the same by nature, i.e. ecclesiological, though with different terms of reference (christological, ecclesiological, and sociological respectively), amount to the same thing.

It should cause no surprise that I invoke the sociological concept of leadership as the key to this identity, as the sociological is what presents itself immediately in our everyday experience. The only real differences exist at the various levels of the hierarchy. Bishops in their local churches are dependent on the pope who, as successor of Peter, exercises an authoritative "ministry of communion" in the universal Church.³⁹ This provides a key to both their leadership and his. Priests, as already noted, are dependent on the bishop in that they are by definition co-operators with him in his ministry, and this defines their leadership. But both bishops and priests preside at the Eucharist, which draws their eucharistic communities into the fullness of the mystery of Christ and the Church, and in this sense their leadership is complete.

It is this fullness of leadership that the deacon lacks. While leadership roles approximating those of bishops and priests, e.g. "presiding over the worship and prayer of the faithful," are ascribed to him in *Lumen gentium* no. 29, the ascription stops short of having him preside at the Eucharist or restore sinners to the eucharistic community by the sacrament of reconciliation. Hence, while his leadership is community-forming, salvific, and authoritative, like that of bishops and priests, it is not the same as theirs. Therefore, while he too is an official witness to Christ, he is so in a different way from bishops and priests.

If there is identity among headship, official witness, and leadership, there must also be at least material identity among their correlates, union in Christ, faith in the official witness, and belonging to the Church. One belongs to the Church through shared faith in the official witness, and this faith is the access to shared faith in Christ and hence to union in him. Again, and for the same reason as previously noted, I have appealed to the sociological as the key to the identity that I seek.

The issue of the priesthood of the Church was raised by Friedrich Wulf in 1968 in his comment on *Presbyterorum ordinis*:

³⁹ See Pope Paul VI, "Address of Pope Paul VI to World Council of Churches Assembly, 10th June, 1969," in the ongoing series *The Teachings of Pope Paul VI* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1969) 2.151.

Unfortunately, the spiritual, theological unity between the official priesthood and the priesthood of the Church is not made sufficiently clear. It is not stated that the fundamental priesthood in the Church is that of the Church, the whole People of God, and that hence the official priesthood, in spite of its institution by Christ—not by the Church—, finds its immediate theological setting within the priesthood of the Church. It represents the priesthood of the Church and makes this palpable in the sacramental and social reality of the Church. The special powers given by Christ to the priest in the sacrament of Holy Orders, and not possessed by every member, are primarily powers of the Church. They are given to him not as an individual official but as representative of the Church, and hence only through the mediation of the Church. (The ordaining bishop acts not only in the name and person of Christ, but in the name of the Church and as its representative.) Through the priest the Church fulfills its essential nature, its priestly mission, as through a sacramental instrument.⁴⁰

Wulf should receive credit for this initiative taken so soon after the council. In this quotation, however, it is clear that, like the decree he criticizes, Wulf identifies the priesthood of the Church with the common priesthood. Hence, when he writes that the priesthood of the ordained “represents the priesthood of the Church and makes this palpable in the sacramental and social reality of the Church,” I cannot agree with him. Certainly the ordained priest performs these functions in relation to the priesthood of the faithful, the common priesthood, but not in relation to the priesthood of the Church. The latter, as the integration and synergy of the common and the ordained priesthood, does not need to be represented, as it is already manifest in the celebration of the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, and there it is also made palpable in the ways desired by Wulf. Nor can I agree with his statement that the special powers of the priest are “primarily powers of the Church,” if by this he means that they are drawn from the priesthood of the Church, i.e., for him, the common priesthood. For one thing, this would make the common and the ordained priesthood different only in degree and not in essence. But also, this view does not correspond to the historical reality. Historically, the apostles did not derive their office from the Church in any way. This office did not have a history of development and emergence out of the bounty with which Christ endowed the Church. It was precisely the other way round. The bearers of this office were commissioned immediately by the risen Christ, and it was their preaching of the Resurrection, in which they acted as “apostles,” i.e. emissaries of Christ, that created the Church.

This shows also that the apostolic office was not a derivation from the priesthood of the Church in our sense of the expression either, for there never was such a thing as an undifferentiated priesthood of the Church. From the first it existed as the integration of two differentiated forms, the apostolate and the Church at large. Unlike the common and the ordained priesthood, each of which is personal in senses that

⁴⁰ Friedrich Wulf, “The Priesthood in the Mission of the Church” 220–21.

have been explained, the priesthood of the Church is a purely social reality.⁴¹ There is, however, a sense in which I would admit Wulf's statement that the powers of the priest are "primarily powers of the Church," inasmuch as the office of priest is grounded in that of apostle, which is the foundational office in the Church (see Revelation 21:14). This does not equate the Church with the apostles, still less with the hierarchy. For the apostolate is a dynamic office and cannot be conceived except as summoning people to faith and membership of the Church. The apostle, therefore, can be thought of only in conjunction with the community that he has brought and continues to bring to faith in Christ.

The same is true of bishops, priests, and deacons as successors of the apostles. There is something anomalous about an exercise of the ordained priesthood that does not directly involve the participation of the common priesthood. This accounts for the negative attitude that the Church has consistently taken towards the celebration of Mass when only the celebrating priest is present.⁴² Conversely, while it is possible to have exercises of the common priesthood apart from the ordained, these attain their ultimate meaning and efficacy only when brought to the Eucharist and there joined with the ministry of the ordained, as *Presbyterorum ordinis* states.⁴³

In the passage cited, Wulf has raised the important question of rep-

⁴¹ As the priesthood of the Church consists in the integration of the common and the ordained priesthood, and if, therefore, it cannot be said to exist in its entirety in the common priesthood, it might be thought so to exist in the ordained priest, inasmuch as he possesses both forms, the common priesthood by virtue of his baptism and the ordained priesthood by virtue of his ordination. But this position too is unacceptable. What it presumes is not integration but sublation (*Aufhebung*, to use the Hegelian term), the sublation of the priest's baptismal character into his ordination character. In so doing, the presumption makes the opposite mistake to that of the received theology, in that, whereas the latter identified the priesthood of the Church with the common priesthood, the former would identify it with the ordained priesthood. These alternatives are equally objectionable. The priest possesses not just one character but two (actually three, since he has been confirmed as well.) He cannot directly exercise the characters of baptism and ordination together, since he either celebrates a sacrament as a priest, or receives it or at least participates in it as a baptized person. The priest who assists at the Eucharist but neither celebrates nor concelebrates assists by virtue of his baptism, not his ordination. When on the other hand he celebrates or concelebrates, he does so directly by virtue of his ordination and only indirectly by virtue of his baptism, and then only in the sense that this forms the basis of his ordination. Augustine also kept the two functions distinct when he said to his congregation, "I am a bishop for you, a Christian with you" (*Sermo* 340,1 [PL 38.1483]). The point raised serves to bring into relief the fact that the priesthood of the Church consists not in the possession of the ordained and the common priesthood, let alone the sublation of the latter into the former, but in their integration. And this is possible only in the community, not in individuals. Hence the priesthood of the Church is a purely social reality, and not at all a personal one.

⁴² For an account of this, see *The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, ed. James A. Coriden, Thomas J. Green, and Donald E. Heintschel (New York: Paulist, 1985) 647, the principal authoritative texts being *Sacrosanctum concilium* no. 27 and canon 906.

⁴³ See *Presbyterorum ordinis* no. 2.

resentation, and to this we must now briefly turn our attention.⁴⁴ In the celebration of the sacraments the priest acts both in the person of Christ (*in persona Christi*) and in the person of the Church (*in persona ecclesiae*). Georg Hintzen ably captures this double representation in regard to the supreme sacrament of the Eucharist when he writes that:

The council says that in the celebration of the Eucharist the official priest acts *in persona Christi et ecclesiae*. The expression *in persona ecclesiae* does not occur as such, but its substance is conveyed by "in the name of the whole people." Saying "*in persona Christi et ecclesiae*" shows that we need to understand the ministry of the official priest "sacramentally," i.e. *in genere signi*: the priest is the sacramental real-symbol for both Christ the high priest and God's priestly people of the Church. On the level of the sacramental rite he presents in the sign that which in this external sign-reality happens (or is to happen) inwardly: the *communio* of head and members in their common surrender to the Father; surrender of the high priest, which has opened again for human beings the way to the Father, and the answering surrender of human beings, who follow Christ on his way to the Father. In the one person of the priest the unity of the *totus Christus, caput et membra*, finds at the same time its symbolic expression.⁴⁵

It is necessary to add only that the priest does not represent Christ and the Church in exactly the same way. He represents Christ in that

⁴⁴ See the recent exchange between Dennis Michael Ferrara and Sara Butler: Ferrara, "Representation of Self-Effacement? The Axiom *In Persona Christi* in St. Thomas and the Magisterium," *TS* 55 (1994) 195–224; Butler, "A Response to Dennis M. Ferrara"; and Ferrara, "*In Persona Christi*: A Reply to Sara Butler," *TS* 56 (1995) 81–91, and in "*In Persona Christi*: Towards a Second Naïveté," *TS* 57 (1996) 65–88. In this discussion Ferrara rejects the concept of priestly representation, proposing in its stead that of instrumental causality, while Butler defends representation. While Ferrara may have demonstrated that the language of Thomas (and consequently the Council of Trent also) did not surpass that of instrumental causality, he seems to have overlooked at least three factors. First, Aquinas's recourse to the expression *in persona Christi* for the function of the priest in celebrating the Eucharist could indicate an attempt on his part to express representation within the limited vocabulary of Scholasticism; second, the modern idea of representation is a retrieval of an older patristic tradition obscured in Scholasticism (if Thomas Aquinas did not reflect it, Bonaventure certainly did [see Butler, "Response" 67]); and third, representation could be a more suitable idea, inasmuch as instrumental causality is an infrapersonal concept borrowed from Aristotelianism, whereas representation is personal. Throughout, Ferrara exhibits a negative idea of the priestly role (which he indicates by means of an idiosyncratically defined sense of "apophatic"), as though in order to act as the instrument of Christ the priest is required to be self-effacing. Sacramentality, however, is a positive concept, requiring no such self-abnegation. Here the sign glories in its God-given created reality and as such is raised up by the sacramental word to signify and convey God's gracious action. And, with the help of Aquinas, Butler shows that in the Eucharist the sign consists not just of the elements and the words but of the priest together with these ("Response" 72). I would add that to endorse thus the concept of sacramentality by no means commits its defender to a position on what the limits of the natural likeness might be, e.g., in the question of women's ordination, whether it extends to gender or not. That is a further question.

⁴⁵ Hintzen, "Das gemeinsame Priestertum" 60–61.

he sacramentally makes visible and active in the Church an invisible reality, Christ in his headship. This is not the case with his representation of the Church, for in a real sense the Church is visible already. But in this case he adds headship, apostolate, or leadership to the action of this group of believers, in order to constitute them as Church in the full sense. Apart from his presence and ministry they are only a group of believers, unable of themselves to represent the Church. But at the same time, the fact that he represents them by no means renders their presence and action superfluous, for just as their faith is positive and active, so too is their priesthood. Thus it can be seen that, even though the priest represents a reality that is already at least partially visible, his is truly a sacramental, and not a merely juridical, representation. (If, per impossibile, it were only of the latter kind, his priesthood would differ only in degree, not in kind, from theirs.) But what he adds is drawn not from them, but from Christ. And it is precisely this contribution that, along with theirs, truly constitutes the Church, and therefore the Church at prayer, i.e. the priesthood of the Church.

CONCLUSION

I will now draw the two parts of this article together for the purpose of illuminating the relation between the ordained and the common priesthood. Responding to modern scholarship and to perceived pastoral needs, Vatican II sought to complement the traditional christological understandings of the two forms of the priesthood in the Church with pneumatological understandings that were also referred ultimately to the person of Christ. Despite its good intentions, it was unable to accomplish this at the level of understanding, because Catholic theology did not then have the tools necessary for the task. The problem was that in the person of Christ himself the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit were perceived as parallel rather than co-ordinated. This meant that if the Incarnation were regarded as primary in Christ, his anointing with the Holy Spirit could be seen as only secondary, both in itself and in regard to the goal of his mission, the Redemption. On the other hand, if primary status were awarded to the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the specter of adoptionism would be raised. Official doctrine, therefore, never seriously contemplated this latter alternative. The solution that I have proposed is to co-ordinate the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit at the conception of Jesus (and ever after, for that matter) to show that the Holy Spirit is Spirit of Sonship also for him, indeed especially for him. Despite fears, adoptionism can be shown to be not a real danger in this context. Once this reconciliation is effected in the person of Christ, adjustments can be made for the two forms of priesthood in the Church. If in Christ priesthood is both incarnational and pneumatological, in the sense that even as incarnational it is pneumatological, so also the two forms of priesthood in the Church are essentially pneu-

matological, even when understood, as they have been, by means of christological references.

The category that had been left undeveloped, though it was present in the doctrine in rudimentary form, was that of the priesthood of the Church. Because the council was unable to reconcile its judgments about the ordained and the common priesthood in the person of Christ, it settled for the idea of the ordained priesthood as referred immediately to Christ, indeed to his headship, which did nothing to correct the popular perception of the priest as above the Church rather than as part of it, and, unlike *Mediator Dei*, it left the common priesthood rather vague. Thus on the one hand it stopped short of saying that the common priesthood was that of those mystically united to Christ, and on the other it did not adequately distinguish between the ordained and the common priesthood on the basis of anointing with the Holy Spirit, i.e., by saying that the former was a particular charism and the latter a dynamism of incorporation into the Church. But it did identify the common priesthood with that of the Church. Thus, unintentionally but no less really for all that, it conveyed the impression that whereas the ordained priesthood was christological, the common priesthood was ecclesiological. As long as this unfortunate separation remained, there was no hope of uncovering the intrinsic relation between them, though the council essayed a simple statement of fact that they were intrinsically related, in Christ.

With both forms of priesthood now firmly located in the Church, and the problem of the separation of the christological and the pneumatological understandings overcome, it is possible to describe the nature of the intrinsic relation between the ordained and the common priesthood. Depending on whether christological or ecclesiological terms of reference are chosen, it can be called the relation of sharing in Christ's headship over against simple union with him through faith, or the relation of official witness (apostolic leadership) in the Church over against simple belonging to it through faith and baptism. While both possibilities are correct, the second is the more appropriate, as it is expressive of the actual context in which the priesthood exists and operates. In the process the two forms of the priesthood will have been seen as intrinsically related as pneumatological and ecclesiological and thus as constitutive elements of the priesthood of the Church. And in this way a satisfactory conception of the priesthood of the Church will have been achieved.

Finally, when the relation between the two forms of priesthood in the Church is understood in explicitly ecclesiological terms, this provides a clearer exemplification of the leitmotif "communio" present in *Lumen gentium* than does a christological understanding (though the latter also supports communion theology.) Communion is promoted in a practical way, for priests and people are brought to see clearly that they need each other for the realization of their respective vocations in the Church. All in the Church have communion in the Holy Spirit, through

Christ, with the Father, and hence also with each other. There is also hierarchical communion, based on possession of a common charism, among the members of the episcopal college, a communion in which priests and deacons share in their own way through their participation in the ordained ministry. But finally, there is the communion that exists between priests and people based on the fact that their respective forms of priesthood need each other for the realization of the priesthood of the Church and hence for the ultimate and unified ecclesial worship of God, the purpose for which the human race was created.

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