

ECCLESIASTICAL OFFICE, POWER AND SPIRIT

The topic of this workshop can be approached from several points of view: the limitations of the use of the word power;¹ the ideological justification of clerical power without communitarian regulation;² the weak link between power of jurisdiction and the sacramental ordinance in the post-conciliar period.³ While these themes are extremely important ones, others refer more directly to the theological foundations of ecclesiastical office. Reflection on them provides the basis for an approach to linguistic, practical and pastoral problems.

Among the themes which come to the foreground in a modern systematic treatment of ecclesiastical office, the following are discussed here: 1) the clerical state as a state of love; 2) the content of the charism of office; 3) ordination: anointing of the Spirit; 4) *in persona Christi*: Christological mystique; 5) *in persona Ecclesiae—in persona Christi*; 6) role of the priest in the Eucharist.

1. Clerical State—State of Love

In recent years some attention has been paid to the classical description of ordination as marriage with the Church. According to this approach, the grace of ordination somehow includes the establishment of a bond of love between the office bearer and the Church. However since the ministry is a personal ministry, a continuation of the personal ministry of Christ, the act of ordination involves a specification of ministry which relates to the personal uniqueness of the candidate and the necessary services of the Church.

On the analogy with marriage, the enduring state of love comes first. Authority derives from the relation of the office to the community. Consequently ordination is not understood as an act through which an individual is given an objective charism, a spiritual power, independent in its foundation from the concrete ministry to be accomplished. Much less can ordination be conceived as a juridical delegation of authority by the community to fulfill certain functions in the Church.⁴

The charism of love, a gift of the Spirit, prompts a person to commit self to the ministry of the Church. It is sealed by the anointing of the Spirit at the laying on of hands. As Paul teaches, the charism of love inwardly governs the exercise of all the variety of charisms of leadership (1 Cor 12: 27–31 together with 1 Cor 13:1–13). But the special bestowal of the Spirit in ordination means more than a deepening of the bond of love between the ordained and the Church.

2. Ordination: Anointing of the Spirit

The notion of anointing of the Spirit is popular in recent theology of ordination. II Vatican's *Presbyterorum ordinis* refers to the sharing of all baptized in the anointing of the Spirit, "wherewith he (= Christ) has been anointed," and

¹G. Leclercq, "Le Pouvoir dans l'Église," *Mélanges de science religieuse* 38 (1981), 133–36.

²C. Duquoc, "Ministère et Pouvoir," *Spiritus* 70 (1978), 8–18.

³G. Alberigo, "La Jurisdiction: Remarques sur un terme ambigu," *Irenikon* 49 (1976), 167–80.

⁴J. Zizioulas, "Ordination and Communion," *Study Encounter* 6 (1970), 189.

so in the mission of the Church (PO 2,1). However it adds that some receive a special calling from Christ through the Church "as sharers in his consecration and mission" (PO 2,2). The dogmatic constitution *Lumen gentium* explains that this anointing takes place through the laying on of hands from person to person. As a result the ordained is enabled to represent Christ's activity in the Church and so act *in persona Christi* (LG 21,2).

Lumen gentium also speaks of the bestowal of a *donum spirituale* in ordination by the laying on of hands. This is supported by references to 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6-7 (LG 21,2). When the two scriptural references are taken together, one can conclude that *Lumen gentium* refers to the bestowal of the Spirit. It is this Holy Spirit who enables Timothy to teach sound doctrine (2 Tim 1:14).

It is worthwhile stressing, as modern Catholic theology does, that the ordainer does not directly impart a *donum spirituale*. It cannot even be said that the ordainer imparts the Spirit. Rather the Spirit imparts self, in sovereign freedom, through ordination and so the charism of office. Traditional unreflective theology of ordination, hampered by a dominantly horizontal understanding of the process of handing on of the power of office, sometimes gives the impression that the ordainer automatically gives a gift which is his personal possession. However a pneumatological approach to ordination makes clear why the reception of office for a profane purpose completely vitiates the ordination. The refusal to accept the anointing of the Spirit is not only an obstacle to the deepening of the life of grace but also to the reception of the permanent *donum spirituale*.⁵

3. The Content of the Charism of Office

The content of the charism of office has been approached from various points of view. Perhaps the best still remains that of Paul, the theologian of apostolic office.⁶ The Pauline corpus certainly ascribes to the notion that the apostles and prophets, the latter the forerunners of later church officers, have received a special grace of office. This has also been the conviction of the traditional theologies of ordination of East and West, as witnessed by the liturgy itself.

The persuasion that a special grace is related to official ministry of the Church can be traced back, in part, to a differentiated experience of what Paul calls the *mystērion* of God, resp. of Christ. *Mystērion*, in this context, refers to the history of salvation being fulfilled in the world according to God's hidden plan. It is experienced as grace of justification—sanctification by all who know

⁵J. Villalón, *Sacrements dans l'Esprit*. Théologie historique 43 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977), pp. 385-86.

⁶H. Mühlen, "Das Mögliche Zentrum der Amtsfrage," *Catholica* 27 (1973) 330, 338-42. On the question of the relation between charism and office in the authentic Pauline writings, confer the excellent study of U. Brockhaus which has received little publicity. The author shows how Paul's doctrine of charisms does not furnish the basis of a real or possible constitution of the Church. At the same time one cannot find in Paul's writings the least polemic against the use of human authority (126, 209). The author's study leads to this conclusion: *Chrimata* build a bridge between the Spirit as power and norm of life and the new life of Christians. As gifts they demonstrate the presence and power of the Spirit; as differentiated, they lead to the service of members to one another. The charisms allow the Spirit to become effective and so the community remains dependent on the new corporealizing of the Pneuma through them: *Chrima und Amt* (Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus, 1972).

themselves to be chosen by God without merit on their side. It is experienced by some in another way: as a grace of consecration by which they are set apart by God precisely for the service of the *mystērion*.

Paul sheds some light on the content of this grace of consecration. He is convinced that the carrying through of the hidden plan of God in history and the carrying through of the apostolic ministry go hand in hand (1 Cor 3:5-9). Hence the grace of office for the ministry of the Gospel (Rom 15:15-17) necessarily includes a spiritual insight into the mystery of Christ granted to the apostles and prophets (Eph 3:4-5).

The special nearness to the mystery of Christ is described in very concrete terms by Paul. He sees himself and Apollos as "administrators of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor 4:1). Not only that, the mystery itself sends him: "... that mystery for which I am an ambassador in chains" (Eph 6:20). The special nearness to the mystery of God makes a claim on the whole life of the apostle. He must live for the mystery in an existential suffering nearness to it (Eph 6:19-20; Col 4:3). It is a grace given not for the office bearer but for the benefit of others: for the Church, for the *mystērion* (Col 1:24-27). Hence it must never become the occasion for self-seeking, nor express itself in structures of repressive power and lordship (1 Thess 2:5-7). As Augustine puts it: The minister of the Gospel should manifest the *clementia* of God⁷ in the style of the *humilitas Christi*.⁸

Perhaps, as we have said, Paul best expresses the content of the charism of office. At least the history of ecclesiastical office demonstrates that the root of the power of office lies in living only for the *mystērion* of God.

4. In Persona Christi: Christological Mystique

The special nearness of the person of the office bearer to the *mystērion* of God is expressed in different ways in the patristic period. Latin literature teaches that the Church participates in the *auctoritas divina*, a term coined by Tertullian.⁹ With the exception of Tertullian,¹⁰ early Latin Fathers localize the participation of the Church in the *auctoritas divina* in the bishop. Cyprian,¹¹ Ambrose,¹² and Augustine¹³ can serve as examples. In their understanding the bishop interprets Scripture authoritatively and makes decisions which bind the consciences of the members of his church.

The Latin Fathers speak of the Spirit who supports the ministry of ecclesiastical office and take for granted that Christ acts through their ministry. In this context Paul's saying about the "energy" of Christ is sometimes introduced: "For this I struggle and work, impelled by that energy of his which is so powerful a force within me" (Col 1:29).

The bestowal of the Spirit through ordination also grounds the notion of a

⁷K.H. Lütcke, "Auctoritas" bei Augustinus. Tübinger Beiträge zu Altertumswissenschaft 44 (Stuttgart, 1968), pp. 119-23.

⁸*De sancta virginitate* 35: "... noluit docere, quod ipse non esset; noluit iubere, quod ipse non faceret" (CSEL 41, 276). Cf. Lütcke, "Auctoritas" bei Augustinus, pp. 72-76, 125-28.

⁹T.G. Ring, *Auctoritas bei Tertullian, Cyprian und Ambrosius*. Cassiciacum 29 (Wurzburg: Augustinus, 1975), pp. 54-63.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 72-80.

¹¹*Ibid.*, pp. 95-101.

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 196-214.

¹³Lütcke, "Auctoritas" bei Augustinus, 124, 137.

twofold morality in early patristic writings. Ambrose, particularly, champions a higher morality for the clergy and a lower for the laity: *Debet praeponderare vita sacerdotis, sicut praeponderat gratia*.¹⁴ As a survey of Ambrose's remarks on the office of presbyter shows, the priest is not so much described as liturgist or officer of the Church but as ethical model.¹⁵

Despite these various forms of stressing the dignity of ecclesiastical office, patristic writers do not develop a theology of the office bearer's special nearness to the person of Christ such as is found in the medieval period. The later tendency in the West to equate grades of office with a kind of special rank in the Mystical Body is exemplified by Gratian, the Father of canon law.¹⁶ This viewpoint later developed into a static concept of quasi-identification of the person of the priest with Christ, especially favored by the post-Reformation *Ecole française*. Further impetus in this direction was given by later ecclesiologies which focused on the horizontal bestowal of power of teaching and governing through juridical acts of competent ecclesiastical authorities.

The static concept of quasi-identification of the priest with Christ projects the image of the office bearer standing at the side of Christ, as a moral person with him, over against the laity. This viewpoint finds support in papal documents of the twentieth century.¹⁷ Remnants of it are contained in II Vatican's *Presbyterorum ordinis* 2. The basis for its statements about the spirituality of priests is the quasi-identification notion (PO 12). 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.¹⁸

Typically these attempts to shed light on the theology of the priesthood lack a pneumatological dimension. One still reads that the priest participates *in the priesthood of Christ* rather than in the anointing of the Spirit of Christ.¹⁹ Also no account is taken of the distinction between the configuration to the life of the Trinity and the configuration to Christ which occurs in baptism and ordination. A more precise understanding of the relation of the priest to Christ may be accessible if the former configuration is seen as Christological, grounded on the life of grace; the latter ecclesial, corresponding to the historical conditions of the Church as such and the quality of the life of faith of the church in which the ordained lives.²⁰

Some theologians, critical of the static concept of representation of Christ,

¹⁴Ep. 4 (CSEL 82.39).

¹⁵Ring, *Auctoritas bei Tertullian*, p. 207.

¹⁶*Decretum Gratiani*, C.7, C.XII, q.1 (Friedberg I, 678): *Duo sunt genera christianorum* (The one suited to spiritual things; the other, the *laici*).

¹⁷E.g., Pius XI, encyclical letter *Ad catholici sacerdotii* (AAS 28 [1936], 10); Pius XII, encyclical letter *Mediator Dei* (AAS 39 [1947], 529).

¹⁸D. Wuerl, "Recent Theological Conclusions on the Priesthood," *Angelicum* 51 (1974), 277-79, argues that by sharing in the powers of Christ the priest is identified with Christ. His consecration is, "in some way," a permanent part of his being. He participates in Christ's work "because he is in his very being identified with Christ."

¹⁹J.M.R. Tillard, "'Ministère ordonné' et 'sacerdoce' du Christ," *Irenikon* 49 (1976), 147-66, indicates the problem associated with the identification of the priesthood of Christ with that of the ordained.

²⁰Villalón, *Sacrements dans l'Esprit*, 403-07.

are led by another path to the same conclusion. If one makes a charge in the Church extrinsic to the ordination itself, the way is open to a purely charismatic ordination which situates the ordained in the state of a superior Christian. P.J. Cordes, in his excellent commentary on II Vatican's *Presbyterorum ordinis*, provides a good example of this mode of argumentation.

He rejects the traditional *Alter Christus* theology which effaces the distinction between *sacramentum et res*.²¹ On the other hand he accepts the notion of charismatic ordination, arguing from a false dilemma between "absolute" and "relative" ordination. Since the latter amounts to a canonical mission, ordination consists in the bestowal of a special grace of the Spirit, inseparable from office.²² It follows from this, as Cordes explains, that the mission of the ordained is an intensification of the common mission of the whole Church. Primarily it is related to the witness of the Gospel by one's life. It does not relate directly to the many necessary services of the church.²³

This theology, reminiscent of Ambrose's theology of the presbyterate, makes the ordained, *ceteris paribus*, the Christian par excellence. Consequently, Cordes can conclude to the superiority of the priests' senate over pastoral councils, which contain lay members, in view of the differentiated "spiritual capacity" of ordained and laity.²⁴

5. *In Persona Ecclesiae—In persona Christi*

Reflection on the significance of the Pentecostal gift of the Spirit has led many Catholic theologians in the post-conciliar period to a new approach to the theology of ordained ministry. The Spirit, sent by a theandric act of Christ from the Father, is not only principle of the gathering of the Church (*LG*, 1; 28,2) but also principle of interiorization by the diversity of gifts by which individuals can freely give themselves in communion with others. The Risen Lord and the members of his Body constitute a unique moral person in the power of the one Spirit. This is the reason Paul can call the whole Church by the name "Christ" (1 Cor 1:13; 12:12).

The Church on earth, as a whole, can be characterized as a comprehensive sacrament of salvation.²⁵ For Christ lives and works in his Church through his Spirit. At the same time the Church manifests the unity of humanity with God, in Christ through the Spirit, and the communion of humanity with one another. Therefore everytime the Church actualizes itself as agent of the mediation of the mystery of Christ, its activity signifies and contains, for the eyes of faith, the saving action of Christ.

However the activity of the Church does not take place except through persons. For the Church is not a substantial being. It forms with the Spirit not a person but a unity of activity. In other words, the Spirit of Christ works through persons integrated into the social structure of the Church. This means that the official activity of the office bearer represents and contains the action of Christ who works through it in the power of the Spirit.²⁶

²¹P.J. Cordes, *Sendung zum Dienst*. Frankfurter Theologische Studien 9 (Frankfurt am M.: J. Knecht, 1972), pp. 184–94.

²²*Ibid.*, pp. 246–47.

²³*Ibid.*, pp. 85–86.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 305.

²⁵*LG*, 1; 9,3; 48,2.

Acting as a head of the Church, the office bearer represents the invisible side of the mystery of communion of humanity with God. The invisible side consists in the fact that Christ, head of the Church, unites it to himself through the Holy Spirit. So the office bearer, acting as representative of Christ in his official acts, not only effects communion with the invisible Lord but signifies it. On the other hand, the communion of all humanity among themselves with God is signified by the congregation of believers who live in peace and communion with one another.

But do these two considerations exhaust the notion that the Church signifies and effects the unity of humanity with God and the communion of humanity among themselves with God? In recent years the theology of charisms has grounded the concept of the Church as made up of acting subjects through whom the Spirit of Christ works for the preservation and growth of the whole Body.

In this purview it is not only the charism of office which has a public function. All charisms are to be utilized for the common good (1 Cor 12:7), and so publicly. It is not only the activity of the office bearer which manifests and effects the mystery dimension of the whole Church. 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. In this way the dependence of all on Christ is expressed and lived: in mutual dependence of the members of the Church, including the office bearer, on one another.

As ambassador of Christ to the community, the office bearer represents that Christ is head of the Church. Hence this one has responsibility, in the name of Christ, for the public display of the fact that "Christ is among you" (Col 1:27). But his official activity does not exhaust this manifestation. Only a mystification of the relation of the office bearer to Christ allows such a conclusion.

In virtue of his special insight into the mystery of Christ, the office bearer has the chief responsibility for the ordering of the charisms of the community. In this sense he can be said to represent the charismatically endowed community, i.e., insofar as he is authorized to order the charisms so that they can be employed for the common good.²⁷

At present the prevailing understanding of authority in the Catholic Church is linked to a narrow concept of jurisdiction, power of jurisdiction, which provides no means for a juridical expression of non-institutional subjects of authority.²⁸ Nevertheless there are many such subjects from the point of view of effective exercise of responsibility and authority. Their growing importance may force the Church to redefine its ministries along lines dictated by the exigencies of a theology of charisms.²⁹

²⁶LG 6,2; 11,2; 20,3; 21,1; PO 2,3.

²⁷Mühlen, "Das Mögliche Zentrum," 357.

²⁸G. Alberigo, "La Jurisdiction," 177-78; J. Grootaers, "Dynamisme et prospective de l'ecclesiologie de Vatican II," *Irenikon* 50 (1980), 200.

²⁹R. Sobański, "Modell des Kirche-Mysteriums als Grundlage der Theorie des Kirchenrechts," *Archiv für katholisches Kirchenrechts* 145 (1976), 29-36, shows how the endogenous model of Church of LG 8,1 leads to the conclusion that the charisms of all Christians should be recognized and employed within the social structure of the Church. The recent study of D.M. Power affords a good overview of the subject of lay ministry: *Gifts that Differ: Lay Ministries Established and Unestablished*. Studies in the Reformed Rites of the Catholic Church 8 (New York: Pueblo, 1980).

6. *The Role of the Priest in the Eucharist*

Since the thirteenth century's elaboration of the concept of power of consecration possessed personally by the priest and effective independently of an ecclesial context, the sharp distinction between the role of the priest and laity in the Mass has been progressively refined. Modern scientific theology discards this theology of power of consecration and, in some measure, has returned to a characteristically Augustinian position still favored in the Western commentaries on the Mass of the first part of the twelfth century.

In what follows the main lines of this new theology are summarized with some personal observations.

a. The priest acts as minister of Christ who is host of the meal and dispenser of his self-gift. He also acts as minister of the Church to whom Christ entrusted the sacrificial meal of the New Covenant. Because the Eucharist is entrusted to the whole Church, it is entrusted to the ministers of the Church.

b. In the liturgy, which is the official expression of the faith of the Church, the priest acts from this faith in which he shares. Therefore the realization of the mystery of the Eucharist does not depend *per se* on whether he is a believer. However it depends on the faith of the Church. Precisely because Christ himself invested the bread and wine with a new meaning at the Last Supper, they acquire new being. But meaning, in a situation which is not purely private, depends on both the one who gives the meaning and those who accept it. Hence the bread and wine would not have become the sacrament of the sacrificed Christ, "given for many," if the apostles had not accepted this meaning in faith, however obscurely understood. Similarly the bread and wine signify and become the sacrament of the sacrificed Christ in the time of the Church because the priest acts from the faith of the Church.³⁰ Since the faith of the Church is indefectible in its foundation the realization of the sacrificial meal of the New Covenant is assured, provided that the ecclesial context is maintained.

c. The traditional theologies of East and West witness to the fact that the priest acts as representative of the organic reality: Christ and the Body of Christ, united in the one Spirit.³¹ However Christ is the chief actor; the Church is only recipient. This fact has led official Catholic theology to a narrow Christological interpretation of the role of the priest at the "moment of consecration." In the encyclical letter *Mediator Dei*, Pius XII follows the prevailing theology of that time by simply inserting the function of the priest to represent the Church into the function to represent Christ. He argues that the priest represents Christ, the head of the Church, at the moment of consecration. Therefore he represents the Church of which Christ is the head!³²

One cannot quarrel with the logic of this explanation. If one officially represents the head of state, for example, one necessarily represents the state of which the head is leader. However from the viewpoint of modern Catholic theology this explanation is inadequate. It situates the *in persona Christi* within the *in persona Ecclesiae*.

³⁰D. Coffey, *Grace, The Gift of the Holy Spirit*. Faith and Culture 2 (Sidney, Australia: Catholic Institute, 1979) 201-02. As a systematic treatment of the theology of the Holy Spirit, this book deserves special attention.

³¹Y. Congar, *Je Crois en l'Esprit Saint* III (Paris: Cerf, 1980), p. 306.

³²AAS 38 (1947), 555.

Yves Congar explains the relationship of the priest to Christ and Church in the Eucharist along these lines. The consecration takes place by the recitation of the words of institution spoken by the priest with the intention of doing what Jesus did and which the Church has continually celebrated. However, the application of the intention to consecrate takes place according to the rite of the Church. Hence the Orthodox priest intends that the *verba Domini* be efficacious only by the descent of the Spirit invoked at the epiclesis. But this does not mean that they are efficacious only *after* the pronouncing of the epiclesis in the Eastern anaphoras. For the priest pronounces the *verba Domini* as representative of Christ.

The priest alone, Congar continues, has the power to celebrate the Eucharist, to consecrate the gifts. Still he does not do this alone. He does not consecrate the gifts in virtue of a power inherent in him and of which, in a sense, he is master. Rather he consecrates in virtue of the "grace" which he implores and which is made through him by the Church. The prayer of the community: "And with your Spirit," points to this meaning. It refers to the grace received at ordination for the common good. It is a petition that this grace be actualized in the celebration, i.e., the capacity to act *in persona Christi*.³³

A traditional Orthodox theology views the matter somewhat differently. The priest always acts *in persona Ecclesiae*. He recalls the narrative of institution *in persona Ecclesiae*. Thus the *verba Domini* have a historical, narrative meaning. He invokes the epiclesis *in persona Ecclesiae* and not as a manifestation of his own power. According to this theology, the priest speaks the *verba Domini* as *typos* of Christ and so *in nomine Christi*, but not *in persona Christi*. These words obtain divine efficacy at the epiclesis. For the Spirit makes the words of remembrance of the Church a sacramental anamnesis. In other words, the Spirit manifests the intervention of Christ himself, identifying the words pronounced by the priest with his own words. Thus the epiclesis is the moment of consecration. It signifies the descent of the Spirit on the gifts in order that they become what the *verba Domini*, spoken by the priest *in nomine Christi*, signify: the Body and Blood of Christ.³⁴

Some modern Orthodox theologians find this explanation unsatisfactory. A. Scrima, for example, argues that if the priest acts *in nomine Christi* by the power of the Spirit received in ordination, he necessarily acts effectively *in persona Christi*.³⁵ However Orthodox theologians who find the distinction between *in persona Christi* and *in nomine Christi* without real meaning have not worked out an adequate theological explanation of the relation between the representative functions of the priest. Congar's approach also needs further development from the standpoint of the meaning of the liturgical action.

The Christological approach of Pius XII derives from both the quasi-iden-

³³Congar, *Je Crois en l'Esprit Saint* III, pp. 305-07, 312.

³⁴P. Evdokimov, *L'Orthodoxie* (Neuchâtel & Paris, 1959), p. 250; *L'Esprit Saint dans la tradition orthodoxe*. Bibl. oecumen. 10 (Paris, 1969), pp. 103-04; C. Kern, *Evcharistija* (Paris, 1947), pp. 238-39. For summary of Orthodox positions on this question, confer R. Hotz, *Sakramente—im Wechselspiel zwischen Ost und West* (Zürich & Cologne: Benziger, 1979), pp. 235-41. Unfortunately Hotz does not mention Orthodox theologians who are critical of this theology. For the opinions of these latter theologians, confer Congar, *Je Crois en l'Esprit Saint* III, pp. 308-09.

³⁵Congar, *Je Crois en l'Esprit Saint* III, p. 309, n. 44.

tification of the person of the priest with Christ and the attribution of an ontological power of consecration of which the priest is, as it were, master. It is, as Congar points out, inadequate. As representative of the organic reality: Christ and the Body of Christ, the priest cannot be separated from the Body of Christ and be simply placed at the side of Christ even when reciting the *verba Domini*. For these words are themselves an expression of the faith of the Church. Through them the Church recalls what Christ did at the Last Supper when he instituted the Eucharist. At the liturgical level they represent the response of faith of the Apostolic Church in the form of an affirmation by recall. However the mimicking of what Jesus said and did at the Last Supper is not a pietistic activity. The Church would never have dared to do this in its liturgical sacrificial meal without being authorized by the conviction of faith that Christ is actively present as High Priest of its worship and host who dispenses his self-gift.

As representative of the whole Church, the priest recalls the *verba Domini* in the name of the believing Church and so in the name of Christ. At the same time, before (new Roman canon) or after (Eastern anaphoras), he invokes the Spirit in the name of the whole Church to sanctify the elements. The community shares in the one faith expressed by the *verba Domini*. In this sense it is able to make the words its own. The community possesses the same Spirit who is the source of the epiclesis of the liturgy. Consequently it is capable of participating in this petition made liturgically by the priest. It is noteworthy, in this regard, that the priest does not invoke the Spirit to act through the priest himself, neither in the Eastern nor Western liturgies. The epiclesis of the Eastern churches is pronounced in the plural. This makes clear that the whole community invokes the Spirit. In the new Roman Canons the "we" dimension is lacking, or rather placed in the background. But the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* explains that the epiclesis is an invocation by which "the Church calls on God's power."³⁶

As leader of the community the priest has charge of leadership of the Eucharist. He represents Christ the head of the Church. At the same time he represents the community united in Christ through the Spirit. This is expressed liturgically especially in the "we" prayers. This one Spirit is the personal mediation of the personal unity between Christ and the Church. This Spirit is not a mediator between Christ and the Church or between Christ-ministerial priest and Church. Hence the action of the priest, expressing the faith of the Church, represents the action of all: Christ, priest and baptized. As act of Christ, it is the act of the host who is High Priest and giver of his self-gift; as act of the Body of Christ it is one of grateful acceptance of Christ's self-gift.

The requirement of office bearer, bishop or priest, for the celebration of the Eucharist is grounded on the fact that ordained ministry is embedded in the relation between Christ, Church and Eucharist. It is an essential structure of the Church whereby Christ's headship is displayed. On the other hand the Eucharist is precisely the meal of the community and signifies the corporate sharing of the community in the blessings of the Kingdom of God. The Eucharist is not only a means through which Christians obtain support for ethi-

³⁶*Selected Documentation from the New Sacramentary* (Washington, D.C.: USCC, 1974), no. 5c, p. 39.

cal activity. Rather it has its meaning precisely in itself. It is the sacramental real promise of the coming Kingdom of God under the form of the sacramental, and so anticipated, meal of the Kingdom. Because of the relation of office to the Church on earth and because the being of the Church is manifested and realized in the Eucharist, the requirement of ordained ministry for the celebration of the Eucharist becomes clear.³⁷

The celebration of the Eucharist without a priest is defective. But this does not mean that Christ, in the power of his Spirit, refuses to "supply" for a community which gathers to celebrate the Eucharist without a priest but in good faith. On the grounds of the unity of faith and love of the community, it may be expected that Christ bestows not merely some individual grace but what the scholastic theology calls *unitas ecclesiastica*.

SUMMARY AND OBSERVATIONS

1. The love which grounds the commitment to office and governs the effective exercise of office is a grace of the Spirit. It is linked to the peculiar charism of office: a special existential nearness to the *mystērion* of God. The root of the power of office lies in living out the implications of this charism.

2. The special nearness to the *mystērion* of God does not imply a special nearness of the person of the office bearer to the person of the Holy Spirit or to Christ. The office bearer does not stand at the side of Christ as moral person vis-à-vis the laity.

3. Since Christ and the members of his Body constitute a unique moral person, in the one Spirit, the office bearer represents the *Totus Christus* in his official acts. But his activity neither exhausts the representation of Christ, the head of the Church, nor the representation of the Church. Christ's headship is fully manifested by the public display of the variety of charisms of the Church. In this respect the office bearer has the chief responsibility of representing the community insofar as ordering the charisms by which the dependence of all on Christ is manifested and realized. In the liturgy the priest represents and acts *in persona Ecclesiae*. Since the Church is sacrament of Christ, the priest also acts *in persona Christi* in liturgical activity.

4. The authority of stable offices is limited by their functions. The charism of office is one among many in a community of acting subjects. It is exercised properly in responsibility before God and in the recognition of others as acting subjects in the Church. This entails an active synergism between office bearers among themselves and between them and the community, displayed by the recognition and employment of the gifts of all for the common good.

5. Office has no authority over the Mystical Body of Christ because it has a charge of leadership. Christ alone is head. The priest has no power over "the Body and Blood of Christ" because he has the charge to preside at the Eucharist. Christ alone is the host and dispenser of the gift of himself. As leader of the community the office bearer stands under Christ as servant and with the community as believer. In this capacity he oversees orthodoxy. But this does not seem to require that he should always preach in the assembly. For he also has need to hear the word of God. In the Eucharistic celebration the priest represents Christ who is the host. Hence he should not only speak the

³⁷A. Gerken, *Theologie der Eucharistie* (Munich: Kösel, 1973), p. 235.

verba Domini over the bread and wine. For the context is: "Take . . . eat, drink." The words should be spoken in such a way that one understands that it is Christ who invites to the meal of the Kingdom.

6. In official Catholic theology today the language of power is used as a code word to affirm that ecclesiastical office is not merely functional. The accent is placed on *potestas sacra*. This corresponds to the concept of "administrators of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor 4:1). The notion *sacra* indicates that the power derives from the Spirit who unites all in Christ and who employs the gifts of all in the work of building up the Body of Christ. Hence power of office is rightly exercised in a collegial way.

7. Since power of office has its source in ordination and is given for the carrying out of the hidden plan of God in history, the limits of the exercise of this power are ultimately measured by the role which the office plays in the Church. It cannot be ultimately limited by institutional law or the arbitrary decisions of ecclesiastical authorities but only by the economy of salvation recognized in the faith.

8. All power in the Church is exercised collegially and measured by roles given through various sacraments. There is no power which is totalitarian in the Church. For there is no Christian who is the source of the power of the others. Therefore the pope's role must be seen in relation to that of the college of bishops and so his power. The pope serves collegially. At the diocesan level he may interfere with a bishop's activity only in the interests of collegiality.

9. At present, active synergism between pope and the college of bishops is not apparent. At the diocesan level the bishop is awarded *potestas immediata* according to *LG* 27,1. But another part of the doctrine attributes *potestas immediata* to the pope (*CD* 9.1). Both in doctrine and practice bishops emerge as *vicarii papae* who exercise indirect power over their dioceses limited by the pope who is the source of jurisdiction. The *primatus sacer* of *LG* 18,2 hides the legally clear *primatus jurisdictionis* which is exercised at all levels of ecclesiastical life. Thus the link between jurisdiction and the sacramental ordinance remains weak.

The same may be said of the whole structure of authority in the Church which is at home with a universalist rather than communion ecclesiology. As a consequence a dimension is reserved in the Church to jurisdiction: a power radically secularized to which obedience becomes a social duty devoid of the aspect of communion. The exercise of ecclesiastical power without communitarian regulation is justified by many on the basis that it is necessary to preserve the order essential to the Church. But the tendency at present is to see that order exemplified in communion ecclesiology. The official vocabulary of the Church, as well as the dominant ideology of the day, points in this direction. The real danger of a reactionary ideology, which attempts to stop this trend, is clear. It makes ecclesiastical office a prisoner of a power incapable of responding to the transformations occurring in social relations in the Church.

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