

THE MINISTERIAL PRIESTHOOD AND LITURGICAL ANAMNESIS IN THE THOUGHT OF EDWARD J. KILMARTIN, S.J.

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[The article explores the possibilities for a constructive theology of priesthood drawn from the work of Edward J. Kilmartin, S.J. (1923–1994). Placing Kilmartin’s direct treatment of church office within the context of his larger theological project, the author names the unstated thesis guiding Kilmartin’s approach: the ministerial priesthood serves the memory of Christ. The article concludes that Kilmartin’s understanding invites reflection on the ministerial priesthood in light of Jesus’ life, pneumatology, faith, and the category of priesthood itself.]

CAN THE LANGUAGE OF PRIESTHOOD—burdened by its long association with a narrowly cultic model of ministry, a Neoplatonic descending hierarchy of church governance, and a clericalism of static states of life—serve to express today’s experience of ordained pastoral leadership? Can the category of priesthood be salvaged in this postconciliar period? When the Second Vatican Council adopted Christ’s threefold office (priest, prophet, and king) as a framework for ministry and chose the biblical language of *presbyteros* over the patristic and medieval *sacerdos*, it signaled a shift away from a cultic model of ordained ministry toward a diversity of models emphasizing pastoral care. But the council did not abandon the language of priesthood altogether, nor could it. Given the influence the category of priesthood has had on nearly 18 centuries of theology and church teaching on ministry, Catholics have little choice but to grapple with this way of describing the community’s ordained leaders.

This article considers the possibilities for a constructive theology of priesthood drawn from the work of the American Jesuit and liturgical theologian Edward J. Kilmartin (1923–1994). Over the course of his career, Kilmartin addressed the question of ordained ministry; but in doing so, he

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rarely made explicit the theological assumptions behind his arguments, nor did he explain the relationship of his conclusions about ministry to his larger theological project. The primary goal of these pages is to make explicit what Kilmartin left implied, to present Kilmartin's treatment of ecclesiastical office within the context of his most important contribution to the field of liturgical theology, namely, his discussion of the role of the Holy Spirit in the liturgical anamnesis.¹ This synthesis will enable an articulation of the unstated thesis guiding Kilmartin's several treatments of church office: the ministerial priesthood serves the memory of Christ. This article first summarizes Kilmartin's direct consideration of ecclesiastical office, which took shape as he strove to specify the representative nature of the ministry vis-à-vis Christ and the Church. I then consider Kilmartin's broader system according to three priesthoods: that of Christ, the faithful, and the minister. The last of these three presents an opportunity to describe several gains for a theology of priesthood drawn from Kilmartin's work. A brief conclusion points to an often-overlooked passage in Vatican II's *Presbyterorum ordinis*, suggesting that Kilmartin's thought offers a fruitful and genuinely postconciliar approach to the ministerial priesthood.

REPRESENTING CHRIST AND CHURCH

Kilmartin did not plan a career in liturgical theology. As a young scholastic, he studied chemistry, destined to teach petroleum engineering to Iraqis at the Jesuit university in Baghdad. But he never made it to Iraq. After his presbyteral ordination and doctoral studies in theology, Kilmartin was called to Weston College to fill in for a fellow Jesuit and professor of sacramental theology who had suffered a sudden heart attack. This "temporary" assignment lasted for 15 years; Kilmartin later moved on to teach sacramental and liturgical theology at the University of Notre Dame and then at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome.² When he died in 1994, Kilmartin left behind a body of work in liturgical theology notable for its attempt to integrate liturgy (*lex orandi*) and theological reflection (*lex credendi*), its dialogue with the liturgical traditions of the Eastern churches, its trinitarian approach to worship, and its creative treatment of Christian sacrifice. Only within the context of this body of work in liturgy can his contribution to a theology of priesthood be fully appreciated.

Kilmartin's theology of priesthood is often viewed through the lens of the debate over how the priest is said to act *in persona Christi* and in

¹ See Jerome M. Hall, *We Have the Mind of Christ: The Holy Spirit and Liturgical Memory in the Thought of Edward J. Kilmartin* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2001) xv.

² A biography and complete bibliography of Kilmartin's published works can be found in Michael A. Fahey, "In Memoriam: Edward J. Kilmartin, S.J. (1923–1994)," *Orientalia christiana periodica* 61 (1995) 5–35.

persona ecclesiae.³ This is appropriate, since Kilmartin dedicated several important articles to the question of how the priest represents both Christ and the Church.⁴ In the course of these articles, he consistently placed the christological referent within the context of the ecclesial. For Kilmartin, 20th-century magisterial teaching had translated the axiom *in persona Christi* into an unqualified and direct representation of Christ by the ministerial priest—an approach that he believed failed to account adequately for the pneumatological and ecclesial dimensions of the apostolic ministry. The primary reality is not the priest, but the Church. Thus Kilmartin often repeated the observation that the ministerial priest is not a mediator between Christ and the Church; rather the role of the priest is embedded in the Christ-Church relationship.⁵

Kilmartin based his argument on the category of faith, the faith of the Church. The Scholastic understanding of the minister's intention *faciendi quod facit ecclesia* in administering the sacraments affirms an ecclesial context. To intend "to do what the Church does" means that the minister must represent the faith of the Church in order to serve as a minister of Christ (i.e., validly administer the sacraments of Christ). "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."⁶ Moreover, attention to the structure of the eucharistic prayer reveals that the account of institution—the point at which the minister's acting *in persona Christi* is most clearly expressed—comes within the context of the assembly's cor-

³ See two survey treatments: Daniel Donovan, *What Are They Saying About the Ministerial Priesthood?* (New York: Paulist, 1992) 129–34; Thomas P. Rausch, "Priestly Identity: Priority of Representation and the Iconic Argument," *Worship* 73 (1999) 169–79, at 173–76.

⁴ Edward J. Kilmartin, "Apostolic Office: Sacrament of Christ," *Theological Studies* 36 (1975) 243–64; "Christ's Presence in the Liturgy," *Emmanuel* 82 (1976) 237–43; "Pastoral Office and the Eucharist," *Emmanuel* 82 (1976) 312–18; Letter to America on the Declaration on the Ordination of Women, *America* 136 (March 5, 1977) 177–78; "Office and Charism: Reflections on a New Study of Ministry," *Theological Studies* 38 (1977) 547–54; "Bishop and Presbyter as Representatives of the Church and Christ," in *Women Priests: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration*, ed. Leonard Swidler and Arlene Swidler (New York: Paulist, 1977) 295–302; "Ecclesiastical Office, Power and Spirit," *Catholic Theological Society of America, Proceedings* 37 (1982) 98–108.

⁵ Kilmartin, "Ecclesiastical Office, Power and Spirit" 106; *Christian Liturgy: Theology and Practice: I. Systematic Theology of Liturgy* (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1988) 325; *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1998) 365–66; "The Catholic Tradition of Eucharistic Theology: Towards the Third Millennium," *Theological Studies* 55 (1994) 405–57, at 439–40.

⁶ "Apostolic Office" 252. On the mid-20th-century debate regarding the role of the minister's intention, see L. Renwart, "L'Intention du ministre des sacrements, problème mal posé," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 81 (1959) 469–88.

porate prayer of thanksgiving, offering, and epiclesis. "The whole prayer is a sacramental word: a word of faith of the Church and form of the ritual action."⁷ To view the priest as directly representing Christ, and so acting *in persona Christi* in an activity to which the passive community only subsequently relates itself (if at all), reduces the eucharistic celebration to a kind of sacral performance with the faithful as audience.⁸ This is not the case: the priest pronounces the words of institution as representative of the faith of the Church in an act of corporate worship, and because of this he represents Christ the head of the Church.

Kilmartin did not play the priest's representation of Christ and his representation of the Church off of one another. In recognizing that the ministerial priest represents Christ *and* the Church, the *et* does not signify a disjunction, but rather a "co-ordination of magnitudes."⁹ In his commentary on the Vatican's 1976 declaration on the ordination of women, *Inter insigniores*, Kilmartin argued that the declaration failed to distinguish clearly between the different levels of signification involved in its use of the phrase *in persona Christi*. He noted two different processes by which sacraments are studied. The first begins with the sensible sacramental rite itself, and then progresses toward that which the rite ultimately signifies ("what is *denoted* by the sensible rite also *connotes* a spiritual reality"¹⁰); the second begins with what is ultimately signified and then reflects on the ways in which this directs the whole process of symbolization. The question of priority of representation is subsumed within this distinction between levels of signification. In other words, from the perspective of the sensible rite, "it is necessary to say that the priest first represents (denotes) the Church in its sacramental activity and secondly represents (connotes) Christ the Head of the Church." But from the perspective of what is ultimately signified, "the priest first represents (connotes) Christ the Head of the Church and secondly represents (denotes) the Church united in faith and love."¹¹ Consequently, the priest represents the Church because he first represents Christ, or the priest represents Christ because he first represents the Church. The difference between these two statements lies in one's prior methodological choice and in the fact of various levels of signification of sacramental rites.¹²

⁷ "Bishop and Presbyter as Representatives of the Church and Christ" 299.

⁸ "Apostolic Office" 257.

⁹ Ibid. 250.

¹⁰ "Bishop and Presbyter as Representatives of the Church and Christ" 296.

¹¹ Ibid. 297.

¹² Kilmartin, "Sacraments as Liturgy of the Church," *Theological Studies* 50 (1989) 527–47, at 531. For Kilmartin, the failure of the reasoning in *Inter insigniores* is methodological. In providing an argument from "fittingness" against the ordination of women to the ministerial priesthood, the document accurately asserts that the priest represents Christ before he represents the Church—based on a consideration of the ultimate source of the priest's activity. But the document then applies

Kilmartin's concern to allow the *lex orandi* to inform the *lex credendi* guided his own methodological choice and explains his repeated claim that the ministerial priest represents Christ because he represents the faith of the Church, of which Christ is the head. But his view is far from reducing the minister to a delegate of the community. He affirmed that the ministerial priesthood belongs to the essential structures of the Church, that it comes from Christ through the Spirit as a gift to the Church and not as a natural right, and that it is linked historically to the apostolic ministry. However, Kilmartin sought to correct an imbalance that has assumed Christ binds his presence to institutions that operate independently of the faith of the Church.¹³ What Kilmartin did not spell out here—and thus what can be missed in his direct treatment of apostolic office—is his thoroughly trinitarian approach to the category of faith. When Kilmartin affirmed that the priest represents Christ because he represents the faith of the Church, more is involved than the issue of women's ordination (although Kilmartin took this question seriously). Behind his arguments for the priority of the Church's faith lie the basic convictions of Kilmartin's theological project: the role of the Spirit in the life of Jesus, the participation of humanity in the trinitarian life of God, and the place of priest and liturgical anamnesis in serving the self-gift of believers. In an effort to make explicit what Kilmartin often left implied or assumed in his arguments on apostolic office, I spell out the principles guiding his theology of ministry, treating the role of faith in the priesthood of Christ, the priesthood of all believers, and the ministerial priesthood.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

The key for understanding Christian priesthood is the New Testament identification of priest and victim in the person of Jesus. A proper understanding of priesthood is conditioned by a proper understanding of sacrifice—something on which Kilmartin had a great deal to say. Unlike the history-of-religions concept of sacrifice in which the victim is distinguished from the priest, Christian sacrifice can never be something that someone

this notion of direct representation to the priest's act of pronouncing the words of consecration, without recognizing that here it shifts from ultimate signification to a consideration of the sensible rite. Furthermore, the Scholastic exception that the priest denotes Christ in pronouncing the institution narrative ignores both the structure of the eucharistic prayers and the epicletic character of these prayers. For Kilmartin, the eucharistic prayer as a whole denotes the action and faith of the Church, and so connotes the activity of Christ ("Bishop and Presbyter as Representatives of the Church and Christ" 296, 298–99; Letter to *America* on the Declaration on the Ordination of Women 178).

¹³ "Apostolic Office" 256.

does to something or someone else.¹⁴ Rather, Christian sacrifice—and thus Christian priesthood in its exercise—is fundamentally an offering of self, an offering rooted in the divine self-offer. Kilmartin concluded that Christian sacrifice “is, in the first place, the self-offering of the Father in the gift of his Son, and in the second place the unique response of the Son in his humanity to the Father, and in the third place, the self-offering of believers in union with Christ by which they share in his covenant relation with the Father.”¹⁵ The self-offering response of men and women involves the free decision to accept the meaning of one’s life from God’s hand, a life-long movement of self-transcendence that occurs through concrete acts of love.¹⁶ Christ’s self-offering response was distinctive, the fullest possible acceptance and response to God’s self-communication, an orientation progressively actualized throughout his life and realized on the cross. This sacrifice has its ground in the trinitarian life of God. And so we turn to the trinitarian theology behind Kilmartin’s understanding of the priesthood of Christ.

Trinitarian Self-Gift

Kilmartin’s analysis of the classical eucharistic prayers of the ancient churches led him to challenge the Christomonism of what he called the “modern average Catholic theology” of the Eucharist.¹⁷ His search for a

¹⁴ See Robert J. Daly, “Sacrifice Unveiled or Sacrifice Revisited: Trinitarian and Liturgical Perspectives,” *Theological Studies* 64 (2003) 24–42; “Sacrifice: The Way to Enter the Paschal Mystery,” *America* 188 (May 12, 2003) 14–17; “Robert Bellarmine and Post-Tridentine Eucharistic Theology,” *Theological Studies* 61 (2000) 239–60. On a phenomenological approach to priesthood in Roman Catholicism, see Avery Dulles, “Models for Ministerial Priesthood,” *Origins* 20 (October 11, 1990) 284–89, at 285–86. For a comparative approach, see E. O. James, *The Nature and Function of Priesthood: A Comparative and Anthropological Study* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1955); Leopold Sabourin, *Priesthood: A Comparative Study* (Leiden: Brill, 1973); Willard G. Oxtoby, “Priesthood: An Overview,” in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 11, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: MacMillan, 1987) 528–34.

¹⁵ *The Eucharist in the West* 381–82.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 356.

¹⁷ The “modern average Catholic theology” of the Eucharist signified for Kilmartin the Tridentine and neo-Scholastic reduction of liturgical reflection and experience to a theology of the “moment of consecration” whose characteristics include: separation of the institution narrative from the context of the eucharistic prayer, marginalization of the communion rite, an objectification of the sacramental presence of the sacrifice of the cross, neglect of the pneumatological and epicletic dimension of liturgy, insertion of the ordained priest as mediator between Christ and Church, and a general preference for the *lex credendi* over the *lex orandi* and the second theological millennium over the first (“The Catholic Tradition of Eucharistic Theology” 431–43; *The Eucharist in the West* 365–68).

pneumatological balance led him, first, to adopt an ascending Spirit-Christology as the basis for his presentation of the sacraments¹⁸ and, eventually, to attempt a thoroughly trinitarian theology of liturgy.¹⁹ In seeking a language to describe the truths about God that are revealed in the celebration of liturgy, Kilmartin came to admire and embrace David Coffey's "bestowal model" of the Trinity as a complement to the "procession model" that has dominated the Western theological tradition.²⁰

The procession model begins with the fact of the missions of the Word and the Spirit in the economy, and then moves to conclusions about the two processions within the immanent Trinity. Grounded in the descending Logos Christology of the New Testament, this model affirms the unity of God and equality of persons. It describes the ordering of relationships among these persons: "Corresponding to the economic mission of the Word and the role of the risen Lord in the sending of the Spirit, the generation of the Word precedes the procession of the Spirit in the immanent Trinity."²¹ Whether the Spirit proceeds from the Father "through the Son" or from the Father "and the Son," the guiding image is a linear procession: Father, Son, then Spirit. For Kilmartin, that model fails to clarify the purpose of the spiration of the Spirit. "The direction is toward an infinite void."²² The model, on its own, cannot express the goal of God's self-communication, which is the return of humanity and all creation to the Father. The classical theology of *exitus-reditus*, which has served to account

¹⁸ Kilmartin, "A Modern Approach to the Word of God and the Sacraments of Christ: Perspectives and Principles," in *The Sacraments: God's Love and Mercy Actualized*, Proceedings of the Theological Institute 11, ed. F. A. Eigo (Villanova, Penn.: Villanova University, 1979) 64–88.

¹⁹ In "The Active Role of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Sanctification of the Eucharistic Elements," *Theological Studies* 45 (1984) 244–53, Kilmartin sketched the trinitarian approach that would be developed at length in his *Christian Liturgy*. In his review of *Christian Liturgy*, Hans Bernard Meyer wrote: "In our opinion no book of similar scope has yet appeared that on the basis of the theological traditions of East and West offers such a systematic, consistently structured trinitarian theology of Christian worship and sacrament" (*Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 113 [1991] 37, cited in Fahey, "In Memoriam: Edward J. Kilmartin" 17).

²⁰ Jerome Hall argues that Kilmartin had already articulated the basic structure of an ascending model of the Trinity before encountering Coffey, whose work won Kilmartin's respect and is liberally cited throughout his books and articles (*We Have the Mind of Christ* 100–1). In his later writing, Coffey speaks of a "model of return" rather than "bestowal," developing and advancing his earlier presentation (see David Coffey, *Deus Trinitas: The Doctrine of the Triune God* [New York: Oxford University, 1999] 4–5). Kilmartin, however, depended on the early categories in Coffey's *Grace: The Gift of the Holy Spirit*, Faith and Culture 2 (Sydney, Australia: Catholic Institute of Sydney, 1979).

²¹ *Christian Liturgy* 120.

²² *Ibid.* 131.

for this return, Kilmartin saw as an inversion of the model itself. Such a move cannot be justified by appeal to the inner logic of the procession model alone. The imposition of *exitus-reditus* as a corrective illustrates that it is not a solution, but a statement of the problem.²³

If the guiding text of the procession model is John 1:14, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us," the bestowal model turns to the beginning of the Gospel of Luke: "The Holy Spirit will come over you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God."²⁴ This text presents the Spirit not only as the consequence of Jesus' saving work, but as intimately involved in this work, from the very beginning of the Incarnation. For Kilmartin, the ascending Christology of the Synoptic Gospels can be fully integrated with the descending Christology of John by drawing on Augustine, who spoke of the Holy Spirit as love. The love that is the Spirit is shared between Father and Son: the Father fully bestows the Father's love (which is the Holy Spirit) onto the Son, the Son returns this love, fully bestowing the Spirit on the Father. Hence a "bestowal model" of the Trinity.²⁵ Kilmartin believed that if the Holy Spirit is seen as an immanent term distinct from the act of mutual love, then the Spirit becomes a kind of bridge standing in the way of the immediacy of Son to Father.²⁶ But according to a bestowal model of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is conceived of not as the term of the operation of the Father's love, but as the operation itself: love. As the subsistent operation of love, the Spirit is not an intermediary but the very bond uniting Father to Son and Son to Father. As such, the Spirit is not a mediator, but the personal mediation between Father and Son.²⁷

Jesus' Life of Faith: The "Incarnation" of the Spirit

The trinitarian model of bestowal is revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus in his humanity is an example—a unique and unrepeatable example—of the dialogical nature of the trinitarian self-offer. The Father bestows the Spirit in the very act by which the created humanity of Jesus is sanctified and united to the person of the Son.

²³ Language drawn from Kilmartin's lecture notes as cited in Hall, *We Have the Mind of Christ* 98–99.

²⁴ Luke 1:35, see also Matthew 1:18–23.

²⁵ David Coffey says of the bestowal model: "Its substance can be stated quite simply: the Holy Spirit is the mutual love of the Father and the Son" ("The 'Incarnation' of the Holy Spirit in Christ," *Theological Studies* 45 [1984] 466–80, at 471).

²⁶ *Christian Liturgy* 131.

²⁷ "The Catholic Tradition of Eucharistic Theology" 435; "Sacraments as Liturgy of the Church" 535.

Thus the Incarnation corresponds, within the life of the Trinity, to the bestowal of the Spirit on the Son as the object of the Father's love. From the beginning of his existence, Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God in a concrete humanity. And the response of Son to the Father thus takes place precisely through this concrete humanity. It is a response realized over the course of Jesus' whole human life.

The mystery of Christ is, on the one hand, the Incarnation of the Son of the Father as the final, never to be surpassed expression of the Father's fidelity to His covenant with humanity. But the mystery of Christ also embraces the response of the incarnate Son to the fidelity of the Father. . . . In his humanity the Son knows and loves the Father in the way that all humanity finds God and holds to God. Through the objective content of his consciousness he experiences his basic orientation to the Father, which yields knowledge of his special relation to the Father and the mystery of the Father's special love for him. This gives birth to his all-consuming love of the Father, the characteristic trait of Jesus according to the New Testament. The state of having this knowledge and love, which is called the life of faith, expresses itself in acts of the life of faith. By his human acts of faith the man Jesus responds to his own mystery, which is the mystery of the fidelity of the Father to His covenant with humanity.²⁸

Here emerges Kilmartin's special attention to the category of faith. Characteristic of his ascending Christology, Kilmartin grounded his theology of the Christian life not on faith *in* Jesus (objective genitive) but rather on the faith *of* Jesus (subjective genitive). Jesus' primary subjective experience was the love of the Father that is the Spirit. The Gospels attest to the many ways in which Jesus accepted this love and responded to the Father through concrete acts of love for God and for God's children. His acts of teaching and preaching, healing, serving, and welcoming reveal a personal history of self-offering, a conscious and active response to God's self offer. This response is the faith of Jesus, a life of faith that developed over time. Kilmartin stated: "This response of faith by Jesus, carried on through the whole of his life, can be described as the progressive upward growth of his humanity toward the goal of the highest possible embodiment of the acceptable response to the covenant initiative of the Father in him."²⁹

Since concrete acts of love constituted Jesus' human response to the Father, they shaped the content of Jesus' faith-relationship with the Father: the Holy Spirit.³⁰ Not only did the divine sonship take on the specific character of the unique human personality and life of Jesus of Nazareth,

²⁸ "Sacraments as Liturgy of the Church" 541. Kilmartin drew on Hans Urs von Balthasar's treatment of the faith of Christ ("The Catholic Tradition of Eucharistic Theology" 454–55; *The Eucharist in the West* 301–2).

²⁹ *The Eucharist in the West* 357. This paragraph and the following rely on the analysis of Hall, *We Have the Mind of Christ* 129–32.

³⁰ *Christian Liturgy* 169.

but "the progressive actualization of this divine sonship during Jesus' life included the progressive actualization of the transcendental love of the Son for the Father," which is the Spirit.³¹ "Consequently, in virtue of the hypostatic union, the Spirit must be said to acquire the traits of Jesus' personal and individual love of the Father. In this sense we can speak of an 'incarnation' of the Spirit in Jesus' love of the Father. Also, we must say that there was a progressive incarnation of the Holy Spirit which realized the limits possible in this life in Jesus' total giving of self on the cross."³² The cross is inseparable from Jesus' life of faith, which was the human response of the Son to the Father's gift of self—a life of love lived to the end.

When Kilmartin described Jesus' high priesthood in terms of his final human act of sending the Holy Spirit, he had in mind the "acceptable worship" that is nothing other than Jesus' life of faith that culminated on the cross. "The risen Lord sends the Spirit to enable humanity to respond to the Father with the love of daughters and sons in union with his acceptable worship."³³ The sacrifice of Jesus is not limited to the cross, nor is his high priestly work. This high priestly work is a theandric act (a divine act flowing from his glorified humanity) of sending the Spirit; coming at the end of his earthly life, it can only be properly understood within the context of an entire life of faith, over the course of which the Spirit was modified by the personal history of the man Jesus. The Spirit who is sent is marked by the story of Jesus' life of faith. This Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus' faith, links the sacrificial priesthood of Christ to the sacrificial priesthood of all believers.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

Through the working of the Holy Spirit, the priestly people of God participate in the response of faith of Jesus. This Spirit, who is the bond of love between Father and Son, is the source of the "mediated immediacy"

³¹ Kilmartin, *Culture and the Praying Church: The Particular Liturgy of the Individual Church*, Canadian Studies in Liturgy no. 5 (Ottawa, Ontario: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1990) 85–86.

³² Ibid. 86. See *Christian Liturgy* 168–69; Coffey, "The 'Incarnation' of the Holy Spirit in Christ" 466–80.

³³ Ibid. 90. In a study of patristic sources, Kilmartin noted that, as a result of the Arian controversy and in order to avoid the charge that the divine Son serves as mediator, the classical eucharistic prayers of the Eastern churches tend to associate Christ's high priesthood with his humanity, not with the person of the Word. Thus the Eucharist, as sacrifice of Christ the high priest, evidences an anamnestic character: "Correspondingly, in their writings the concept of the Eucharist as representation of the past saving acts of Jesus came to the foreground" ("The Active Role of Christ and the Spirit in the Divine Liturgy," *Diakonia* 17 [1982] 95–108, at 100).

between believers and Christ.³⁴ The simultaneous closeness and distance of believer to Christ is guaranteed by the Spirit, understood not as a mediator, but as mediation, the dynamic bond of unity (love) by which believers are caught up in the self-offering response of the Son. This self-offering of believers, in conformity to the self-offering of Christ, is the way in which the priesthood of all believers is exercised: "This radical self-offering of the faithful is the only spiritual response that constitutes an authentic sacrificial act according to the New Testament (Romans 12:1)."³⁵

Sharing in the Spirit of Jesus' Faith

The sanctification of human persons takes specific shape in conformity to the spiritual attitudes and actions of Christ. These attitudes are demonstrated in Jesus' particular life of faith. They are made possible in the believer through the gift of the Spirit, the Spirit of the faith of Jesus. Through the Spirit, human beings join in the trinitarian dynamic experienced by Jesus: the experience of being loved by the Father and the self-offering response to the Father in love. Since the Spirit's presence in the world is modified by the personal history of faith of Jesus, especially the sacrificial love sealed by his death on the cross, the subsequent sending of the Spirit does not simply draw believers to Christ in an undifferentiated way. Rather the Spirit of the faith of Jesus draws believers into the sacrificial attitudes of Christ. The Spirit who is marked by the story of Jesus' faith life marks the faith life of believers with his story. Christian faith is a participation in the faith of Jesus, a sacrificial faith demonstrated in his human acts of love of God and love of neighbor.

The Spirit and Liturgical Memory

The conformity of believers to the faith of Jesus is expressed and powerfully actualized in the liturgy. For Kilmartin, liturgy is the life of faith under the mode of celebration.³⁶ In liturgy, faith "as the act of acceptance of God's self-communication, the realization of the basic attitude of self-offering to God to receive the meaning of one's life from God, is given the opportunity for an offering that embraces the whole person in an especially intensive and extensive way because of the expressiveness of the sacramental celebration."³⁷ Liturgy enables the human response to the Father's self-gift and is thus the means by which human persons enter more deeply into union with God. But this response is nothing other than a participation

³⁴ "Sacraments as Liturgy of the Church" 543; *The Eucharist in the West* 357.

³⁵ *The Eucharist in the West* 382–83.

³⁶ "Sacraments as Liturgy of the Church" 527.

³⁷ *Ibid.* 539.

in the faith of Jesus, through which human persons experience the Father's love and are united to Christ in his response to the Father—believers are caught up by the Spirit in the saving dynamic of trinitarian life. It is for this reason that Kilmartin described the theology of liturgy as the theology of the economic Trinity.³⁸ Sacraments, which fall within the category of liturgy for Kilmartin, exist both to allow faith to be expressed and to enable the subject to accept the gift of faith in the context and contours of an individual life lived in relation to others. All of this works by the power of the Spirit who enables, through liturgical activity, believers to express their inner conformity to the worship of Christ. This process is grounded on the Spirit's transmission of the sacrificial attitudes of Christ.

Jerome Hall has argued convincingly that at the heart of Kilmartin's theological project is a question that he faced from the very beginning of his career: What is the relationship between Jesus' historical deeds and the liturgical celebration?³⁹ When Kilmartin began teaching sacramental theology on the eve of Vatican II, the literature of the field had been marked for nearly four decades by a vigorous debate surrounding the "mystery presence" of Christ in the liturgy.⁴⁰ The *Mysteriengegenwart* controversy began when a German Benedictine from the abbey of Maria Laach, Odo Casel, challenged the legalism and neo-Scholastic metaphysics that had marked textbook treatments of sacramental efficacy. For Casel, liturgy and sacrament ought to be understood under the category of "mystery," a category that describes the presence of divine salvation under symbolic signs. Casel spoke of Christ as the basic mystery and proposed that the glorified Christ makes objectively present, under the veil of the sacramental sign, the saving work accomplished on the cross. The liturgy is nothing less than the occasion for a personal response of the believer in faith to the very presence of Christ.⁴¹

Critics argued that Casel presupposed a perennialization of Christ's sav-

³⁸ "A theology of liturgy merely attempts to show how Christian worship, in all its forms, should be understood as the self-communication of the Triune God. . . . The mystery of the liturgy is the mystery of the history of salvation, fully revealed in the special missions of the Father's one Word and one Spirit. It is, at its depth, the life and work of the Triune God in the economy of salvation" (*Christian Liturgy* 180).

³⁹ The following paragraphs draw on Hall, *We Have the Mind of Christ* 1–37.

⁴⁰ Hall identifies four secondary sources as particularly influential in informing Kilmartin's understanding of the *Mysteriengegenwart* controversy: Theodor Filthaut, *Die Kontroverse über die Mysterienlehre* (Warendorf: Schnellsehe, 1947); Eloi Dekkers, "La Liturgie, mystère Chrétien," *La Maison-Dieu* 14 (1948) 30–64; Jean Gaillard, "Chronique de liturgie: La théologie des mystères," *Revue thomiste* 57 (1957) 510–51; Jean-Hervé Nicolas, "Réactualisation des mystères rédempteurs dans et par les sacrements," *Revue thomiste* 58 (1958) 20–54.

⁴¹ See Odo Casel, *Die Liturgie als Mysterienfeier* (Freiburg: Herder, 1922); "Mys-

ing acts that, according to a Thomistic metaphysics, was logically inconsistent. This more traditional neo-Scholastic approach, defended by the Jesuits at the Gregorian University, among others, rejected Casel's mystery theology by arguing that past events are truly past and no longer exist. Christ's past deeds continue to operate only as instrumental cause of the grace given by God to recipients of the sacraments. However, after Casel, the deficiencies of this traditional explanation could no longer be ignored. The papal magisterium avoided taking sides in this debate. In his 1947 encyclical on the liturgy, *Mediator Dei*, Pius XII affirmed a variety of modes of Christ's presence in the liturgy, but he did not explain *how* this presence is possible. With the Second Vatican Council, attention shifted to liturgical reform, and the question of mystery presence faded into the background because new and pluralistic theories of sacrament and liturgy had emerged.

The early-20th-century debates surrounding the mystery presence were, for Kilmartin, inconclusive. Neither the instrumental causality of the neo-Scholastics nor the mystery language proposed by Casel could adequately respond to objections raised. The solution, he believed, lay in the category of memory. Memory linked Jesus' historical deeds and the liturgical celebration; through memory the assembly is made present to the faith of Jesus. In presenting his argument, Kilmartin drew on theologians, like Gottlieb Söhngen, Cesare Giraudo, Hans B. Meyer, Brian McNamara, and others, who were giving new attention to the subjective dimension of Christ's presence in liturgical activity.⁴² According to Kilmartin, in the liturgical anamnesis, the Church recalls the deeds of Jesus, bringing worshipers back to his life of self-gift, fulfilled and finalized in his sacrifice on the cross. This memorial transforms Christians through memory, the memory of Christ's sacrifice. Through this remembrance, the assembly receives the mind of Christ, faith as a participation in the faith of Christ, conformity in one's own person to the sacrificial attitudes of Jesus.⁴³ In plain language, the community learns to love by recalling how Jesus loved. In this remembrance, Christ is present.

teriengegenwart," *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft* 8 (1928) 145–224; Anscar Vonier, *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist* (New York: Benziger, 1925).

⁴² Kilmartin summarized the contributions of these theologians in "The Catholic Tradition of Eucharistic Theology" 450–54 and *The Eucharist in the West* 300–38. See Gottlieb Söhngen, *Symbol und Wirklichkeit im Kultmysterium* (Bonn: P. Hanstein, 1937); Cesare Giraudo, *Eucaristia per la Chiesa* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1989); Hans Bernhard Meyer, *Eucharistie* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1989); "Casels Idee der Mysteriengegenwart in neuer Sicht," *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* 28 (1986) 388–95; Brian McNamara, "Christus Patiens in the Mass and Sacraments: Higher Perspectives," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 42 (1975) 17–35.

⁴³ Hall, *We Have the Mind of Christ* 145.

Kilmartin's notion of memory as presence recovered a subjective dimension to Christ's presence, without falling into a subjectivism devoid of any objective content. He rejected a too sharp distinction between an objective concept of "cultic memorial" and a subjective notion of remembrance. Too many theories on anamnesis, he believed, have been tainted by fears of subjectivism, giving rise to a notion of objective presence that cannot be supported biblically.⁴⁴ Such an objective approach may be useful for preaching, but it fails to capture the intimate relationship between Christ's presence and the activity of the assembly. For Kilmartin, objective content is provided by the Holy Spirit, who enables the community to remember the actions of Jesus. The Spirit empowers a remembrance that transforms the history of Jesus into a mystery present and living for us.⁴⁵

The response of faith of ordinary human persons can be described as a participation in the life of faith of Jesus insofar as the response is conformed to the meritorious attitudes of Christ. The possibility of this active participation is not a matter of simple human endeavor based on the subjective memory of the New Testament accounts of the life of Jesus. Rather, it is based on the working of the Holy Spirit, who is the mediation of the personal immediacy of believers to Christ and of the divinely transmitted conformity to the spiritual attitudes of Christ.⁴⁶

Occurring within the consciousness of the subject, memory is not reducible to the subject's effort. The memory of Christ's deeds is a gift of the Spirit, who is both the source of sanctification and the source of "the psychological reality of the life of faith."⁴⁷ As source of faith, the Holy Spirit guarantees an accurate memory of Jesus' life of faith. This guarantee is possible thanks to a bestowal model of trinitarian relations, which recognizes that the Spirit has acquired the traits of Jesus' personal and individual love of the Father. The Spirit of mutual love binds believers to the object of the Father's love, the Son, joining the assembly to Christ's human response to the Father's invitation.

⁴⁴ *The Eucharist in the West* 303.

⁴⁵ Kilmartin cited favorably the pneumatological approach to anamnesis of Maurice Giuliani (*The Eucharist in the West* 304–305). See M. Giuliani, "Présence actuelle du Christ," *Christus* 2 (1954) 97–107, at 107. In an early survey article, Kilmartin had noted scholarly attention to the Spirit's role in liturgical memory: "But the goal of the Eucharist is to permit men to associate themselves with and participate in Christ's sacrifice. This is made possible by the Spirit, who, as soul of the Church, is particularly the memory of the Church. Through the Spirit Christ makes His spouse participate in His divinized memory. At the time of the Eucharist, the Spirit gives the Church the grace to recall, to render herself present to the Christ of history, passing from the world to the Father" ("Sacramental Theology: The Eucharist in Recent Literature," *Theological Studies* 32 [1971] 233–77, at 245–46).

⁴⁶ *The Eucharist in the West* 357.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 358.

It is in this Spirit-enabled dynamic of gift and return that the priestly character of the people of God is most clear.

The exercise of the priestly worship of the eucharistic community is grounded on its character as a priestly people of God that 'participates' in the priestly worship of the one High Priest, Jesus Christ. But this takes place in the power of the Holy Spirit. . . . [A]s divine source of the human worship of the Son of Man offered to the Father in faith, the Spirit is also the source of the worship of ordinary human persons conformed to the worship of Christ's humanity.⁴⁸

Marked by the concrete contours of Jesus' sacrificial life of faith—the worship of Christ's humanity—the Spirit shapes the spiritual sacrifice of the whole of life that characterizes the priestly people of God. In the liturgy, but not exclusively there, the Spirit works to bring believers' sacrificial offering of their own lives into union with the sacrificial offering that was Christ's life. Believers participate in the priesthood of Christ in their actualization of his sacrificial faith, a faith shaped by the particular acts of love of God and love of neighbor that characterized Jesus' own life.

In this light, Kilmartin's consistent emphasis on the entire assembly as the active subject of the liturgy becomes clear. The eucharistic sacrifice is not an activity or a thing made objectively present to the community, who only subsequently respond in an act of private devotion. The eucharistic sacrifice is the high point of a single movement of response made by the entire assembly. It symbolizes and empowers the acceptable sacrifice of the whole priestly people of God, their participation in Jesus' own response to the initiative of the Father. Liturgy enables and evokes the response of faith that leads into and out of a life of faith lived in conformity to Christ's own self-offering. "The active participation of the assembly is realized by the individual believer's degree of agreement with the religious attitudes expressed verbally and gesturally in the ritual act, and which mirror the sacrificial attitudes of Jesus expressed at the Last Supper and in the event of his historical death of the cross."⁴⁹ Within this corporate response of faith, the ministerial priest plays a leading role.

THE MINISTERIAL PRIESTHOOD

Running throughout Kilmartin's writings are the elements of a theology of the ministerial priesthood grounded in the trinitarian dynamic of bestowal and return, a dynamic revealed in the priesthood/sacrifice of Jesus, who inaugurates the priesthood/sacrifice of all believers as a participation in his own self-offering response to the Father's gift of self. What follows is an attempt to identify these elements latent in Kilmartin's work. What

⁴⁸ Ibid. 374.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 371.

emerges is the unstated thesis guiding Kilmartin's treatment of apostolic office: the ministerial priesthood exists to serve the self-offering of believers by helping the faithful to appropriate those sacrificial attitudes and actions of love of God and love of neighbor that marked Jesus' own life. In other words, the priest ministers by helping the community remember Christ.

Witnessing to the Faith of the Church

The ministerial priest lives the faith of the Church as a participation in Jesus' response to the Father (as member of the priesthood of all the faithful) even as he witnesses to this faith (as member of the ministerial priesthood). Having seen his systematic approach to the faith of Jesus and liturgical memory, we are in a better position to appreciate Kilmartin's claim that the priest represents Christ because he represents the faith of the Church.

In an early article on apostolic office, Kilmartin turned to the experience of the Resurrection in order to explain the relationship between faith and church institution/office.⁵⁰ In the Resurrection appearances, the risen Christ—living outside the confines of space and time—makes himself present to the chosen witnesses as source of their faith in his presence and as the content of their act of faith. Their ministry is grounded in this primal faith experience: "the content of office of the 'chosen witnesses' of the Resurrection is the obedient exercise of their faith in Christ."⁵¹ But what is the relationship of this faith experience to later church institutions, to later apostolic office? Kilmartin rejected the tendency of traditional Western theology to see Christ binding his presence to institutions that operate independently of the faith of the Church (a danger present in neo-Scholastic treatments of apostolic succession, *ex opere operato*, or the institution of the seven sacraments by Jesus, for example). This objectification of the means of salvation fails to do justice to a key conclusion he drew from the *Mysteriengegenwart* controversy: "Without the exercise of the faith no sacramental presence of Christ or the *passio Christi* is possible."⁵²

Kilmartin recognized that, historically, this objectification grew out of a desire to guarantee Christ's presence in the Church over against the vicissitudes of the faith of the community. His thesis was not meant to reduce Christ's presence to individual faith. Faith is precisely the faith of the Church of which Christ is the source.

⁵⁰ "Apostolic Office" 254–60. In expressing the relationship of the Resurrection to the modes of Christ's presence, Kilmartin relied on B. Langemeyer, "Die Weisen der Gegenwart Christi im liturgischen Geschehen," in *Martyria, Leiturgia, Diakonia*, ed. O. Semmelroth (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald, 1968) 286–307.

⁵¹ Ibid. 257.

⁵² Ibid. 255.

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.⁵³

Behind Kilmartin's theology of the obedience of Christ in this passage is his developing pneumatological understanding of the faith of Jesus. After adopting a bestowal model of the Trinity and combining this model with his understanding of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Jesus' faith, Kilmartin was in a position to articulate the objectivity of faith asserted above: faith is empowered by the Spirit's presence uniting believers to Christ in his response to the Father. And Kilmartin's later writings added this pneumatological component to his earlier argument that the priest represents Christ by representing the faith of the Church.⁵⁴ His original contribution becomes more evident by explicitly linking this pneumatological concern to his theology of liturgical memory.

The ministerial priest makes Christ present to the community through the particular way in which he exercises the faith of the Church, namely, by witnessing to and serving this faith. If faith is described as the human response to the Father's self-communication, the specific content of the life of faith is gleaned from the concrete life of faith of the man Jesus. Participating in the faith of Jesus—his response to the Father—is what marks the authentic life of faith of the believer; it is the acceptable sacrifice of the priestly people of God. And it means conforming one's own life to the sacrificial attitudes and actions of Jesus himself, for these attitudes and actions constitute his faith. Herein lies the meaning of ministry for Kilmartin. For the faith of Jesus continually needs to be held before believers and believers need to be made present to this faith in order to participate fully in it. It is the Spirit of Jesus' faith that calls this faith to mind and so transforms the faithful. But human agents serve the activity of the Spirit in acts of ministry that remind the community of Christ. Thus Kilmartin's appeal to the category of memory offers a framework for a theology of ministry in general, and a theology of ministerial priesthood in particular.

The community is reminded of Jesus' faith by being brought to the concrete acts of love that constituted his life of love, a life lived faithfully to the end. That broad service of witness and memory does not belong

⁵³ Ibid. 259.

⁵⁴ See "Ecclesiastical Office, Power and Spirit" 98–108; "The Active Role of Christ and the Holy Spirit" 240–43, 250; "Sacraments as Liturgy of the Church" 530–31; "The Catholic Tradition of Eucharistic Theology" 439–41; *The Eucharist in the West* 375–79.

exclusively to the ministerial priest. "Since the office bearer does not possess all charisms, his activity does not exhaust the public display of the dependence of the Church on Christ. Rather the mystery dimension of the Church is publicly displayed by the full public display of the variety of charisms of the community."⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the priest's role is distinctive. In the liturgical celebration, the ministerial priest plays a unique role in calling to mind Christ.

Calling to Mind Christ in the Liturgical Anamnesis

Christ is present in the lives of human persons whenever faith is actualized in the sacrificial attitudes and actions of loving self-gift that constituted Jesus' own life. But, for Kilmartin, Christ is most fully represented in the celebrating community. As the "performative form of the act of faith," the ritual act of liturgy is the event in which the Church actualizes itself in a transforming moment of explicit faith.⁵⁶ It "brings to the surface the mystery of the Church of Christ, in order that it may be lived more consciously and explicitly in the social dimension of the life of faith."⁵⁷ Given its corporate and explicit nature, the liturgy is a key moment in calling to mind Christ. In liturgical celebration, the faithful are rendered present in memory to the self-offering of the Son, an actualization of faith that is nothing less than an incorporation into the trinitarian dynamic of self-gift and response.

An emphasis on the active participation of the liturgical assembly, fortunately recovered at the Second Vatican Council, was obscured in previous centuries by the development of a moment of consecration theology that had become a characteristic feature of the average modern Catholic theology of the Eucharist. This theology removes the institution narrative from its proper context within the eucharistic prayer, reduces the rite of communion to a non-essential (merely integral) element of the eucharistic sacrifice, feeds a problematic objectification of the sacramental presence of the sacrifice of the cross, and subverts the active participation of the assembly through a theology of direct representation of Christ by the ministerial priesthood.⁵⁸ It distorts the witness of the eucharistic prayers of the first millennium, shortchanges the pneumatological and the ecclesial dimensions of the liturgy, and privileges the *lex credendi* over the *lex orandi*. It is, Kilmartin bluntly asserted, "a weak synthesis without a future."⁵⁹ In

⁵⁵ "Ecclesiastical Office, Power and Spirit" 103.

⁵⁶ *The Eucharist in the West* 371. See *Christian Liturgy* 44–47; "Sacraments as Liturgy of the Church" 544.

⁵⁷ "Sacraments as Liturgy of the Church" 527.

⁵⁸ "The Catholic Tradition of Eucharistic Theology" 436–41.

⁵⁹ *The Eucharist in the West* 365.

the impact of this synthesis on the theology and practice of the ministerial priesthood, Kilmartin quoted approvingly Angelus Häussling:

It leads to the elevation of the priest, because he speaks the words of Christ in the account of institution according to 1 Corinthians 11 and the Synoptic Gospels, to the role of the one acting *in persona Christi*, (and finally representing the person of Christ himself . . .) in such a way that he is no longer, as the rite clearly shows, receiver with and in the celebrating assembly (which is the Church) and so remains and must remain. Otherwise, as the logical consequence, a sacramentalistic clericalism results that works destructively.⁶⁰

Moving past this moment of consecration theology, Kilmartin sought to recover the epicletic dimension of the whole eucharistic prayer, and to locate the role of the ministerial priest within this context. An exclusive focus on the narrative of institution had reduced the anamnestic character of the eucharistic liturgy to one moment within the rite and given to the words of consecration a sense of near-magical efficacy. Kilmartin argued that the narrative of institution grounds what is in fact a larger prayer of anamnesis-offering, a prayer that includes but extends beyond the words of Jesus. The proclamation of the memory of Jesus occurs within the context of, and is thus itself shaped by, the prayer of petition to the Father to bestow the Spirit on the gathered assembly. In other words, anamnesis is epicletic in nature.⁶¹ Recalling the memory of God's deeds in the past is one moment within a seamless ascending movement of petition for the presence of the Spirit to transform the elements of bread and wine so that the assembly itself might be transformed into the body of Christ.

Within the context of anamnesis as epiclesis, the ministerial priest serves as the "external agent of communication of the performative form of the eucharistic faith, the Eucharistic Prayer."⁶² He places the signs of Christ as a public person in a public act, repeating the words and gestures of Christ.⁶³ On the one hand, "[a]s act of Christ, it is the act of the host who is High Priest and giver of his self-gift."⁶⁴ This action is the unique and clearest expression of the priest's ministry of reminding the community of Christ, and in it, the community becomes present to the saving deeds of Jesus. On the other hand, "[a]s act of the Body of Christ it is one of grateful acceptance of Christ's self-gift."⁶⁵ Anamnesis is not understood as locating the ministerial priest over and against the priestly people, much less is it an

⁶⁰ Ibid. 350–51. See Angelus Häussling, "Odo Casel—Noch von Aktualität? Eine Rückschau in eigener Sache aus Anlaß des hundertsten Geburtstages des ersten Herausgebers," *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* 28 (1986) 357–87, at 377.

⁶¹ *The Eucharist in the West* 349.

⁶² Ibid. 375.

⁶³ "The Active Role of Christ and the Holy Spirit" 251.

⁶⁴ "Ecclesiastical Office, Power and Spirit" 106.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 106.

objective representation of the sacrifice of Christ effected by the priest. "The *transitus* of the liturgical community to the Father is expressed liturgically in the Eucharistic Prayer. The *transitus* of Christ himself is recalled but is not represented objectively and sacramentally to the assembly in the Eucharistic Prayer, for the Eucharistic Prayer is prayer of the Church."⁶⁶ In recalling the saving deeds of Christ, the whole assembly asks that the Spirit of Jesus' faith, shaped as the Spirit is by the deeds and attitudes of Jesus' love, might shape the lives and minds of the gathered community; it is a prayer to join Jesus in his loving response to the Father, a prayer for salvation itself. "The Holy Spirit brings about the presence of the historical sacrifice of Christ, and acts through it as source of the transmission of the sacrificial attitudes of Christ that enable the liturgical assembly to participate in Christ's self-offering through the medium of the Eucharistic Prayer."⁶⁷

In reciting the institution narrative, the ministerial priest calls to mind the sacrifice of the cross; it is the high point of his ministry of reminding the community of Jesus Christ. Anamnesis extends beyond this moment to include the whole eucharistic prayer, the whole eucharistic celebration, the whole life of ministry of the priest.⁶⁸ Witnessing to and serving the faith of the Church by reminding the community of Jesus' own faith provides the unifying framework for the life of ministry. Reminding the community of Jesus Christ is not a purely intellectual proposition or ritual act; it includes all those actions that enable the faithful to take on in their lives the sacrificial attitudes that marked Jesus' own life. For in every ministerial act the priest strives to serve to remind the world of the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

Gains for a Theology of Ministerial Priesthood

The notion of ministerial priesthood as anamnesis situates this ministry in relationship to the priesthood of Christ and places it within the context of the priesthood of all the faithful. It is a conclusion drawn from Kilmarin's reflections on memory, sacrifice, and the role of the Spirit in Christian life and liturgy. His approach suggests four gains for a contemporary theology of the ministerial priesthood: the relationship of priesthood to the concrete deeds of Jesus' life, a pneumatological corrective, attention to the primacy of faith, and the use of priesthood language in a theology of ordained pastoral leadership.

(1) *Connection to the Concrete Deeds of Jesus' Life.* In his trinitarian

⁶⁶ *The Eucharist in the West* 370.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 382.

⁶⁸ "This pastoral ministry is exercised by witness to the faith in word and act: through witness of preaching and teaching, the charitable service of others and through leadership in communal worship" (*The Eucharist in the West* 375).

vision of liturgical anamnesis, Kilmartin underlined a strong link between the priest and Christ, while at the same time avoiding two extremes: on the one hand, a physicalistic imaging of Christ that came to be attached to a theology of direct representation and, on the other hand, a spiritualized identification with Christ more concerned with the interior life than with ministry. The first extreme colors the iconic argument provided by *Inter insigniores*, in which the natural resemblance demanded by sacramental signs is used to argue that the priest, who acts in the person of Christ and thus represents Christ, must be male.⁶⁹ We have already noted Kilmartin's objections to the argumentation of *Inter insigniores*. The second extreme is found in the French School of priestly spirituality, which, with its theology of priest as *alter Christus*, located priestly identity in an interior imitation of Christ's self-renouncement. Clouded by a phenomenological, cultic understanding of the priest as mediator, this approach translated Christ's self-sacrifice into a spirituality of denial: the priest was other-worldly, a man set apart for the things of God.⁷⁰ Kilmartin noted that this *alter Christus* theology attempted to give a personal dimension to a Scholastic approach that seemed to say that the priest, acting in the sacraments, was an impersonal agent or a mere instrument of Christ. Yet its effect was to locate the priest outside the community of believers. Besides, it missed the point of the Scholastic approach. "The true perspective of the Latin tradition, and of scholastic theology, is not found in the concept of the 'quasi-identification' of the priest with Christ. Rather, the priest is personal instrument or minister of Christ."⁷¹

Witness to and reminder of the priesthood of Christ, the ministerial priest presents the entire life of faith of Jesus. Jesus' life of faith is his sacrifice: specific acts of love of God and love of neighbor that shaped his response to the Father's love. A theology of the ministerial priesthood as anamnesis, a ministry of calling to mind Christ, suggests a biblically grounded spirituality—a spirituality that flows from the one life of Jesus

⁶⁹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "A Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood," *Origins* 6 (February 3, 1977) 517–24, at 522.

⁷⁰ The enormously influential *Traité des saints ordres* established a program of priestly formation that shaped seminaries throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. Attributed to the founder of the Sulpicians, Jean-Jacques Olier, the *Traité* was in fact a compilation and revision of various works of Olier completed by the third superior general of the order, Louis Tronson, who significantly altered the emphasis of Olier in the direction of a cultic and clericalistic understanding of priesthood. See *Traité des saints ordres*, ed. Gilles Chaillot, Michel Dupuy, and Irénée Noye (Paris: St. Sulpice, 1984).

⁷¹ "The Active Role of Christ and the Holy Spirit" 239. See Dennis Michael Ferrara, "Representation or Self-Effacement? The Axiom *In Persona Christi* in St. Thomas and the Magisterium," *Theological Studies* 55 (1994) 195–224.

refracted through the various New Testament witnesses. A strong connection between the deeds of Jesus and those of Christians pushes a theology of ministry beyond an empty reiteration of biblical metaphors or a lazy appeal to an abstract ideal of self-sacrifice toward the concrete example of Jesus, reminding the community that faith is an active participation, through the Spirit, in Jesus' fully-human, historical response to the Father's self-gift.

(2) *Pneumatological Corrective*. An overdrawn identification of the priest and Christ is avoided by giving attention to the Spirit of Christ, who enables the "mediated immediacy" of believers to Christ and who creates and empowers the Church's ministries. "Hence in his official capacity the priest connotes, for the eyes of faith, the activity of Christ working through the Spirit. In this sense the priest can be said to act *in persona Christi per Spiritum* and, incidentally, be described as participating in the Spirit of the priesthood of Christ."⁷² Kilmartin's effort to overcome the Christomonism of Western theologies of ministry was not simply the addition of a theology of charisms to traditional discussions of church order and institution. The Spirit does not separate, as a mediator, the priesthood of the minister from that of Christ; rather, the Spirit is the mediation, the bond of unity that holds the priest to Christ.

The interplay of anamnesis and epiclesis that shapes the eucharistic prayers guides a theology of ministerial priesthood. In the liturgical anamnesis, the institution narrative takes on the role of a prayer of petition: anamnesis itself is epicletic in nature. The whole eucharistic prayer is one ascending movement of prayer for the Spirit's presence. Likewise, the ministerial priesthood, a ministry of reminding the community of Christ, is itself epicletic, actualized in various acts of ministry that constitute prayers of petition that the Spirit of Jesus' faith might come upon the community and conform the attitudes and actions of its members to the sacrificial response of Jesus. Within such a framework, a theology of priestly power (which Kilmartin linked to the moment of consecration theology) gives way to the categories of prayer and petition, reclaiming the role of the Spirit as source of all ministerial empowerment.

(3) *Primacy of Faith*. The Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus' faith, marked by the concrete contours of Jesus' own life of faith. Stretching beyond a neo-Scholastic theology of intellectual assent, Kilmartin cast faith as a total life response to the self-communication of God—a dynamic at work in the life of Jesus and in the lives of ordinary human persons. Faith is nothing less than the offer of self in response to the love of the Father, made in union with Christ through his Spirit. It is salvation history in the life of an individual, the gift of being caught up in the trinitarian dynamic of love. Ministry is best understood within such a "theology of faith as form of life and

⁷² "Sacraments as Liturgy of the Church" 531.

act.”⁷³ Given the primacy of faith in Kilmartin’s system, he rejected the notion that Christ binds his presence to institutions that operate independently of the faith of the Church. The ministerial priesthood does not exist for its own sake; it exists to witness—to express and, in doing so, to advance—the faith of the Church. Serving the one life of faith of the community enables a participation in the sacrifice of Christ through a life of self-offering. This service of faith takes place through all of the priest’s acts of ministry, but is particularly clear and effective in the liturgical celebration.

(4) *The Language of Priesthood*. Kilmartin did not promote priesthood as a comprehensive category for understanding the ordained ministries of bishop and presbyter. Nevertheless, he did defend the use of priestly language: “As minister of Christ the high priest, and minister of the priestly people, he merits the title ‘priest.’”⁷⁴ And he gave an indication of the breadth of the category when he said: “Within the New Testament perspective the ministry of presbyter and bishop can be called priestly primarily because in all their Church related activities they mediate the priestly service of Jesus Christ. The qualification ‘priestly’ cannot be reserved for their activity in the celebration of the Eucharist.”⁷⁵

Within the Roman Catholic tradition, priestly language has such a strong historical association with a cultic model of ministry that an unnuanced contemporary appropriation will only evoke a theology of ministry that is no longer tenable and a pastoral reality that no longer exists. Here Kilmartin’s trinitarian rethinking of Christian sacrifice offers a fruitful direction. If a phenomenological approach defines sacrifice as “a gift presented to God in a ceremony in which the gift is destroyed or consumed,” it defines the priest in terms of this sacrifice: a priest performs a sacrificial ritual as a specialist on behalf of a community. But the Christ event turned this notion of sacrifice on its head.⁷⁶ Sacrifice begins not with human but with divine activity: the Father loves the Son in an act of self-communication in the Spirit, the Son loves the Father in a self-offering response in the Spirit. So too priesthood is turned upside down. Christ is the priest, his priesthood is one and the same as his sacrifice, it is a priesthood in which all of the faithful share. In this context, the ministerial priesthood exists to serve this priesthood of all believers. It is a service that involves calling to mind the saving deeds of Christ and invoking the Spirit to transform the minds of the faithful so that they may exercise their

⁷³ “Office and Charism” 554.

⁷⁴ “Sacraments as Liturgy of the Church” 530.

⁷⁵ Kilmartin, *Church, Eucharist and Priesthood: A Theological Commentary on “The Mystery and Worship of the Most Holy Eucharist”* (New York: Paulist, 1981) 6.

⁷⁶ See Daly, “Sacrifice Unveiled or Sacrifice Revisited” 26–27.

priesthood in lives of faith marked by the same acts of loving self-gift that marked the life of Jesus. This service, this "priestly" ministry, is exercised not only in the liturgy, but in all aspects of the ordained priest's life of ministry.

CONCLUSION: KILMARTIN AND VATICAN II

Kilmartin's project provides an opportunity for constructing a theology of the ministerial priesthood both attentive to the richness of the tradition and responsive to the pastoral needs of the present. It is a direction suggested by Vatican II in its recasting of priestly language, a dimension of the council's teaching that has too often been overlooked.⁷⁷ Commentaries on the second article of Vatican II's *Presbyterorum ordinis* note that the article was included as a concession to those at the council who wanted to reaffirm traditional sacerdotal language.⁷⁸ It has been criticized for repeating Trent's reduction to the cultic: priests receive the sacred power of offering sacrifice and forgiving sins. Kilmartin himself saw in *Presbyterorum ordinis* no. 2, the remnants of a problematic "quasi-identification" of the priest with Christ: "In the post-conciliar period a still significant number of Catholic theologians explain the mystery dimension of the priesthood from this point of view. For it offers an easy way out of a purely functional understanding of office. As a rule, however, the explanations provide more questions than answers."⁷⁹

It must be kept in mind that, in *Presbyterorum ordinis* no. 2, the Tridentine language comes only after explicit reference to the priesthood of all the faithful, and it is followed by a broadening of the category of priestly ministry:

Since they share in their measure in the apostles' role, priests are given by God the grace to be the ministers of Jesus Christ among the nations, fulfilling the sacred task of the Gospel, that the offering of the gentiles may be made acceptable and sanctified in the holy Spirit (see Rom 15:16, Greek text). For it is by the apostolic

⁷⁷ "The category of priesthood has created a problem for modern Roman Catholics. Given its all but total absence from NT understandings of the ministry, some have simply rejected it. Others have tried to maintain it while balancing it by evoking the threefold office of Christ and by insisting on the importance of preaching and other forms of pastoral activity. The present text [*Presbyterorum ordinis* no. 2] appeals to a distinctively NT understanding of priesthood and sacrifice. It is an attempt that few seem to have understood or to have developed in any significant way in the post-conciliar period" (Donovan, *What Are They Saying About the Ministerial Priesthood?* 15).

⁷⁸ Friedrich Wulf, "Commentary on the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests: Articles 1-6," in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 4, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969) 218, 222.

⁷⁹ "Ecclesiastical Office, Power and Spirit" 101.

proclamation of the Gospel that the people of God is called and gathered so that all who belong to this people, sanctified as they are by the holy Spirit, may offer themselves “a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God” (Rom 12:1). Through the ministry of priests, the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful is completed in union with the sacrifice of Christ the only mediator, which in the Eucharist is offered through the priests’ hands in the name of the whole Church in an unbloody and sacramental manner until the Lord himself shall come (see 1 Cor 11:26). The ministry of priests is directed to this and finds its consummation in it. For their ministration, which begins with the announcement of the Gospel, draws its force and power from the sacrifice of Christ and tends to this, that “the whole redeemed city, that is, the whole assembly and community of the saints should be offered as a universal sacrifice to God through the High Priest who offered himself in his passion for us that we might be the body of so great a head.”

Therefore what priests try to achieve by their ministry and life is to procure the glory of God the Father in Christ. That glory consists in people’s conscious, free, and grateful acceptance of God’s plan as completed in Christ and their manifestation of it in their whole life. Thus priests, whether they devote themselves to prayer and adoration, or preach the word, or offer the eucharistic sacrifice and administer the other sacraments, or perform other services for people, are contributing at once to the increase of God’s glory and people’s growth in the divine life. And all these activities, since they flow from the paschal mystery of Christ, will find their consummation in the glorious coming of the same Lord, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God his Father (see 1 Cor 15:24).⁸⁰

The notion of priesthood extends beyond a narrow identification with eucharistic cult. For Paul, the preaching of the word was a sacerdotal act, insofar as it furthered the offering of the people, who offer themselves as “a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.” Priesthood involves the offering of sacrifice, but this sacrifice is vastly expanded. It is the offering of life, nothing other than people knowingly, freely, and gratefully accepting what God has achieved perfectly through Christ and manifesting this gift in a response of their whole lives. In *Presbyterorum ordinis* no. 2, priesthood is not simply one dimension alongside the pastoral or the prophetic. Insofar as these serve the offering of life, the various ministries of prayer, preaching and presiding, counseling and community leadership, active service, teaching, and prophetic witness—all are priestly activities of the ministerial priest.

The preceding pages have employed the language of priesthood—the priesthood of Christ, the faithful, and ministers—as a framework within which to present a synthetic account of Kilmartin’s theological project. I have shown how his explicit treatment of apostolic office is situated in

⁸⁰ *Presbyterorum ordinis*, in *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery (Northport, N.Y.: Costello, 1996) no. 2. This article reflects the theology of priesthood of Yves Congar, who was the principal drafter of this section (*Fifty Years of Catholic Theology: Conversations with Yves Congar*, ed. Bernard Lauret, trans. John Bowden [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988] 4).

relationship to his broader liturgical and trinitarian vision, a vision in which the role of the Spirit in enabling the memory of Jesus' life of faith transforms the lives of human persons into a participation in Jesus' own self-offering response to the Father's love. In this dynamic that is the salvation history celebrated in liturgy, the ministerial priest serves the self-gift of believers by calling to mind Christ.⁸¹

⁸¹ I wish to acknowledge and thank Xavier University and the Louisville Institute for providing a summer stipend in support of research leading to this article.