Toward a Recovery of the Priest as Shepherd: Scriptural and Theological Reflections

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"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." - John 10:11

Introduction

In *The Priestly Office,* Avery Dulles offers a series of reflections up the ministerial priesthood and the current theological and pastoral debates surrounding it. In the post-Conciliar tradition, Dulles identifies three particular functions of the priest and explicates them in an effort to present a concise yet robust picture of the ministerial priesthood. This essay seeks to build upon the insights offered by Dulles in the fourth chapter, "The Pastoral Ministry."[1] The goal here is modest, yet addresses an important topic for those who plan to seek ordination in the Church today. It asks the basic question: what is a proper model for the priest in his pastoral works? The importance of this question is heightened by the decreasing number of priests in active ministry, as well as the growing phenomenon of lay ecclesial ministry. Because of the growing role of the laity in the Church's ministerial life there often occurs the idea that the priest's role should be limited to the sacramental and canonically mandated administrative tasks.[2] This essay will attempt to demonstrate that such a construction does not need to be the case. In fact, a scriptural and theological recovery of the image of the priest as shepherd is needed. In this formulation, the priest serves a particularly poignant ministry of presence precisely because he is ordained. A refocusing upon the pastoral office of the priest also gives needed context to his other *munera* (functions/offices), namely sanctification and governance.

Undergirding the strategy of the foregoing reflections is an epistemological structure outlined by Bernard Lonergan in his epochal *The Triune God: Doctrines*. In discussing the development of the Christological doctrines, Lonergan takes pains to describe a four-fold process of the appropriation of dogma: objective, subjective, evaluative, and hermeneutic.[3] Important for our purposes is Lonergan's distinction between the objective and subjective unfolding of dogma. He notes that there is necessarily a difference between the objective aspect of development, namely that which is designed to "penetrate our sensibility, stir up our imagination, [and] move our affections," and the subjective, "a kind of synthetic process [which] reduce the many scriptural words to one basic proposition."[4] This work shall proceed then following the line of Lonergan's thought: first, we shall outline some scriptural references to the shepherd, more hortatory in nature than dogmatic. Only after the scriptural imagery of the shepherd is explicated (albeit in a limited way) will the subjective appropriation of such imagery receive its articulation.

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[1] Avery Dulles, *The Priestly Office* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997), 45-58.

[2] Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Edition: New Translation (Washington, DC: CLSA, 2001). Canons 519-532.

[3] Bernard Lonergan, *The Triune God: Doctrines*, trans. Michael Shields, ed. Robert Doran and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 31ff.

[4] Ibid.

If scripture is indeed the "soul of theology," this is the only sensible way of proceeding.[5] Of course, some may argue that the priesthood itself is embedded in neither the Old nor the New Testament; this is, however, an entirely different topic. The fundamental goal of this paper is to take that which the Church "has," that is the ordained priesthood, and provide for it a corrective model based upon the importance of the pastoral office.

As briefly noted above, these reflections will begin by noting key "shepherd" passages from both the Old and New Testaments. The landmark Vatican II document *Presbyterorum Ordinis* will then be reviewed in light of Scripture. Afterwards, the development of a theology of the priest as shepherd will be developed with assistance from Walter Kasper, Jean Galot, and Hans Urs Von Balthasar. Finally, the role of the shepherding priest will receive further content by drawing upon an element of the Christology of Gerald O'Collins wherein he focuses on the theme of presence.

Scriptural Reflection: Old and New Testament

The figure of the shepherd possesses a multitude of meanings in both the Old and New Testaments.[6] Two Old Testament images among many serve to clarify the role of the shepherd and illuminate his role as protector and guide. In Ezekiel 34, judgment is made against those shepherds who have led Israel astray; at the same time, Ezekiel announces that God himself will become the protector of the sheep. The evil shepherds are condemned by Ezekiel for "feeding [themselves]" and not the flocks thus letting the sheep go hungry.[7] The prophet's condemnation continues, pointing out that the appointed shepherds have instead used the flock for their own gain. As a result, God will "demand my sheep at their hand; and put a stop to their feeding the sheep; no longer shall the shepherds feed themselves" (Ez. 34:10). Consonant with the overall message of Ezekiel, the Lord is described as the rectifying ruler of the people, in reality a new shepherd to guard the flock.[8] The prophet concludes with God's promise to make the people "my sheep, the sheep of my pasture." This emphasizes God's sovereign decision to be "[their] God" (Ez. 34:31).

The beginning message of Deutero-Isaiah presents a stark contrast to the condemnatory statements of Ezekiel. In describing the future actions of the Lord, the divine court proclaims, "He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep" (Is. 40:11). Here the shepherd takes responsibility for both the feeding and protection of the sheep. And, perhaps equally as important for our purpose, the shepherd leads the leaders of the flock with a spirit of gentleness. While the appearance of the shepherd with his flock is no longer a common one, the imagery suggests that pastoral leaders should possess the characteristics of a shepherd. What's more, these images provide for us an analogic relationship between the shepherd and God. In other words, there is a

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[5] Second Vatican Council. *Dei Verbum* accessed at http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html on 2 July 2013 §24.

[6] For a fuller scriptural exegesis of the "shepherd," see H. U. Balthasar in *Explorations in Theology: Spirit and Institution,* 365-375. My exegeis intends to be more modest.

[7] Ezekiel 34:10; all scripture citations from the NRSV. Further scriptural citations are found in the text.

[8] This theme of "rectification" is used continually by Richard Clifford in his lectures on the Old Testament at Boston College, School of Theology and Ministry. It is my own notes taken in Clifford's class upon which I rely.

needed nuance provided to the narrow conception of the priest who acts *in persona Christi*[9] in a primarily sacramental sense. Instead, the shepherd lives in relationship with the flock: his presence is more than liturgical. In this sense, the priest takes on the role of the Divine Shepherd precisely when he acts in a manner consonant with his calling. Such a conclusion is reminiscent of the sacramental theology of Louis Marie Chauvet, wherein the gifting of a sacrament, in this case Orders, necessarily predicates a response. While failure to respond to the inherent invitation to grace of the sacrament in no way derogates from the gift's (ontological) meaning or its goodness, the receptor does not realize the full potential of the gift.[10]

Christian typology often presents Jesus as the Good Shepherd, yet the simple image of a smiling shepherd on a holy card does not recognize the full import of the shepherd in the New Testament. This "good shepherd" imagery directly reflects John 10:11, where Jesus states, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." Jesus continues by offering a criticism of hired shepherds and contrasts them with his own role because he is willing to "lay down [his] life for the sheep" (Jn. 10:15b). This description is part of a larger Johaninne discourse offered by Jesus that reflects upon his relationship to the Father. Indeed, at the conclusion of the speech the "Jews" want Jesus to plainly reveal himself as the God's anointed or not (Jn. 10:24). This conflict points to an ever-present reality (or, at the least, a hope): the shepherd is responsible for the sheep, even to his own detriment. Likewise, the role of pastor entails a certain responsibility for the people, even to the point of suffering. Moreover (and this must be stated clearly), the role of shepherd plays a unique role in the life of the sheep. In our case this role begins in the spiritual sense but there is also the sense of the shepherd/priest is required to look after the totality of needs of the flock.

As a scriptural coda of sorts, one may turn to the description provided by 1 Peter 5:1-4 wherein the author describes the role of elder as being best understood as an imitation of the "chief shepherd" (1 Pt. 4a). From one "elder" to a series of others, the "shepherds" receive the charge to look over the entire flock under their care, "as God would have you do it – not for sordid gain but eagerly" (1 Pt. 5:2b). Moreover, the power used by the elder is to be preeminently one of example rather than coercion. Again, one finds here the necessity of the righteousness of the shepherd over and against any necessarily pedagogical or juridical role. This brief passage from 1 Peter thus serves to strengthen the previous arguments made by Isaiah, Ezekiel, and John, pointing out that the role of shepherd, as carried out by the pastoral leader (in Roman Catholic circles, most normatively the priest), is an all-encompassing one.

These scriptural passages provide brief examples that suggest certain characteristics of the shepherd. These elements provide the outline for viewing the priest as a shepherd, responsible for the entirety of his flock, regardless of consequences. This emphasis on the priest being a priest exactly *when* he acts as a shepherd is underlined by the Vulgate's rendering of Psalm 22 (23): "*Dominus pascit me nihil mihi deerit.*" One notes here that "pascit" is rendered not as a verb in the NRSV, but rather a noun. It thus reads, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." A more direct translation, however, would be: "the Lord feeds me [what I need] and I will

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[9] Cf. Ernst Niermann, "Priest" in *Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, Ed. Karl Rahner, (Crossroad: New York, 1982), 1281-1285. For further discussion of *in persona Christi,* see Scott Hahnenberg *Ministries,* (Herder and Herder: New York, 2003), 50-51.

[10] Cf. Louis Marie Chauvet, *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body*, (Liturgical Press: Collegeville, MN, 2001), especially Chapter 6, "Symbolic Exchange," 117-127.

want for nothing."[11] The idea of the priest as "shepherding," that is "feeding" or "nourishing," places proper emphasis on the points raised above. At the same time, these selected biblical passages also present one who bears a divine commission and, finding his life completely changed by the complexities of his new role, experiencing a different relationship than before with those under his spiritual care.[12] At the same time, the notion of the pastor as shepherd reinforces the objective ontology possessed by the ordained. As can be seen by the scriptural passages noted above, the idea that there is a supernatural grace imparted by ordination may be seen not as a sort of privilege or dogmatic cudgel to be wielded, but rather a real imposition of the Holy Spirit upon those called to serve in a way commensurate with the boldness of the Chief Shepherd (Christ).

Presbyterorum ordinis[13]

The pastoral office of the priest is addressed specifically in *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, the Second Vatican Council's *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*. *PO* describes priests as performing the ministries of the Word and Sacrament (especially the Eucharist) as well as exercising governance (*PO*, §4-6). This last role is described in §6 as taking place when the priest is "exercising the office of Christ, the Shepherd and Head." The document describes the pastoral role of the priest as one of gathering the people of God and building up the Church. Yet *PO's* thrust focuses more upon teaching the people of God than anything else. The Council Fathers engaged in a fascinating shift here, equating the role the pastoral (shepherding) function of the priest as primarily catechetical. Even in addressing the poor and underprivileged, *PO* suggests that evangelization (understood contextually as catechesis) be the priest's main pastoral concern. The document continues:

> In building the Christian community, priests are never to put themselves at the service of some human faction of ideology, but, as heralds of the Gospel and shepherds of the Church, they are to spend themselves for the spiritual growth of the Body of Christ.[14]

PO defines the main pastoral role of the priest as focusing upon education. At the same time, the ministries of the Word and Sacrament flow from the priest's pastoral ministry so as to compel him to prepare Christians for participation in the sacraments. While by no means minimizing sacramental ministry, there is a need to recover the true nature of the priest as shepherd. Not only is it the responsibility of the priest to sanctify and teach, but also inculcated in his mission is

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[11] Vulgate translation taken from *Bibla Sacra: Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994). I am indebted to Father Charles Sammons, OFM. Cap for his assistance in parsing this phrase in both the Vulgate and the LXX.

[12] This suggests a relational ontology. For a broader discussion of relational ontology, see Hahnenberg's *Ministeries*, 201 (note 9); see also Richard Gaillardetz "The Ecclesial Foundations of Ministry within an Ordered Communion" in *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood* (Liturgical Press: Collegeville, MN, , 2003), especially 38-41.

[13] Second Vatican Council. (1965, December 7). *Presbyterorum Ordinis*. Retrieved December 12, 2012, from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_presbyterorum-ordinis_en.html. Hereafter, cited as *PO*. Several documents of the Second Vatican Council address the pastoral nature of the priestly office. In more recent times, both John Paul II's *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, as well as the Program for Priestly Formation, focus upon the priest's pastoral role. While space does not allow a full treatment of their contents, *PO* serves as a starting point for examining the pastoral theology of the post-Conciliar Church.

[14] *PO*, §6.

the need to be a gentle guide of the people, sharing in their joys and sorrows.[15] In this sense, the shepherd/priest is a receptor rather than an effector. *PO,* however, does not make such a need clear. John Paul II, in his post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (Lit: I will give you shepherds), calls the priest to exemplify the "specific ontological bond which unites the priesthood of Christ the high priest and good shepherd."[16] *PDV* thus builds upon the foundation laid by *PO,* highlighting the embedded (ontological) nature of the office of shepherd within the constant necessity for the priest to conform with the Good Shepherd Himself.

Theological Reflections: Balthasar, Kasper, and Galot

In beginning his discussion of the priest as a pastoral minister, Avery Dulles acknowledges the pastoral elements as being inherently embedded in the preaching of the Word of God and sacramental ministry. Dulles presents three theologians who develop "theologies of priesthood that are centered on the role of pastor or shepherd."[17]

The 1968 volume of the journal *Concilium* was "wholly devoted to the identity of the priest in the modern world."[18] It went on to acknowledge the "critical situation of change and tradition," in which distinct efforts would be needed to be taken to avoid "losing sight of the enduring character of the Church and the priesthood."[19] In the same edition, Walter Kasper attempted to develop a "proper understanding of the priestly office … for the post-Conciliar Church."[20] Kasper identifies three interrelated problems facing the priesthood, "sociological upheaval and the general tendency toward democratization," "the biblical foundation for the priestly office," and "the overall process of secularization."[21] Kasper first responds with new Christological and Ecclesiological foundations developed for a "new outlook." The Christological shift points out the reconciling actions of Christ that should be mirrored by the priest while at the same time acknowledges the fundamental priesthood of Christ which subsumes all others.[22] Kasper goes on to historically root changes in the administrative responsibilities of the priesthood. Thus, in the early church:

> the precise boundaries between authoritative office and community, and between the
> office themselves, was determined by the exigencies of the whole sacramental economy

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[15] In this sense, the opening lines of Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes* describes the proper role of the shepherding priest: "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts" (§1), February, 22, 2013, accessed at http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

[16] John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis,* Retrieved 2 July 2013 from http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_25031992_pastores-dabo-vobis_en.html, §11 Hereafter cited as *PDV.*

[17] Dulles, *Priestly Office,* 47

[18] Karl Rahner, Karl Lehman and Heinz Shuster "Preface," *The Identity of the Priest*: *Concilium,* (New York: Paulist Press, 1969) 1.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Walter Kasper, "A New Dogmatic Outlook on the Priestly Ministry," *The Identity of the Priest: Concilium,* (New York Paulist Press, 1969) 20.

[21] Ibid., 20-21.

[22] Ibid., 23.

> … this means that today we have a relatively large amount of freedom in reshaping our understanding and our practical implementation of the priestly office.[23]

Kasper uses these two foundational points to describe a fresh perspective on the priesthood based in pastoral (and more basically, anthropological) concerns.

Kasper also makes two important points when speaking about the pastoral nature of the priesthood. He first argues that "interpersonal relations are the highest ontological reality."[24] In this way, Kasper anticipates the relational ontology later described by Richard Gaillardetz and Edward Hahnenberg in their writings on ministry.[25] At the same time, Kasper maintains the "indelible character" of the priesthood, but frames it more as a recognition of the totalizing nature of the priesthood itself.[26] The priest is thus, by the nature of his ordination, "summoned to serve others with every ounce of humanity that he possesses".[27] This construction recalls the earlier scriptural images of the shepherd: he is the one who gives all that he has to the flock.

Subsequently Kasper articulates the ministry of priesthood as fundamentally oriented toward unity. In Kasper's estimation, the very ability of the priest to celebrate the Eucharist exemplifies the notion that the priest should serve as a sign of the unity of the Church itself. Moreover "the special ministry of the priest in the eucharistic celebration becomes clearer … when we view it in the light of his ministry on behalf of Church unity."[28] Kasper, in defining the priest in terms of relationship to the Church (and, of course, to Christ), provides a view of the priest not as a simple teacher, but rather as a true and able mediator drawing upon the Church's public recognition of his charism as shepherd.

Jean Galot, in his book *Theology of the Priesthood*, builds upon the totality of the ministry of priesthood offered by Kasper. Like Kasper, he views the ministerial *ethos* of the priesthood as one which attempts to foster unity within the Church.[29] Galot also develops the theme of the nature of leadership exercised by the priest. He argues that pastoral leadership may not be defined solely in the "sense of governance and administration."[30] Instead, Galot identifies "the quality of the shepherd" as being commensurate with the unity of those shepherded.[31] Such an articulation is not as overly subjective as it may appear, but rather "bespeaks a power of leadership with a determinative objective, which is the guidance of the flock."[32] Since this type of leadership is rooted in Word and Sacrament, as well as in the overall activities of the Church, the result of such a construction is a holistic model wherein the shepherd/priest ministers (lit: shepherds) in all facets of the community to all its members.[33] This avoids the exclusion of lay people from pastoral ministry as well as resists the urge to restrain the priest to the sacral realm. Rather, the shepherd acts to bring multiple strands of the community and its shared faith life together. Correspondingly, the shepherd's failure to do so bears a greater influence on the overall health of the worshipping community than most others. This is an ecclesial reality that cannot be wished away: the consequences of a tepid priest are myriad.

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[23] Ibid., 27.
[24] Ibid., 27.
[25] See note 6 above.
[26] Walter Kasper, "A New Dogmatic Outlook," 28-29
[27] Ibid., 29.
[28] Ibid., 31.
[29] Jean Galot, *Theology of the Priesthood,* Trans. R. Balducelli, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1984), 134-135.
[30] Ibid., 136.
[31] Ibid., 137.
[32] Ibid., 138.
[33] Ibid., 140.

The priest's role as mediator also plays heavily in this construction. Drawing explicitly upon the shepherd-theme of Ezekiel 34, Galot names the priest as shepherd "in the name of God, or more precisely, in the name of Christ, and, through Christ, in the name of the Father" in the same manner as that of Yahweh's shepherding.[34] Galot further specifies the role of this mediating shepherd by noting that the priest specifically serves in Christ's pastoral role. He is quick to point out, however, that such a shepherd/mediation configuration also relies upon "complete solidarity with mankind."[35] This dual solidarity is the driving factor of Galot's theological exposition. It focuses upon the priest as truly a man in between: both mediating Jesus' shepherding presence and at the same time existing completely in union with the people of God.[36] The unique element in the shepherd/flock analogy is noted by Galot when he speaks of the leadership of the community. Exactly because the priest serves as a shepherd through the ministry of Christ, he shares the baptism of the faithful. As a result, the priest shepherds *with* the flock and not explicitly *over* it.[37]

Hans Urs Von Balthasar frames his discussion regarding priests and their pastoral role in a scriptural context. Before this, however, Balthasar engages in an important conversation regarding receptivity. Balthasar uses gender as his primary analogue, removing from it any sexual meaning. What he means to do here is focus on the femininity(that is, the receptivity) of humanity, as compared to God, who is the perfect example of total fulfillment.[38] Balthasar uses both this anthropological discussion as well his exegetical work on shepherds in the Old and New Testament (a line of development less problematic than that of cultic "priest" in his opinion) to articulate what he considers the fundamental opposition between the sheep and their shepherd.[39] Just as quickly, however, Balthasar turns what might be perceived as a hierarchical, triumphant model into principle for conformity with Christ.[40] Balthasar trenchantly notes that the "Good Shepherd" (Jesus) overwhelms and subsumes cultic priesthood models because Christ is both the guardian of the flock and the victim vicariously provided for the flock's safety.[41] Therefore any image of Jesus as priest also implies Jesus's role as the Good Shepherd. The practical result for priestly ministry is that the priest himself is called to serve as an icon of receptivity for those he shepherds as well participate in Christ's ministry to the flock.[42] In the final account, Balthasar views the biblical shepherd dynamic as inculcating the "sending of the Son from the Father" which "shows over and over again how fruitful this tension is and how it can be resolved."[43] Balthasar articulates a theology of the priesthood that relies upon shepherd imagery and points toward the need for priests to take seriously their roles as both sacramental/pastoral animators as well as the possibility that they may be required to vicariously bear the burdens of their sheep. We now turn to a further construction, using the Christology of

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[34] Ibid., 144.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid., 145.
[37] Ibid., 147.
[38] Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Explorations in Theology: Spirit and Institution*, Trans. E. Oaks, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 353.
[39] Ibid., 376.
[40] Ibid., 377.
[41] Ibid., 378.
[42] Ibid., 380. See also Michael Downey's "Ministerial Identity" in *Ordering the Baptized Priesthood* (Liturgical Press: Collegeville, MN, 2003) for another discussion of the priest's iconicity, especially 20-23.
[43] Ibid., 381.

Gerald O'Collins to articulate a heretofore underdeveloped component of the theology of the priesthood - the need for presence.

The shepherd's role: A ministry of presence

      At the conclusion of his book on Christology of the same name, Gerald O'Collins submits the idea of "presence" as a means through which Christ may be better understood.[44] He reckons that the description of Christ in terms of "presence" avoids several Christological pitfalls, while also opening up new areas for examination. Such a proposal directly relates to the pastoral ministry of priests. Moreover, in using "presence" to describe pastoral ministry, there is no diminishment of the other *munera* of the ordained priesthood because presence itself is a constitutive part of all three. In applying O'Collins' model for our purposes, there is the hope that priests as pastoral ministers may come to specifically symbolize and make present Christ in any given situation. In this manner, priests serve as symbols (sacraments) of the Good Shepherd himself.

      Three elements of O'Collins' theology of presence stand out as particularly helpful in one attempt to construct an improved pastoral theology of the priesthood. The first asserts that presence is defined always as being in relationship to another, that is, as "presence to." The second assertion takes this reality a step further, defining presence as relationship with another person. The content of that same relationship constitutively defines it. In other words, more than simply presence to anonymous others (i.e. parishioners), Jesus' presence focused itself on a one-to-one basis wherein he established a personal relationship with each of his interlocutors. This sentiment is echoed by John Paul II in *PDV*, wherein he notes that "Jesus Is the promised good shepherd and knows each one of his sheep, who offers his life for them and who wishes to gather them together as one flock with one shepherd."[45] Finally, presence also denotes that it has been given to one entity and not to another. Presence, since it is temporally limited, can only be exercised in one situation at a time.[46] These three elements serve to amplify the theological reflections of the pastoral office offered by Kasper, Galot, and Balthasar.

      O'Collins derivation of "presence to" highlights Kasper's emphasis on the interpersonal dynamics in his discussion of priestly ontology. While the indelibility of ordination is not denied, such a conception of the importance of presence vis-à-vis another person(s) reminds the priest that he is not a shepherd for his own sake. Instead, the priest ministers in an ecclesial community to which he is responsible in its entirety. This goes beyond the reminder of *PO* that the priest pays specific attention to the young, sick, and poor; rather, it paints a larger version of the flock, comprising the disenfranchised, fallen away and separated as well as regular church attendees. The idea of presence specifically geared to individuals further sharpens Galot's emphasis on ministerial solidarity. The priest is able to show greater solidarity when he establishes a personal, pastoral relationship with those whom he meets. Indeed, in this case, he "calls each by name," and his "sheep know [him] and he knows them" (Cf. Jn. 10:27). Finally, O'Collins' recognition of the temporal boundaries of presence provides a fuller context for Balthasar's treatment of the priest as shepherd. It does this by drawing out the dialectical present in the shepherd/priest model. The priest does in fact serve as an icon for the Divine Shepherd; at

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[44] Gerald O'Collins, *Christology: A Biblical, Historical and Systematic Study of Jesus* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1995). For the complete discussion, see chapter 14, "The Possibilities of Presence."
[45] PDV, §13.
[46] Ibid., 310-311.

the same time, he is inevitably a poor substitution. Nevertheless, as an icon, the priest's presence/lack of presence possesses the potential to further illuminate the flock as to the great responsibility and powers the Good Shepherd bestows upon His icon.

Conclusion

Very often, the pastoral element of the ordained priesthood is incorrectly limited in scope to that to only that which takes place within formal liturgical gatherings. Such a conception feeds into the sense that the last remaining domains of ordained ministry are within the contexts of the sacraments or in administrative tasks.   This essay attempted to prove that this is not necessarily the case. In doing so, it first examined four key scriptural passages which illustrate the role of shepherd; it then briefly examined *Presbytororum Ordinis* and *Pastores Dabo Vobis* as a means of highlighting an official stance on the role of the priest in pastoral ministry. Three differently nuanced views of the pastoral elements of the priesthood were then presented. The essay concluded with insights mined from Gerald O'Collins' *Christology*, in which the importance of presence was emphasized. The essay thus articulated a more complete picture of the priesthood, especially its pastoral elements. The priest serves as an icon of the Good Shepherd as well as His stand-in. Thought of in this manner, the presence of the priest in non-sacramental situations may be better comprehended. Such understanding of the pastoral position of the priest allows him to take a less prominent role in these activities if the situation is right, comfortable in his own position as shepherd of the People of God. In all of this then, the pastoral role of priesthood is constitutive of his entire vocation as well as his iconicity of the one true Shepherd.