

**The Gift of Assurance: the Presbyter
in Modern Roman Catholic Theology**

Thomas Joseph Shields

Ph.D. Thesis

University of Edinburgh

2007

Contents

Contents.....	1
List of Common Abbreviations.....	6
Abstract	7
Introduction	9
1. Purpose and Methodology.....	9
1.1 Aim of the Thesis.....	9
1.2 The Origins of the Thesis.....	9
1.3 The Originality of the Thesis	10
1.4 Methodology	11
1.5 The Limits of the Thesis.....	11
2. Outline of the thesis.....	12
2.1 Part One.....	12
2.2 Part Two	13
2.3 Part Three and Conclusion	14
PART ONE - IDENTIFYING THE PRESBYTER	15
Chapter One – Assurance.....	16
1. Introduction.....	16
1.1 The Ecclesial Context for the Ordained Ministry	16
1.2 Assurance	17
1.3 Outline of the Chapter.....	18
2. The Relationship of the Priesthood of the Baptized and the Priesthood of the Ordained in the Second Vatican Council	19
2.1 The Priesthood of the Baptized	19
2.1.1 Ecclesiological Perspectives of the Council.....	19
2.1.2 Consecration and Mission	20
2.2 The Relationship of the Priesthood of the Baptized and the Priesthood of the Ordained in Select Conciliar Documents.....	21
2.2.1 The Concerns of the Council Fathers.....	21
2.2.2 The Expression of a Complimentary Relationship – <i>Lumen Gentium</i> and <i>Subsequent Documents</i>	22
2.2.3 Evaluation.....	29
3. The Hermeneutical Analyses of Ordained Ministry in the Church – the Search for a Founding Identity.....	29
3.1 The 1971 Synod and the Document <i>De Sacerdotio Ministeriali</i>	29
3.1.1 The Anxiety over the Identity of the Ordained Priest	29
3.1.2 The Document <i>De Sacerdotio Ministeriali</i>	31
3.1.3 Evaluation.....	34
3.2 Historical Research into the Nature of Ministry	35
3.2.1. Edward Schillebeeckx	35
3.2.2 Reactions to Schillebeeckx	37
3.2.3 Kenan Osborne and Francis Sullivan – Further Reflection on the Historical Development of Ministry	38
3.2.4 Evaluation – Coordinates for the Definition of the Ordained Priesthood	40
4. The Ordained Priest as Symbolic of the Union between God and the Church... 41	41
4.1 <i>In Persona Christi and In Persona Ecclesiae</i>	41

4.1.1 David Power – the Ordained as Symbolic of Christ the Head of the Church in Liturgy and Life.....	42
4.2 The Royal Priesthood of Christ and the Church – Life and Worship	46
4.3 A Pneumatological Perspective – David Coffey	49
4.4 Summarizing Power and Coffey	54
Conclusion – Preference for the Term Assurance.....	55
Chapter Two – Authenticity.....	57
1. Introduction	57
1.1 Authenticity as Restatement and Renewal.....	57
1.2 Outline of the Chapter	59
2. The teaching of John Paul II on the Ordained Ministry in the First Years of his Pontificate.....	61
2.1. General Observations on John Paul II’s Approach to the Ordained Priesthood.....	61
2.2 The Letter <i>Dominicae Cena</i> e – the Sanctity and Service of the Ordained ...	62
3. Pastores Dabo Vobis	66
3.1 The Synod of 1990	66
3.2 The Central Ideas Current at the Synod of 1990.....	67
3.3 The Document	69
3.3.1 Christology	71
3.3.2 Trinitarian Theology	74
3.3.3 Ecclesiology	76
3.3.4 Anthropology	77
3.3.5 The Ordained Priesthood.....	80
4. Evaluating Pastores Dabo Vobis.....	82
4.1 Christ and the Spirit in the Life and Ministry of the Ordained	83
4.2 The Ordained Priest and the Church	87
4.3 Other Relevant Documents	89
5. Conclusion – Authenticity and Authority	91
Chapter Three – Authority	93
1. Introduction	93
2 Authority as an Issue for the Ordained Priesthood	94
2.1 Religion in Contemporary Society.....	94
2.2 The impact of scandal on the Authority of the Church.....	96
2.3 Power and Community.....	97
2.4 Globalization and its Affects on Ordained Ministry	99
2.5 The Desire for Change	102
3. The Place of the Presbyter.....	104
3.1 The Bishop and the Presbyter.....	104
3.2 The Rite of Ordination of Presbyters	106
3.3 The Presbyter and the Parish.....	110
4. Conclusion – Images of the Presbyter.....	114
4.1 Shepherd.....	114
4.2 Steward.....	115
4.3 Leader and Guide	116
4.4 Assurance	116
PART TWO – GIFT AND RETURN.....	118
Chapter Four- Participation in the Life of the Trinity.....	119
1. Introduction to Part Two and Chapter Four – the Sacramental Encounter	119

2. The Roots of the Theology of Edward Kilmartin - The Sacramental Encounter in Twentieth Century Theology	122
2.1 The Presence of Christ in the Sacraments.....	122
2.1.1 Aquinas and Neo-Scholastic Theology.....	123
2.1.2 Odo Casel and the Presence of Christ in the Liturgy.....	124
2.1.3 Further Reflection on Christ's Presence in the Liturgy.....	126
2.2 The Theology of Schillebeeckx and Rahner	129
2.2.1 Edward Schillebeeckx – the Divine-Human Encounter in the Humanity of Christ.....	130
2.2.2 Karl Rahner - the Divine-Human Encounter within an Evolutionary View of the World.....	132
2.3 Summary	139
3. Sacrament: the Encounter with the Triune God – Edward Kilmartin.....	139
3.1 Our Approach to Kilmartin's Theology.....	139
3.2 Human Growth in Personhood – Worship and Culture	141
3.2.1 The Human Person as Embodied Spirit	141
3.2.2 The Phenomenon of Religious Worship and Culture.....	143
3.2.3 Inculturation	145
3.2.4 Human Communication in the Liturgy	146
3.3 The History of Salvation and the Liturgy.....	147
3.4 Trinitarian Theology	149
3.4.1 The Theology of the Trinity and the Theology of the Liturgy.....	149
3.4.2 The Personal Mission of the Spirit.....	151
3.4.3 The Procession Model of the Trinity and the Bestowal or Return Model of the Trinity in the Theology of David Coffey.....	153
3.5 The Celebration of the Liturgy – the Union between God and Believers... ..	159
3.5.1 The Integration of the Processional and Bestowal Models of the Trinity	159
3.5.2 The Mystery of the Liturgy – the Presence of Christ and the Spirit	162
3.5.3 The Liturgy and the Sacraments as celebrated.....	164
3.6 Conclusion.....	168
Chapter Five - The Priority of the Giving God.....	170
1. Introduction.....	170
2. Foundations	171
2.1 The Symbolic Understanding of Christian Life.....	171
2.1.1 The Weakness of the Metaphysical System.....	171
2.1.2 The Mediating Role of Language.....	173
2.2 The Particularity of the Human Encounter	176
2.2.1 The Generic Statement and the Sacramental Encounter	176
2.2.2 The Structure of the Human Person	177
2.2.3 The Relational Structure of Human Existence.....	180
2.2.4 The Dialogue between Text and Reader	181
2.2.5 A Basic Statement	183
2.2.6 Culture and Religious Worship.....	184
2.3 Diversity and Wholeness in Sacramental Celebrations.....	190
2.3.1 Diversity in Sacramental Celebration	190
2.3.2 Sacrament as Language Event.....	193
2.3.3 Hermeneutical Keys	194
2.3.4 The Place of the 'Ordinary' in Liturgical Rites.....	195
2.4 Summary	196

3. Understanding Sacramental Action.....	197
3.1 The Language of Christianity and the Symbolic.....	197
3.1.1 The Language of Christianity and the Symbolic.....	197
3.1.2 The Church and the Symbolizing Activity of Scripture and Sacrament	199
3.1.3 The Ethical Response.....	200
3.1.4 The Sacraments as Instituting Ritual.....	203
3.2 The Possibilities for a Postmodern Sacramental Theology.....	209
3.2.1 Sacramental Theology in the Light of Postmodern Philosophy.....	209
3.2.2 Post-Modern Onto-Epistemology and Solemn Church Teachings	213
3.3 Sacrament as the Language of God’s Giving.....	215
3.3.1 The Power of Sacramental Language.....	215
3.3.2 The Sacraments and Conversion.....	216
3.3.3 Sacrament as the Language of God’s Giving.....	218
3.4 Summary	225
4. Christology and Trinitarian Theology.....	226
4.1 The Pasch of Christ as the Necessary Starting Point for Sacramental Theology.....	226
4.1.1 The Pasch or the Incarnation as a Starting Point?	226
4.1.2 The Revelation of God in the Death of Jesus.....	227
4.1.3 The Pneumatological Dimension of the Sacraments.....	230
4.2 Jesus as the Primordial Sacrament	232
4.3 The Liturgical Mystery of the Triune God.....	234
4.4 Summary	236
5. Conclusion.....	236
PART THREE – THE GIFT OF ASSURANCE	238
Chapter Six - The Presbyterian as a Gift of God to the Church.....	239
1. Introduction	239
1.1 Sanctification in the Life of the Local Community.....	239
1.2 The Outline of the Chapter.....	242
2. The Priestly Work of Assurance	244
2.1 The Visibility of the Presbyterian	244
2.1.1 The Sacrament as Effective and Effecting	244
2.1.2 The Ordained Priesthood as Part of the Received Structure of the Church	246
2.1.3 The Priority of the Symbol.....	249
2.1.4 An Example of the Visibility of the Presbyterian – the Sacrament of Reconciliation.....	252
2.1.5 The Character of Ordination	260
2.2 Conclusion.....	261
2.2.1 The Necessity of the Sacrament of Orders.....	261
2.2.2 The Gift of Assurance	263
3. The Authentic Voice of the Prophet.....	266
3.1 The Action of the Spirit in the Local Community	266
3.2 A Ministry beyond Fulfilment	269
3.3 The Dialogue of Pastoral Charity.....	272
4. The Authority of the Pastor	273
4.1 Catechesis for the Celebration of the Sacraments.....	273
4.2 The Pastoral Interview	275
4.2.1 The Ritual Expectation.....	275

4.2.2 The Authority of the Presbyter.....	277
5. Conclusion.....	279
Conclusion.....	281
1. Outline.....	281
2. Review of the Main Chapters.....	281
2.1 Part One – Identifying the Presbyter.....	281
2.1.1 Chapter One – Assurance.....	282
2.1.2 Chapter Two - Authenticity.....	283
2.1.3 Chapter Three – Authority.....	284
2.2 Part Two – Gift and Return.....	285
2.2.1 Chapter Four – Participation in the Life of the Trinity.....	286
2.2.2 Chapter Five – The Priority of the Giving God.....	287
2.3 Part Three – The Gift of Assurance.....	288
2.3.1 Chapter Six – The Presbyter as a Gift of God to the Church.....	288
2.3.2 The Gift of Assurance.....	290
3. Concluding Remarks.....	291
3.1 The Presbyter as ‘Assurer’.....	291
3.2 The Identity of the Presbyter in Modern Roman Catholic Theology.....	292
3.2.1 The Purpose and Methodology of the Thesis.....	292
3.2.2 The Originality of the Thesis.....	294
Bibliography.....	296
1. Main Ecclesiastical Documents.....	296
2. Principal Authors.....	297
3. Auxiliary Authors.....	299

List of Common Abbreviations

AA *Apostolicam Actuositatem*

AAS *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*

DS *Denzinger Schönmetzer*

CD *Christus Dominus*

GS *Gaudium et Spes*

LG *Lumen Gentium*

PDV *Pastores Dabo Vobis*

PO *Presbyterorum Ordinis*

SC *Sacrosanctum Concilium*

Abstract

From a conversation between selected authors and documents from the Roman Catholic Magisterium, this thesis suggests that the presbyter is one who is given by God to be an assurance of faith to the church.

In the first part of the thesis, under the headings of ‘Assurance’, ‘Authenticity’ and ‘Authority’, the author reflects on the image of the ordained priest as leader of the community and considers the questions raised in the recent debate as to the identity of the ordained as acting in the person of Christ and in the person of the church. Also considered is the identity of the ordained as emerging from the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church especially in relation to the document ‘*Pastores Dabo Vobis*’ of John Paul II. The definition of the office of presbyter as distinct from that of bishop is also explored in relationship to the parish and the local bishop. In the second part of the thesis, under the title of ‘Gift and Return’, the author examines some recent theology which underlines the sacraments as encounters between God and humanity, and show how they are participations in the life of God. Recent theological work concerning the postmodern challenge to an understanding of how God and the human are mutually present to one another is also reviewed. The third and final part of the thesis draws the first two parts together, with reference to assurance, authenticity, and authority but this time in connection with the three offices of priest, prophet, and pastor.

The conclusion of this thesis is that the presbyter’s identity is founded in his being the gift of assurance in the realm of the ordinary. This is a preferred model to other images used to describe the presbyter, such as shepherd and steward.

[Word count: 96,000 words]

I declare that the composition of this thesis is my own work. I further declare that no part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification and that no part of this thesis has been offered for publication.

Signed:

Introduction

1. Purpose and Methodology

1.1 Aim of the Thesis

The aim of this thesis is to identify the role of the presbyter in modern Roman Catholic theology. By ‘modern’ we intend the period from the close of the Second Vatican Council until the beginning of the twenty-first century. The theological discussion pursued in this thesis will deal with selected magisterial documents from the Second Vatican Council and subsequent papal and curial documents. It will also focus on some of the theological reflection undertaken by mainly Roman Catholic thinkers during the period specified.

We conclude that ‘the gift of assurance’ best describes the ministry of the presbyter. This refers to the symbolic function of the presbyter as an ordained priest working in the neighbourhood church or local community. We believe that the symbolic function of the presbyter is that which enables the dialogue between God and the believer in the sacramental encounter.

1.2 The Origins of the Thesis

The origins of the thesis lie in an interest in the sacramental theology of a number of modern Roman Catholic writers who have reflected on the role of the ordained priest over the last forty or so years. These writers have attempted to integrate a theology of the Holy Spirit into the definition of the actions of the ordained priest and have emphasized the existential element in the sacramental encounter. Furthermore, we believe that there has been a certain convergence in recent years between some of the magisterial teaching on the ministry of the

ordained and theological reflection on the existential and ethical elements of the sacramental celebration.

Generally, the theologies of the priesthood we have reviewed do not elaborate on the sacramental theology that lies behind the theological assertions that they make. Instead they tend to trace the historical development of ministry and place the ordained priest in the context of the wider considerations of ministry in the church.¹ Often, these works try to justify their view of the ordained ministry from one particular ecclesiological viewpoint based on their hermeneutical reading of the ordained ministry. Our interest is in developing a theology of the presbyterate that will emphasize a more sacramental reading of presbyteral ministry.

1.3 The Originality of the Thesis

The originality of the thesis consists in the deliberate coordination of a theology of the presbyterate with wider sacramental theology. This act of ‘placing’ the elements gleaned from modern Roman Catholic theologies of the ordained priesthood alongside a theology of the sacraments in general yields some interesting perspectives which we believe are important for a modern presentation of the identity of the presbyter. We do refer to other studies which have examined and summarized the theology of the ordained priesthood of various authors. These have provided important material for the first part of this thesis.² To the best of

¹ See for example GALOT, J., *Theology of the Priesthood*, San Francisco, 1985; GRESHAKE, G., *Ser Sacerdote*, GAZTELUMENDI, M. O., Salamanca, 1996; O'MEARA, T. F., *Theology of Ministry*, Revised ed. New York, 1999; OSBORNE, K. B., *Priesthood, a History of Ordained Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church*, Oregon, 1989.

² For example, GOERGEN, D. G. A., ed., *The Theology of the Priesthood*, Collegeville, Minnesota, 2000; MICHALSKI, M., *The Relationship between the Universal Priesthood of the Baptized and the Ministerial Priesthood of the Ordained in Vatican 2 and in Subsequent Theology: Understanding "Essentia Et Non Gradu Tantum," Lumen Gentium No. 10*, Lewiston, NY, 1996; POWER, DERMOT, *A Spiritual Theology of the Priesthood: The Mystery of Christ and the Mission of the Priest*, Washington, D.C., 1998.

this author's knowledge, there are no such studies which deal with our topic precisely according to the method that we follow in this thesis.

We believe that the main result yielded from our study is that the presbyter is the one who gives assurance in the sacramental encounter between God and the believer. This takes the idea of the symbolic function of the ordained priest, elaborated in the theology of Edward Kilmartin and David Coffey, a step further. This further step is assisted by reference to the sacramental theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet, Kenan Osborne, and David Power, and the ideas of Susan Wood on the presbyterate. By integrating their perspectives, and by drawing on select magisterial documents, we are able to further prescribe the identity of the presbyter using sacramental language.

1.4 Methodology

Throughout the first two parts of our thesis we shall largely pursue a conversational method. We shall place our authors in dialogue under certain aspects which emerge from their theologies as we read them. By so doing, we intend to bring out the main elements of their theologies in respect of our theme. The methodology selected is one which we believe is suggested by the style and content of the material reviewed. In the sixth chapter, we offer a more synthetic approach, bringing together the first two parts of our thesis under certain headings which highlight the main topic.

1.5 The Limits of the Thesis

Our thesis is prescribed by the topic, the sources consulted, and the time period to which it refers. The main topic under discussion is the ordained priesthood in general and the presbyter in particular. Necessary connections are made with the

priesthood of the baptized and the office of bishop. There is little consideration of ministry in the church in general and no mention of the ministry of the deacon. Throughout, we shall generally refer to the ordained priesthood in a manner that will distinguish it clearly from the priesthood of the baptized. Specific use of the word 'presbyter' in the first part of the thesis will refer to the ordained priest in the parochial context. In the sixth chapter, the terms ordained priest, presbyter, and pastor appear occasionally as interchangeable terms.

The sources for this thesis are drawn almost exclusively from the Roman Catholic Church, though some mention is made of the theological work undertaken by theologians from other denominations. This is to both limit the material reviewed for the thesis and to provide the framework for a particular Roman Catholic discussion. The ecumenical context for the ministry of the ordained provides an interesting and relevant field of study but lies outwith our scope.

We have chosen to limit the time period of the works reviewed. Again this helps us to limit the material and provides a contemporary orientation for our study. There are numerous works on the historical development of the ministry of the ordained, a few of which we have indicated in the footnotes in this introduction and throughout the thesis.

2. Outline of the thesis

2.1 Part One

Our thesis will progress in three main parts with a conclusion. The first part seeks to identify the presbyter in the contemporary Roman Catholic debate. It consists of three chapters and reviews some of the material from theologians and the magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church on the ordained priesthood. We

consider these under the headings of ‘Assurance’, ‘Authenticity’, and ‘Authority’. In each case we shall define what we mean by these terms.

In the first chapter, we focus on three aspects: the relationship between the priesthood of the ordained and the priesthood of the baptized in select documents of the Second Vatican Council; the hermeneutical reading of the ministry of the ordained which seeks a founding identity for the ordained priesthood; and the question of whether the ordained priest acts primarily in the name, or person, of Christ or the church. This chapter enables us to ‘map out’ our main theme of assurance and to introduce some important literature.

The second chapter concentrates on the magisterial teaching of John Paul II on the ordained priesthood, particularly the Apostolic Exhortation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*. Here we examine both those elements of his teaching which restate the traditional view of the ordained priest and also the areas of renewal which marry with some of the theological reflection covered in the thesis.

In the third chapter we shall look at the issue of authority as an issue in contemporary society and the place of the presbyter in relation to the bishop and the parish. This chapter will provide us with the idea of the neighbourhood church as the context for the presbyter’s ministry, and will point out some of the issues which will be taken up in the second and third part of our thesis.

2.2 Part Two

Part two elaborates the sacramental theology of selected authors according to the scheme of ‘gift and return’. This part emphasizes the idea of the sacramental encounter as the action of the giving God and the response, or return, of the believer in conversion and ethical action. It consists of two chapters. In the fourth chapter we shall examine the sacramental theology of Edward Kilmartin. This

theologian develops a theology of the liturgy and the sacraments which underlines the role of the Holy Spirit in the sacramental encounter, and elaborates the covenantal relationship established by the Spirit's actions and the response of the believing community. This helps to give the theological background for some of the material reviewed in chapter one.

Chapter five deals with the sacramental theology of three theologians in particular who have sought to address the problems of understanding sacramental action in the light of postmodern philosophy: Louis-Marie Chauvet, Kenan Osborne, and David Power. Their theology is presented with three factors in mind: the basis for sacramental theology, the understanding of sacramental action, and a theology of the Trinity. This chapter relates more closely to the second chapter in dealing with the ethical element in the definition of the effect of the sacraments, and enlarges upon how contemporary society now understands relationship and dialogue.

2.3 Part Three and Conclusion

The final part of the thesis consists of just one chapter and synthesizes the first two main parts under the three headings presented in the first part, this time in connection with the three offices or *munera* of the ordained priest: priest, prophet, and pastor. It seeks to present the main theme of the thesis, the presbyter as the 'gift of assurance', in a progressive way, and with reference to particular sacramental and pastoral situations.

In the conclusion we review the main chapters of the thesis and bring together the key ideas presented in each. We end with remarks on how the presbyter is best placed to symbolize the action of God and the response of the believer in today's world. We also mention some areas not dealt with in this thesis.

PART ONE - IDENTIFYING THE PRESBYTER

Chapter One – Assurance

1. Introduction

1.1 The Ecclesial Context for the Ordained Ministry

From the time of the Second Vatican Council there has emerged the idea of the ordained priest as the one who gathers and leads the community.¹ The magisterium of the Catholic Church expresses this by stating that the ordained minister symbolizes Christ, the Head and Shepherd of the flock.² Theological discussion has centred upon *how* he represents or signifies Christ to and in the community, the exact nature of his leadership role.³

The shift in emphasis from defining the ordained as being almost apart from the community to placing the ministry and life of the ordained within the ecclesial context has been one of the determining factors in recent years.⁴ Furthermore, ministry in the church is not now considered to be solely the prerogative of the ordained, with the laity engaged in various ‘apostolates’ seen as ‘worthy’ but not

¹ See PHILIBERT, P., "Issues for a Theology of the Priesthood: Status Report", *The Theology of the Priesthood*, ed. GOERGEN, D., G. A., Collegeville, Minnesota, 2000, pp. 1-42.

² See ‘The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church’, *Lumen Gentium*, (LG); ‘The Decree on the Life and Ministry of Priests’, *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (PO); JOHN PAUL II’s Apostolic Exhortation ‘*Pastores Dabo Vobis*’, AAS 84 (1992) 657-804.

³ WOOD, S. K., ed., *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Lay and Ordained Ministries*, Collegeville, Minnesota, 2003; GALOT, *Theology of the Priesthood*; POWER, D., "Representing Christ in the Community and Sacrament", *Being a Priest Today*, ed. GOERGEN, D., Collegeville, Minnesota, 1992, pp. 97-123; MICHALSKI, *The Relationship between the Universal Priesthood of the Baptized and the Ministerial Priesthood of the Ordained in Vatican 2 and in Subsequent Theology: Understanding "Essentia Et Non Gradu Tantum," Lumen Gentium No. 10.*

⁴ There still exist competing theologies of the ordained ministry, some of which would still work from a post-reformation vision, which see the ordained priest in terms of a narrow cultic ministry. These emphasize the authoritarian role of the ordained priesthood rather than the broader emphases on the meaning of cultic ministry offered by the Second Vatican Council, see MICHALSKI, pp. 4-5; PHILIBERT, p. 1 ff. It has been noted that some of those ordained to the hierarchical priesthood since the 1980s tend to see the Second Vatican Council as one chapter in the history of the theology of ministry and ecclesiology but not the only one. This has led to some pursuing a more ‘traditional’ form of ministry, see HOGE, D. R., WENGER, JACQUELINE E., *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood, Changes from Vatican 2 to the Turn of the Century*, Collegeville, Minnesota, 2003, pp. 61-78.

central to the church's mission. Ministry is now seen as being at the very heart of being Christian. This further qualifies the leadership role of the ordained.⁵

1.2 Assurance

This chapter focuses on what is particular about the ministry of the ordained as it emerges from the Second Vatican Council and modern Catholic theological reflection, and suggests that the term 'assurance' is one that could best summarize the various definitions that have been offered during this period. Assurance is defined, among other things, as 'confidence', 'feeling of certainty', 'subjective certainty of one's salvation', and 'a positive, confidence giving declaration'.⁶ We see the giving of confidence and certainty to the church in its life and worship, within the context of faith, as crucial to the identity of the ordained priest. The concepts of faith and certainty are put together by Catholic teaching based on the veracity of God's word, i.e. the belief that God does not lie and that what is proclaimed as his intention towards humanity is genuine.⁷ In the sacraments, the offer made by God and the real possibility of the acceptance of that offer in grace are affirmed.⁸

Within the context of our discussion, those who are ordained are seen as a symbol of the real possibility of the encounter with God in Christ and the Spirit in the proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the sacraments. In the faith journey of the Christian, the ministry of the ordained represents the reality of the offer of God at the various stages of Christian pilgrimage which in the Catholic

⁵ See O'MEARA, *Theology of Ministry*, pp. 5-33.

⁶ Source SCHWARZ, C., ed., *The Chambers Dictionary*, Edinburgh, 1993.

⁷ CATHOLIC CHURCH (JOHN PAUL II), *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, London, 1994, paragraph 157.

⁸ KILMARTIN, E. J., *Christian Liturgy: Theology and Practice*, Kansas City, Mo., 1988, p. 10.

context are understood as sacramental.⁹ In other words, in the ministry of the ordained, the Christian is assured that a real offer and the opportunity of response are proffered in the church, and a chance for conversion and transformation is present.¹⁰

1.3 Outline of the Chapter

The Second Vatican Council offered a vision of the church according to which the whole people of God share in the priesthood of Christ and thus in his mission. This gave birth to possibilities and problems. The possibilities arose from a view of the church that saw it in a dynamic relationship of service to the world. Some of the problems centred upon the expression of the particular ministry of the ordained within this general mission.

Following the Council, two main theological strands emerged which attempted to address the problem of the definition of the ordained priesthood in particular and ministry in the church in general. One was the hermeneutical analysis of the development of ministry in the church, the other focused on the nature of the representative role of the ordained priest.

In order to show how the quality of assurance emerges as a dominant theme in post Vatican II theology, and in order to define it more specifically, we shall examine these emergent themes under the following headings: the relationship between the priesthood of the baptized and the ordained in the Second Vatican

⁹ By 'sacramental', we mean not only the celebration of the seven chief rites of the Catholic Church commonly called sacraments but also the whole encounter with God in the life journey of the Christian.

¹⁰ See PHILIBERT'S analysis of the theology of David Coffey and Edward Kilmartin in "Status Report", pp. 29-34. See also POWER, "Representing Christ in the Community and Sacrament", especially pp. 98-99. Here Power discusses the idea of the ordained acting in the person of Christ in medieval theology. He writes in these pages, "It is the assurance of Christ's action in the liturgy, especially his sanctifying action, that is at stake. The assurance that Christ acts through the church's ministers was extended also to those teachings which were offered, in virtue of episcopal authority, as the authentic word of Jesus Christ."

Council; the subsequent theological discussion among selected writers on the development of ministry in the history of the church; and the question of whether the ordained act principally in the person or role of Christ vis-à-vis the church, or whether the ordained primarily represent the faith of the church, and thus indirectly represent the person of Christ.

In this first chapter, there is no distinction made between the order of bishop and that of presbyter; the ordained priesthood is considered more or less in general terms in its relationship to the church. Chapter three of our thesis will take up some of the issues surrounding the specific distinction between the two orders in its discussion of the theme of authority.

2. The Relationship of the Priesthood of the Baptized and the Priesthood of the Ordained in the Second Vatican Council

2.1 The Priesthood of the Baptized

2.1.1 Ecclesiological Perspectives of the Council

According to Melvin Michalski, it is clear from the debates that took place on the Council floor that there had already been a shift among the bishops of the church from an almost exclusively pyramidal view of the church, according to which the hierarchical element was dominant, to that of a more communitarian perspective.¹¹

The challenge issued from Pope John XXIII to the bishops of the church, in calling the Council, had been to look outward, to consider the function of the church in an ever changing world. In answering this fundamental question, the Council Fathers had to examine the basic nature of the church. They reached the

¹¹ MICHALSKI, pp. 11-65. Michalski notes this tendency in the thinking of the Council Fathers throughout the first chapter in his work. See also LECUYER, J., "History of the Decree", in VORGRIMLER, H., *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican 2*, ed. VORGRIMLER, H., Vols. 1-5, New York and London, 1969, Vol. 4., pp. 183-207.

conclusion that the church is to be seen firstly as dependent on Christ, and that the whole people of God are called to salvation in Christ by the power of the Spirit to serve the Kingdom of God.¹² The relationship which first constitutes the church, and founds the identity of every Christian, is that of the community with the Trinity. The *means* to and the *expression* of that relationship is within the church and in and to the world. We believe that this is best summed up in the Council's application of the term 'priesthood' to the whole people of God.

2.1.2 Consecration and Mission

The 'Dogmatic Constitution of the Church', *Lumen Gentium*, makes three main points concerning the baptized: that baptism puts the person into a relationship with God in Christ, and therefore every baptized person shares in the mission of Christ; that this mission involves a dedication to God in the obedience of faith, in the proclamation of the Good News of the Kingdom of God and in love of neighbour; and that the responsibility for the actions of the church is shared by all of its members.¹³

Within the biblical and patristic perspectives offered by the Council, the baptized are portrayed as sharing in the three-fold office of Christ, namely, priest, prophet, and king. As a priestly people they are consecrated to God, as a prophetic people they witness to the Gospel, and as a kingly people their daily lives are

¹² See VORGRIMLER, Vol. 1, pp. 107-108. See also MARTINA, G., "The Historical Context in Which the Idea of a New Ecumenical Council Was Born", LESLIE, W., *Vatican 2: Assessment and Perspectives: Twenty-Five Years After*, ed. LATOURELLE, R., vol. 1, New York, 1988, pp. 3-74. The organization of the first part of *Lumen Gentium* shows that Council Fathers wished to make clear that the church is a mystery that is dependent on and related to the unfolding of the revelation of God's love in history. We believe that the christological and pneumatological references are clear enough in the Council's documents to make the assertion that this relationship was conceived of in these terms, though the mission of the Spirit was not fully elaborated.

¹³ See *Lumen Gentium* (LG) 7; 9-12; 31. 'The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy', *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC), 14 states that all the baptized are called to a holy and priestly life. Texts from the Council documents are taken from TANNER, N. P., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils Volumes I & 2*, Vol. 2, London, 1990.

ordered to God's will and permeated by love of others. The love of God and love of neighbour flow from the one consecration to God in baptism.¹⁴ The result of their consecration to God and sharing in Christ's mission is that the baptized, as a priestly people, are called to consecrate the world to God.¹⁵

2.2 The Relationship of the Priesthood of the Baptized and the Priesthood of the Ordained in Select Conciliar Documents.

2.2.1 The Concerns of the Council Fathers

Melvin Michalski has summarized the concerns of the participating bishops during the debate that led to the final text of *Lumen Gentium* 10, as well as the related discussions on the documents that would eventually become the 'Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests', *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, and the 'Decree on the Laity', *Apostolicam Actuositatem*.¹⁶ We believe that the explanation of the relationship between the priesthood of the baptized and the priesthood of the ordained, as expressed in this section of *Lumen Gentium*, is a pivotal moment in the history of the theology of the ordained priesthood.

From Michalski's analysis, we can see the emergence of three preoccupations. The first was concerned with the unity of the church in Christ. Returning to biblical and patristic witness, the council fathers insisted upon the uniqueness of the priesthood of Christ to which all in the church were related, if in differing ways. The second was the strong desire to affirm the validity of the priesthood of all believers. Although the notion of the priesthood of the baptized had featured in the Encyclical *Mystici Corporis* of Pius XII, what was to be called the common

¹⁴ LG 10; 12; 'Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity', *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (AA) 2; 4. See POWER, D., "Priesthood Revisited: Mission and Ministries in the Royal Priesthood", *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Lay and Ordained Ministry*, ed. WOOD, S. K., Collegeville Minnesota, 2003, pp. 87-120.

¹⁵ LG 31. See commentary on this idea concerning the mission of the priesthood of the baptized, as introduced into the Council's debates by Cardinal Bueno y Monreal, in MICHALSKI, p. 38.

¹⁶ See MICHALSKI, pp. 11-46 for what follows on these concerns.

priesthood or the priesthood of the baptized was still conceived, by many at the time of the Second Vatican Council, in analogous or purely spiritual terms, and as only realized through the priesthood of the ordained.¹⁷ The third concern of the council fathers was to affirm the priesthood of the ordained. The challenge was to find a language that would relate the priesthood of the ordained to the priesthood of the baptized, a language which would overcome the categories of the functional and the ontological. Furthermore, the overriding concern was to portray the ministry of the ordained in terms of service and not domination.

2.2.2 The Expression of a Complimentary Relationship – *Lumen Gentium* and *Subsequent Documents*

1) *Lumen Gentium* 10

The ‘Constitution on the Church’ is considered as central to the Second Vatican Council and the document to which all other Council documents refer.¹⁸ The crucial text for our discussion in this section is number 10, paragraph 2:

The common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood, though they differ in essence and not simply in degree, are nevertheless interrelated: each in its own way shares in the one priesthood of Christ.

Three points can be noted: the use of the terms ‘common priesthood’ to describe the priesthood of the baptized, and ‘ministerial’ or ‘hierarchical’ to denote the priesthood of the ordained; the expression of the difference between the two in terms of ‘essence’; and the statement that the two priesthoods are interrelated. We examine the first two points against the background of *Lumen Gentium* 10, the

¹⁷ PIUS XII, *Mystici Corporis*, AAS 35 (1943), 232-233. For the discussion of this see MICHALSKI, *loc. cit.*

¹⁸ VORGRIMLER, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican 2*, Volume I, pp 105-106.

third against the background of *Lumen Gentium*, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, and *Apostolicam Actuositatem*.

a) The use of ‘Common’ and ‘Ministerial’ to describe the two priesthoods

Because the mission of Christ is shared by all the baptized, the use of the term ‘ministerial’ to describe only the ordained priesthood came under some scrutiny in the Council discussions.¹⁹ The aim of the bishops who contributed to the debates was not to demean the priesthood of the baptized by use of the word ‘common’ but to emphasise three things. Firstly, that the priesthood of the baptized was communal, i.e. that one entered into the *community* of the faithful through baptism and was put into a relationship with others. Secondly, that the use of the word ‘ministerial’ to describe the priesthood of the baptized would have been to narrow the definition of the baptized. Thirdly, given that this section should deal with the organic unity of the church and the interrelatedness of the two priesthoods, the emphasis should be on the priesthood of the ordained as one of service to the priesthood of the baptized.²⁰

¹⁹ MICHALSKI, pp. 25-27

²⁰ However, see GAILLERDETZ, R., "The Ecclesiological Foundations of Ministry within an Ordered Communion", *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood*, ed. WOOD, S. K., Collegeville Minnesota, 2003, pp. 26-51. Gaillardetz elaborates a theology according to which all those who are baptized are seen as ‘ordered’ in the church and are put into a fundamental relationship with the Trinity and to ministry in the world. His starting point is provided by the Second Vatican Council’s teaching on the mission of all the baptized vis-à-vis the world and ‘the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World’, *Gaudium et Spes*. He writes, p. 31 “(The) firm orientation of all the baptized as those bound together in a common mission is a most necessary foundation for any consideration of church ministry. It serves as a vital corrective against any tendency to allow practical distinctions between the church *ad intra* and the church *ad extra* to turn into a dichotomizing separation.” His theology is set against the background of the theological discussion that took place after the Council but it is worthy of note that the distinction of the two priesthoods as ‘common’, on the one hand, and ‘ministerial’, on the other, as found in LG 10, does lead to problems when considering the relationship of the two priesthoods to the common mission of the church in the world.

b) The Expression of the Difference between the Two Priesthoods in terms of 'Essence'

Michalski states that much of the discussion, both on the floor of the Council and also in the written contributions made by the bishops in response to the proposed scheme, centred on how to describe the relationship and the difference between the two priesthoods, given the desire of the Council to affirm the validity of the priesthood of the ordained, as well as that of the baptized. Broadly speaking, the question was whether the difference should be expressed as functional, gradual, sacramental or essential.²¹

The church had already received from the Council of Trent the definition of the sacrament of holy orders as a valid sacrament, and thus a gift from God not from the community.²² Therefore, to describe the ordained priesthood in terms of its being a function of the community would have been difficult, though this would have had the virtue of relating it more closely to the community.

Defining the ordained priesthood in terms of degree was a possibility.²³ *Lumen Gentium* 21 had already described the episcopacy as possessing the fullness of the priesthood; by using such language the sacrament of orders could be seen as an expression of baptismal consecration.²⁴ However, this would not have defined the ordained priesthood as a separate sacrament, and would have courted the danger of seeing the ordained priest as a 'super Christian', rather suggesting, in turn, the inadequacy or inchoate nature of baptism.

According to Michalski, Archbishop Jaegar, in his contribution to the discussion, suggested that the difference between the two priesthoods be

²¹ MICHALSKI, pp. 21-28; 39-45

²² See the chapter and canons on the sacrament of holy orders, Session 23 of the Council, 15th July 1563, in TANNER, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, Volume 2*, pp. 742-744. Cf. DS 1763-1778.

²³ MICHALSKI, p. 44

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 37

expressed in terms that explained better the unity of the two priesthods, rooted as they are in mission and in the celebration of the Eucharist, rather than using the language of school metaphysics.²⁵ Jaegar's contribution, as explained by Michalski, highlights two important points. Firstly, the role of the Holy Spirit in calling and consecrating the individual to baptism and to the ordained priesthood is underlined. Thus the *unity* between the two priesthods is founded in the action of the Spirit as well as that of Christ. Yet, and this is the second point, the *difference* between the two priesthods is also founded in the Holy Spirit. The difference is in the appointing of the ordained priest as an official representative of the church before God the Father.

Michalski states that this second point made by Jaegar envisaged coordination between the role of the Spirit and ecclesiastical delegation; the two go together to appoint the ordained priest to this particular role of representation. So the relationship between the actions of God, on the one hand, the Spirit consecrating the ordained to represent the church to God the Father in the likeness of Christ, and, on the other, the action of the church, together constitute the reality of the two priesthods and their relationship with each other.²⁶

This language used by Jaegar in his contribution, and that of Bishop Jaramillo, who, according to Michalski, more explicitly used the term 'sacramental' to describe the relationship between the two priesthods, shows us that the idea of sacrament was already being expressed in relational and symbolic terms on the

²⁵ See VATICAN II, *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II, Volumen II, Pars III*, Vatican City, 1972, pp. 92-95. Cf. MICHALSKI, pp. 39-41.

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 94. Cf. MICHALSKI, p. 40.

floor of the Council, denoting the dynamic action of the Triune God and the human response.²⁷

The term that was finally used to describe the difference between the two priesthoods was 'essence'. This meant that the ordained priesthood was seen as distinct from the priesthood of the faithful at the ontic level, as a different though related participation in the priesthood of Christ. Why did the council fathers finally opt for a word that was reminiscent of school metaphysics when there had been so much discussion around more 'relational' terminology? The answer lies in the Council's desire to affirm the reality of the action of God on the life of the individual, which changes them at their deepest reality.²⁸ Whatever other terms were introduced into the conciliar documents, to more fully express the new biblical and patristic insights, the language of metaphysics and of being was retained, while including some attempt to construct a relational ontology.²⁹

²⁷ For Bishop Jaramillo's contribution see VATICAN II, *Acta Synodalia, Volumen. II, Pars III*, p. 215. Cf. MICHALSKI, pp. 40-41.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 13. Michalski states that the report from the Theological Commission on the first drafts of the scheme that would become the final text made it clear that the language of metaphysics would feature in order to describe the reality of the priesthood of the ordained; to show that it was not something superficial or delegated by the community. See ROSATO, P. J., "Priesthood of the Baptised and Priesthood of the Ordained, Complimentary Approaches to Their Interrelation", *Gregorianum* 68, 1-2 (1987), pp. 215-266. Rosato writes, pp. 219-220, "The bishops at Vatican II considered themselves obliged, once cognizant of the various new insights they also wished to incorporate into their teaching on the interconnection between the two expressions of priesthood, to anchor them from the outset in the quintessential Catholic conviction that human involvement in the mystery of Christ invariably effects a change in the intrinsic constitution of human persons, and not merely a modification of their extrinsic interaction with the community of divine persons, with the communion of believers, with the temporal order, or with its consummation in the eschaton."

²⁹ See ROSATO, pp. 220-222. Here Rosato argues that the metaphysical language adopted by the Council was not that of any particular school of metaphysics but was indeed a 'sacramental' or 'pneumatological' metaphysics, the commonality between Christ and the Christian being the sharing of the one Spirit. In his article, Rosato draws attention to the existential language used in the conciliar documents of *Presbyterorum Ordinis* and *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, as well as terms that dealt with the need for justice, and those which looked toward the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God, see especially pp. 218-219.

II) Further Reflections on the Relationship of the Baptized and the Ordained in Other Conciliar Documents.

a) The Commonality of the Two Priesthoods

Presbyterorum Ordinis follows the pattern and theology set by the 'Constitution on the Church'.³⁰ The various stages that led to the final text showed that the council fathers were anxious to identify the presbyter in relation to God and to the church rather than by according status.³¹ The 'Decree on the Laity', *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, deals more specifically with the lay apostolate and indicates a different approach.³²

The opening paragraphs of *Presbyterorum Ordinis* make clear that the ordained priest shares in the unique priesthood of Christ and this is exercised in the three-fold office of prophet, priest and pastor (PO 2; 5). The ordained are called for service within the community not apart from it (PO 2; 3), and the ordained are brothers of the baptized (PO 9). The origins of the priesthood of the ordained lie in the same unfolding of the mystery of God's salvation as does the church; the fundamental relationship in Christ - and here more explicitly in the Trinity - is that which founds both the priesthood of the baptized and the priesthood of the ordained (AA 2).

³⁰ See VORGRIMLER, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican 2*, Vol. 4., pp. 183-209; PHILIBERT, "Issues for a Theology of the Priesthood: Status Report", pp. 21-26; NICOLAU, M., *Sacerdotes Y Religiosas Segun El Vaticano 2*, Madrid, 1968, pp 2-14.

³¹ MICHALSKI, pp. 50-55

³² See MICHALSKI, pp. 48-50. Here Michalski notes that Jan Grootaers contrasts *Apostolicam Actuositatem* with *Lumen Gentium*, maintaining that the latter emphasizes the baptismal mandate while the former emphasizes the hierarchical mandate. There are indeed differences in tone between the documents but it should be noted that the 'Decree on the Laity' does in fact repeat the teaching of *Lumen Gentium* on the royal priesthood of all the faithful in baptism, and includes the faithful in the whole mission of the church by stating that the term 'apostolate' can cover all the activities of the church, see AA3.

b) The Diversity in Relationship between the two Priesthoods

According to these selected documents of Vatican II, unity is served in the church not by sameness but by diversity (PO 2; AA6). It is clear that the ordained ministry exists in and for the church, while its origins lie in the intention of God toward the church and the world.

The divine will is seen as that which consecrates the ordained that they might act in the person of Christ, the Head and Shepherd of the flock (PO 2). The particular exercise of the ordained priesthood is found in the preaching and gathering of the flock particularly in and orientated towards the Eucharist (PO 2; 4 - 6). Thus the exercise of the symbolic function of shepherd is in the preaching to, the sanctifying of, and being pastor to the people of God.

The laity exercises its apostolate in union with Christ the head (AA 3) vis-à-vis the world. The laity, in union with the clergy, acts to consecrate the world, witnessing to Christ and bringing humanity into contact with Christ. It could be said that the document sees them as exercising a shepherding role in their own right.

Explaining the organic unity of the two priesthoods as set out in the conciliar documents, Philip Rosato uses the analogy of the cell, portraying the priesthood of the ordained as the nucleus of the cell that nourishes and strengthens the body of the cell so that the cell may multiply. Both priesthoods need each other for the main purpose of the church, which is to grow by bringing others to salvation.³³

³³ ROSATO, p. 260, Rosato writes, "...there is only one ecclesial priesthood, that of Jesus Christ; yet, since he is both transcendent head of and immanent presence to his priestly body in history, each of these connected truths is symbolized by a separate modality of Christian priesthood; the ordained represent his transcendent headship of the church, the baptized his immanent presence to the church, and through it, his headship of and presence to humanity." Rosato takes as his inspiration the macrobiological image of the body used in I Cor. 12, 12-30. The use of the word 'modality' is interesting here, for it brings in the question of the various modes of Christ's presence in and to the church and the world.

2.2.3 Evaluation

The notion of consecration, to God, and to love of neighbour for God's sake, is essential in understanding the Council's description of the nature and purpose of the church.³⁴ The whole idea of consecration reminds us of the essentially priestly activity of the people of God, to represent God to humanity and to bring humanity to God. The ordained priest, acting as shepherd and leader, represents the transcendent calling of God, guiding the baptized in their pilgrimage, enabling them to be the people of God, the priests of the New Covenant. The ordained are marked by the Spirit as the official witnesses to the faith of the church, and the official representatives of the church, in a way that is not characterized by being a member of the lay faithful.

Three pendant questions lead us onto the following sections of this chapter: the adequacy or otherwise of the language of the conciliar documents to describe the relationship of the two priesthoods; the character of the ministry of the ordained given the affirmation of the ministry of the church as a whole; and the exact nature of the ordained priest's official representation before God and the church.

3. The Hermeneutical Analyses of Ordained Ministry in the Church – the Search for a Founding Identity

3.1 The 1971 Synod and the Document *De Sacerdotio Ministeriali*

3.1.1 The Anxiety over the Identity of the Ordained Priest

While the Second Vatican Council had made progress in defining the dynamic relationship of the church to the world, and had explained to some extent the relationship between the two priesthoods in their respective roles, the Council did

³⁴ See POWER, "Priesthood Revisited: Mission and Ministries in the Royal Priesthood", pp. 108-115.

not claim to have settled all matters regarding this theme.³⁵ There remained, then, anxiety in the years that followed, an anxiety exacerbated by the shortage of clergy and the growing number of lay ministries in the church and the impact of this upon the ministry of the clergy. In the face of this uncertainty and pressure, there was a call for a more detailed explanation of the essential difference between the two priesthoods.³⁶

According to Michalski, two competing theologies began to emerge in the discussion during the 1971 synod called to address the issue of the specific identity of the ordained priest in the emerging post Vatican II circumstances.³⁷ On the one hand, there was an emphasis upon a more cultic vision of the ordained priesthood, stressing the theological tendencies that followed the Council of Trent. The other theological perspective was one that tried to maintain the broader emphases of the Second Vatican Council.³⁸

Edward Schillebeeckx states that the challenge before the synod fathers was two-fold: firstly, to maintain the vision of the Council regarding the mission and nature of the church, namely that the whole church had been given its mission by God in Christ and was a sign of salvation in the world; and, secondly, not to bring

³⁵ See MICHALSKI p. 65.

³⁶ *ibid.* pp. 67 ff. Michalski reports the concerns at the time expressed in the post-synodal document, p. 68, "Confusion exists because many ministries once reserved to the clergy...are today being performed by the laity. Therefore the question arises: what is the specific ministry or the distinguishing characteristics of ministerial priesthood?" See WOOD, S. K., "Priestly Identity: Sacrament of the Ecclesial Community," *Worship* 69 March (1995), 109-127. In this article, Wood takes as her starting point the different ministries exercised by various people in the church and the ensuing difficulty that this represents theologically and practically for the identity of the ordained priest who used to exercise these ministries almost exclusively (p. 109). An operational approach does not suffice since it raises the question of why one person is more suitable to exercise this or that ministry and, more profoundly, since it results in congregationalism and annuls the difference in essence between the ordained and the baptized that is at the heart of a Roman Catholic understanding of priesthood (pp. 110-11). This article written some thirty years later shows that this was to be a continuing problem in the church.

³⁷ For an outline of the synodal process in the church see chapter two of this thesis.

³⁸ MICHALSKI, pp. 69-72

into opposition the two models of the church as hierarchical, on the one hand, and as charismatic community, on the other.³⁹

3.1.2 The Document *De Sacerdotio Ministeriali*

The beginning of the synodal document does indeed recognize the problems faced by the ordained in the years following the Council.⁴⁰ In its ‘Description of the Situation’, the document states that in the church’s efforts to engage with the world, many ordained priests sought to connect personally in the social and political life of society, neglecting their traditional ‘cultic’ activity.⁴¹ This was from an attempt to work with the laity and not to address them, as it were, from the outside.⁴²

The general intention of the document seems to be to safeguard the dynamism of the insights of Vatican II regarding the journey of faith and the relationship between the priesthoods of the baptized and the ordained. However, more immediate reference is made to the conciliar teaching on the common priesthood of the baptized as a source of confusion for the ordained.⁴³

The doctrinal section, which constitutes the first main part of the document, emphasizes two things: the unique priesthood of Christ, and the founding of the church on the apostles.⁴⁴ According to the document, the priesthood of Christ is the constant reference for the church and remains the source of her life. Christ is offered ever anew in the Spirit. The establishment and presence of the church in the mission of the apostles is emphasized as is their link with the community and

³⁹ SCHILLEBEECKX, E., *The Church with a Human Face, a New and Expanded Theology of Ministry*, London, 1985, p.213.

⁴⁰ The official text of the document can be found in AAS 63 (1971), 897-922. An English text can be downloaded from www.liserv.american.edu/catholic/church.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, pp. 899-903

⁴² *ibid.*, p. 899

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 900

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 903-908

the passing on of the ministry of leadership to appointed successors. The essential structure of the church is seen as the flock of Christ under the guidance and leadership of pastors.⁴⁵

The ministry of the ordained is the one which, above all others, represents the mediatorship of Christ and “alone perpetuates the essential work of the apostles.”⁴⁶ In the Eucharist, the summit of Christian life, only the ordained priest acts “in the person of Christ”; the faithful are associated with Christ’s offering in the Eucharist. Though the language is careful not to suggest that it is the ordained priest alone who is the subject of the liturgy, his central role is emphasized.⁴⁷

The important section which follows the outlining of the ordained priest’s role in the Eucharist proposes a far-reaching vision for the ministry of the ordained:

The priest is a sign of the divine anticipatory plan proclaimed and effective today in the Church. He makes Christ, the Saviour of all men, sacramentally present among his brothers and sisters, in both their personal and social lives. He is a guarantor both of the first proclamation of the Gospel for the gathering together of the church and of the ceaseless renewal of the church which has already been gathered together. If the Church lacks the presence and activity of the ministry which is received by the laying on of hands with prayer, she cannot have full certainty of her fidelity and of her visible continuity.⁴⁸

We read this to mean that the document understands the ordained priesthood to be both a sign and sacrament which gathers the faithful together in their movement toward union with God in all aspects of their lives. It represents the assurance of the presence of Christ, signifying the christological moment of decision for God in particular, in the proclamation of the Gospel and the celebration of the Eucharist.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 904-905

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 905

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

At the time of the synod, the permanence of the ordained priesthood was under question.⁴⁹ The gift of the Holy Spirit is seen as that which guarantees the permanent character of the ordained priesthood and the sign of Christ's abiding association of himself with the church.⁵⁰ In other words, the ordained priesthood is a sign of Christ's covenant with his church, again underlining the assurance of Christ's presence.⁵¹

The ministry of the ordained is seen as a service to the fellowship of the church and is valid even if not exercised for a stable community. This fellowship is signified particularly by the communion of the ordained presbyter with the bishop.⁵² Again we see the emphasis upon the ordained priesthood as a necessary structure of the church itself. The doctrinal section concludes by reminding the ordained of the true spiritual nature of their service to the fellowship of the church, as opposed to an involvement in 'secular' matters.

Looking at the remainder of the document, the second section offers guidelines for the spirituality of the ordained and the importance of celibacy in the life of the ordained, while outlining some exceptions to the rule of celibacy. It also sketches the relationships that are appropriate for presbyters among themselves and their attitude to the faithful.⁵³

⁴⁹ See MICHALSKI, p. 70; SCHILLEBEECKX, *The Church with a Human Face, a New and Expanded Theology of Ministry*, pp. 209-236.

⁵⁰ The word 'character' implies a relational ontology in Catholic theology; in other words the indelible imprint on the soul given by baptism, confirmation and ordination cannot be removed once given, and puts the recipient of the particular grace into a fundamental and irrevocable relationship with God and with the community.

⁵¹ p. 7 of the downloaded document *De Sacerdotio Ministeriali*.

⁵² *ibid.*

⁵³ Part Two of the document, pp. 9-22.

3.1.3 Evaluation

Edward Schillebeeckx has criticized the synodal document as a lost opportunity in which to address the concerns felt by the people.⁵⁴ He states that the approach taken by the document was one of promulgating deduced and abstract principles rather than addressing pastoral concerns, particularly over the need for the Eucharist. He further argues that the synod was too caught up in the issue of priestly character, the permanence of the ordained priesthood, which, he says, misunderstood from the time of Trent, was portrayed as something which separates from rather than unites the ordained to the rest of the church.⁵⁵

We believe that there is little doubt that the document stresses the hierarchical notion of the church in response to the controversy of the time, and presents the ministry of the ordained as permanent and indispensable to the basic structure of the church. The ministry of the laity and the church as a whole is underplayed. It could be argued that we see in the document the continuing of a trend to which Jan Grootaers refers (and noted by Michalski). In his analysis of the ‘Decree on the Laity’, he saw a drift away from the ideas of *Lumen Gentium* and the restatement of a strong hierarchical vision of the church, where the mandate to mission comes from the hierarchy and not the sacraments of baptism and confirmation.⁵⁶

However, the aim of the document was to answer some specific concerns of the time and to underline church teaching on the ministry of the ordained. The document does follow the outline of *Presbyterorum Ordinis* and underlines the nature of the assurance that is the gift of the ordained ministry.

⁵⁴ SCHILLEBEECKX, *The Church with a Human Face*, pp. 215-217.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 219-221. Schillebeeckx also states in these pages that the Synod was preoccupied with the issue of celibacy.

⁵⁶ See MICHALSKI, p. 50

3.2 Historical Research into the Nature of Ministry

The document *De Sacerdotio Ministeriali* was promulgated against the background of anxiety surrounding the identity of the ordained priest, given the new perspectives of the Second Vatican Council. Mention was made in the document of the historical research into ministry that was already taking place as theologians attempted to rediscover lost insights into the nature of ministry and the priesthood of the whole church. In this section we look briefly at the conclusions of some of the theologians who have been engaged in that argument.

3.2.1. Edward Schillebeeckx

The shortage of clergy and the subsequent threat to the availability of the Eucharist in the West prompted Edward Schillebeeckx to write his book, “Ministry: a Case for Change”.⁵⁷ Faced with the contemporary situation, Schillebeeckx examines the development of ministry with an eye to its more fundamental aspects.⁵⁸ He argues that there has always been change and development in the church’s understanding of ministry at the ‘grass roots’ level, and that these changes have been recognized later by the church’s magisterium.⁵⁹

We offer a brief summary of his ideas as found especially in the first three chapters of “Ministry”.⁶⁰ Schillebeeckx states that during the first millennium it

⁵⁷ SCHILLEBEECKX, E., *Ministry: A Case for Change*, London, 1981. Schillebeeckx updated this work in answer to criticism in the already quoted work, *The Church with a Human Face*. Our aim is not to trace the development of Schillebeeckx’ thought on this matter but to present the main points at issue in his hermeneutical reading of ministry. His arguments are substantially contained in his earlier work. See also O’MEARA, *Theology of Ministry*, pp. 80-138.

⁵⁸ SCHILLEBEECKX, *Ministry*, p.2, “Only in a mutually critical, pastoral, practical and theological confrontation between the present and the past is a truly Christian answer possible....The critical point...is whether the practice of ministry...is shaped primarily by theological criteria, or on the basis of non-theological factors, or more precisely whether it is formed by theological reflection on new human and cultural situations.” See also p. 100. This lies at the heart of Schillebeeckx’ project: a hermeneutical reading in order to establish the basic building blocks of ministry.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 3

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 1- 73

was the community that held primacy over the individual; the ordained were very much at the service of the community, albeit that the ordained priesthood was seen as a gift from God. The term 'apostolic' was applicable primarily to the community and the ordained minister was at the service of *this* apostolicity.⁶¹ The ministry of the ordained found its roots in the gift of the Holy Spirit given in and through the community. A person could not be ordained without the purpose of serving a local or particular church. It was from this conjunction, the gift of the Spirit with the ecclesial context and the needs of the church, that ministry was recognized and the relationship between Christ and the ordained was established.⁶²

Schillebeeckx goes on to say that from about the beginning of the second millennium a stricter connection was made between the Eucharist and the ordained in such a way as to emphasize the power of the ordained to consecrate the bread and wine. This had the effect of separating the ordained from the rest of the community. The authority of the ordained was seen as derived from Christ in a direct way seen, for example, in the ordained priest's role in speaking the words of Christ at the consecration in the Eucharist.⁶³

The Second Vatican Council attempted to steer a course between, on the one hand, the ecclesiological and pneumatological foundation for ministry and, on the

⁶¹ Cf. SULLIVAN, F. A., *From Apostles to Bishops: The Development of Episcopacy in the Early Church*, New York, 2001, pp. 144-170, especially pp. 169-170. Sullivan draws a comparison between the views of two contemporary Church Fathers, Irenaeus and Tertullian. Irenaeus stressed the ministry of the bishop as safeguarding the apostolicity of the church whereas Tertullian understood apostolicity as primarily a mark of the church as a whole. This data, yielded from a study of two Church Fathers from different geographical areas, suggests to Sullivan that there were indeed different understandings of wherein lay the guarantee of the apostolicity of the church and suggests perhaps a more complicated situation than Schillebeeckx would admit.

⁶² See also Canons 15 and 16 of the Council of Nicaea and Canons 6 and 10 of the Council of Chalcedon, Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Volume I, pp. 13-14; 90; 92.

⁶³ See also POWER, "Representing Christ in the Community and Sacrament", pp. 99-102. Cf. Friederich Wulf in Vorgrimler's *Commentary on Vatican 2*, Volume 4, pp. 225-226.

other, a purely christological basis. It is only within an ecclesiological perspective, Schillebeeckx believes, taking into account the changes that have taken place in ministry according to the needs of the church, that a solution can be found.⁶⁴

3.2.2 Reactions to Schillebeeckx

Reactions to Schillebeeckx came from, among others, Gisbert Greshake and Jean Galot.⁶⁵ In his work on the ordained priesthood, Greshake maintains that it is God, not the community, who is the direct origin of ministry, and he questions Schillebeeckx' reading of the New Testament in this regard. The early church, Greshake states, did accept the authority and ministry of the apostles and their successors as coming from God himself.⁶⁶ The symbolic relationship between Christ and the minister reproduces, Greshake believes, the dialogical relationship between the Father and the Son, who is generated and sent by the Father, returning to him in the work of salvation.⁶⁷

Jean Galot's starting point comes not only from a dispute with Schillebeeckx but also with a certain dissatisfaction with the teaching of Vatican II. This Council did not, Galot believes, provide a synthesis of all three functions attributed to the ordained priesthood, namely sacrifice, preaching and pastoral care.⁶⁸ His basic

⁶⁴ SCHILLEBEECKX, *Ministry*, p. 70, Schillebeeckx writes, "The tension between and ontological-sacerdotalist view of the ministry on one hand and a purely functionalist view on the other must therefore be resolved by a theological view of the church's ministry as a charismatic office, the service of leading the community, and therefore as an ecclesial function within the community and accepted by the community precisely in this way as a gift from God." Also note that Schillebeeckx writes, p. 139, "I am opposed to a view which appears here and there that any believer at all can preside at the Eucharist."

⁶⁵ GALOT, *Theology of the Priesthood*; GRESHAKE, *Ser Sacerdote*.

⁶⁶ GRESHAKE, pp. 27-34

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 41

⁶⁸ GALOT, pp 135-142. Cf. WULF in Vorgrimler's *Commentary* Volume 4, pp. 228-236. Wulf states that the Decree did not attempt to offer an exhaustive theology of the ordained priesthood. He argues that there was a deliberate intention to describe the three offices as 'leading into each other' in dynamic relationship. This admits of a certain fluidity between them.

premise is that the ministry of the ordained, as laid out in Vatican II and in most of the church's teaching, is traceable to and finds its unity in Christ himself. Historical development in the ministry is ultimately contingent and changeable and thus not normative.⁶⁹

For Galot, the characteristic that provides the unity and harmony between the various functions is that of the shepherd. The foundation of ministry is thus the person of Christ as Shepherd, and this is expressed in the three offices or functions. According to Galot, it is *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, better than *Lumen Gentium* that expresses the unity of the three functions in the office of shepherd, as represented by the priesthood of the ordained.⁷⁰ The image of the shepherd, he believes, expresses the dynamic relationship between the ordained and the people of God, and emphasizes pastoral care and leadership in sacramental rite and the preaching of the word.

3.2.3 Kenan Osborne and Francis Sullivan – Further Reflection on the Historical Development of Ministry

In the brief second chapter of Kenan Osborne's 1980 work on the ordained priesthood, he outlines two approaches that have dominated Catholic thinking on

⁶⁹ GALOT, pp. 136-137. Galot argues that overemphasizing the historical circumstances that led to a concentration of many ministries into one ministry, that of the ordained priest, pp. 136-137, "...would amount to calling on contingent circumstances to explain the difficulty we have in harmonizing the priestly functions. In fact the new situation, that marks the Christian priesthood, and which brings about the complexity of its functions is traceable to the very priesthood of Christ. And in Christ the diversity of the priestly functions achieves the unity of a higher harmony that ought to prevail also in the ministry of priests." Galot had earlier ruled out the determining factor in the debate being purely sociological, see pp. 17-18. Therefore, according to Galot, it is in Christ that the unity of the various functions of the ordained priesthood is to be found.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 137, "Christ the shepherd leads the flock by the word that he speaks and guarantees the truth of his teaching by the supreme testimony which is the gift of his own self. He offers himself in sacrifice in order to impart to his sheep a bountiful life, especially through the Eucharist. By leading the flock, he makes it one. The three functions – preaching, worship, and leadership – become the expression of the shepherd's love, and from that they draw their inspiration." Cf. WULF, p. 236, who sees this image of the shepherd, as reflected in *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, as paternalistic and predicts difficulty with the image as others in the community are called to leadership roles. For a fuller exposé of the positions of Schillebeeckx, Greshake, and Galot see MICHALSKI, pp. 89-135.

the historical development of ministry in recent years.⁷¹ Both have their roots in a particular ecclesiological understanding. The first is to see the basic structures of the church as having been put in place by Jesus during his earthly ministry, or in some way willed by him in a demonstrable manner. By calling together the twelve apostles, and by bestowing on them the threefold task of preaching, of ruling, and of sanctifying, he provided the basic building blocks that would establish the church. In the years that followed the apostles would establish a fairly coherent system of bishops, presbyters and deacons to govern the church and to form a hierarchy. The presumption here is that it was the intention of Jesus to establish prevailing structures and that the ministry of the apostles would inevitably be passed on to subsequent generations. Osborne cites Galot as a theologian who would be representative of this view-point.⁷²

The counter to this presupposition, and the view held by Osborne, is that Jesus believed that the end times would come sooner rather than later, and that the intention of Christ was to preach and establish the Kingdom, not a cohesive structured community. The ministry of the ordained evolved into its present form as a response to the pastoral, political, and social necessities with which the church was faced in the centuries following the apostolic age.⁷³

Addressing the particular issue of the development of the episcopate in the post-apostolic period, Francis Sullivan proposes three 'steps' in the canonization of the belief in the authority and ministry of the bishop. The first is that the post-New Testament development of ministry is seen to be in line with New Testament understanding. The second is that in the face of heresy and disunity the episcopate

⁷¹ OSBORNE, *Priesthood, a History of Ordained Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church*, pp. 30-39.

⁷² *ibid.*, p. 36

⁷³ *ibid.*, pp. 33-38

provided a means of combating schism. The third is that the post-New Testament church recognized the authority of bishops as coming from the apostles in a similar way to its recognition of the Scriptures.⁷⁴

3.2.4 Evaluation – Coordinates for the Definition of the Ordained Priesthood

We have not considered the in-depth research offered by the theologians quoted above but have simply presented their conclusions in order to emphasize three points:

1. The anxiety over the specific identity of the ordained priesthood in the modern world led theologians to reexamine scripture and tradition in order to search for continuity and discontinuity in the development of ministry in the church.
2. These studies showed that, while there were changes in the form and modality of ministry, two things remained constant: firstly, the presence of a ministry of authority and guidance in the church from earliest times, and the appreciation of this by the church as a gift from God; and, secondly, the necessary ecclesial reference for the ministry of the ordained. A reflection on the nature of the ordained implies a reflection on the nature of the church and vice-versa.
3. The search for an adequate language to express the identity of the ordained and its relation to God and the church, spurred on by the lack of precision in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, was focused on the ministry of Christ himself and on his priesthood.⁷⁵ Again, whether indirectly (from an ecclesiological perspective) or directly (from a christological

⁷⁴ SULLIVAN, *From Apostles to Bishops: The Development of Episcopacy in the Early Church*, p. 225. Cf. BROWN, R. E., *Priest and Bishop: Biblical Reflections*, New York, 1970, pp. 47-86.

⁷⁵ Cf. OSBORNE, K. B., *Orders and Ministry: Leadership in the World Church*, Theology in Global Perspective, New York, 2006, pp. 40- 101.

perspective), it is the person of Christ and his relationship to the church that is decisive: thus, for example, the use of the word ‘shepherd’ to explain the fundamental identity of the ordained.

4. The Ordained Priest as Symbolic of the Union between God and the Church

4.1 In Persona Christi and In Persona Ecclesiae

The debate over whether the ordained act principally in the person or role of Christ or directly in the name of the church, and therefore indirectly in the name or role of Christ, has dominated theological discussion of the ordained priesthood in the last twenty or so years.⁷⁶ The discussion has surfaced from theological reflection on the perspectives of the Second Vatican Council and the historical research into the development of ministry. It has been partly characterized by the opposition between, on the one hand, the concept of the ontological identity of the ordained, which holds that at the level of being the ordained priest is changed and configured to Christ (and so acts in the person of Christ), and, on the other, a functional conception of the ordained priesthood, which sees the ordained as exercising a function or an expression of the gifts of Christ in the Spirit already given to the church (and so the ordained act firstly in the name of the church). We look at two theologians in particular who have sought to integrate the two perspectives, namely, David Power and David Coffey.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ See WOOD, S. K., "Presbyteral Identity within Parish Identity", *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood*, ed. WOOD, S. K., Collegeville Minnesota, 2003, pp. 175-194. See also PHILIBERT, "Status Report", pp. 29-36; ASHLEY, B. M., "The Priesthood of Christ, the Baptised and the Ordained", *The Theology of the Priesthood*, ed. GOERGEN, D., G. A., Collegeville, Minnesota, 2000, pp. 139-164.

⁷⁷ POWER, "Representing Christ in the Community and Sacrament" (Community and Sacrament); POWER, "Priesthood Revisited: Mission and Ministries in the Royal Priesthood"; COFFEY, D., "Priestly Representation and Women's Ordination", *Priesthood, the Hard Questions*, ed. GLESSON, G. P., Newton, Australia, 1993, pp. 79-99; COFFEY, D., "The Common and Ordained Priesthood", *Theological Studies* 58 June (1997), pp. 209-236. It has to

4.1.1 David Power – the Ordained as Symbolic of Christ the Head of the Church in Liturgy and Life

1) The Integration of the Phrases *in Persona Christi* and *in Persona Ecclesiae*

The key question for Power is the role of the ordained priest in symbolizing the salvific presence of Christ in the church and its worship; how Christ's presence is assured in the liturgy and the life of the church.⁷⁸ These questions turn on the use of the phrase *in persona Christi* in Catholic theology.

Power states that this phrase was first bound up with the spiritual exegesis of early Christian writers in ascribing particular words of Scripture to a given person.⁷⁹ He refers to the use of the phrase in 2 Corinthians 2, 10, where Paul interprets his ministry of forgiveness as acting in the person of Christ.⁸⁰ This use was adopted by medieval theologians and applied more specifically to a variety of sacramental rites with the intention of guaranteeing the action of Christ in the liturgy.⁸¹

The use of the term *in persona Christi* by Aquinas has been much discussed, Power believes, and he seeks to clarify the meaning that Aquinas gave to it.⁸² He maintains that Aquinas intended the phrase to mean “to have power from Christ and to act in such a way that one's acts were the acts of Christ.”⁸³ Aquinas had inherited from Augustine the idea that the sacrifice of Christ brings the person into communion with God and that the actions of Christ, symbolized in the liturgy, bring the church into communion with God, uniting the church with

be noted that the presentations of Power and Coffey have been made against the background of the question over the ordination of women. We prescind from dealing with this question directly.

⁷⁸ POWER, *Community and Sacrament*, pp. 97-99.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 98

⁸⁰ Power also notes that there is some controversy over the interpretation of this phrase in Paul's writings.

⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 99

⁸² *ibid.*, p. 99 ff. Power examines in particular the references made in Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*, qus. 3, 64 – 82.

⁸³ *ibid.*, p. 99

Christ in his offering to the Father. The context for the words of consecration, in which the ordained acts in the person of Christ, is the life of grace and communion as realized in the church.⁸⁴ It seems clear to Power that Aquinas also understood the ordained to act *in persona Ecclesiae* when leading the church in worship and expressing the devotion of the church in union with Christ. This analysis, Power believes, integrates the understanding of the phrase *in persona Christi* with the phrase *in persona Ecclesiae* in Aquinas' thought.⁸⁵

The problem was, according to Power, that "Aquinas' view of the ministerial priesthood allowed for two distinctions not prevalent in an earlier age"⁸⁶, namely a distinction between the instrumental acts of the ordained from other acts of ecclesial worship, and a distinction between the actions and prayer of the ordained from those of the church as a body of believers. Earlier writers had situated the actions of the ordained in the context of the leadership of the community, while in the East the role of the Spirit was emphasized as constituting the assembly and uniting it with Christ in worship.⁸⁷ Because of the distinctions made by Aquinas, theology during the period that followed him tended to isolate the acts of the ordained from the rest of the church. Theology in the West pursued a policy of 'nailing down' the specific actions and words of the ordained, connecting them with the words and actions of Christ in an almost exclusive way. Medieval theology thus separated the "descending act of God in Christ from the ascending act of Christ in the church". Eventually, Power states, "even the phrase *in persona*

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 100-101

⁸⁵ *ibid.*

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p 101

⁸⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 102-103. Power draws attention in particular to the writings of Cyprian, Augustine, and John Chrysostom.

Ecclesiae seemed to have the same effect.”⁸⁸ For the last eight hundred years there has been a need, Power maintains, to regain the connection between the representative role of the ordained acting both in the name of Christ and in the name of the church.⁸⁹

Power believes that the solution may lie in a rediscovery of the intentions of Aquinas, the theology of Vatican II, and the writings of Pope John Paul II. An examination of these perspectives points to the headship role of the ordained as bringing the church together but acting as part of the body of Christ, with which Christ unites himself in his offering to the Father in worship. This role is encapsulated by reference to the ordained acting *in persona Christi capitis ecclesiae*.⁹⁰

II) Further Reflection on the Phrase *in Persona Christi* - Self Effacement

The precise nature of the role of the ordained in acting in the person of Christ has been the focus for Dennis Ferrara.⁹¹ He contends that, historically, the term *in persona Christi*, rather than indicating a representative role for the ordained in the Eucharist, was used to show that the ordained acts as a mere instrument; his personal action being replaced by the personal action of Christ. This response by

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 115. Cf. KILMARTIN, E. J. and DALY, R. J., *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, Collegeville, Minn., 1998, p. 79. In the face of uncertainty and the movement of peoples, Kilmartin maintains that western theology came under the influence of a world-view that promoted a sense of “thingly realism” as opposed to a symbolic understanding of reality.

⁸⁹ POWER, p. 114

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 114-116

⁹¹ FERRARA, D. M., "Representation or Self-Effacement: The Axiom in Persona Christi in St. Thomas and the Magisterium", *Theological Studies* 55 June (1994), pp. 195-224; FERRARA, D. M., "In Persona Christi: Towards a Second Naivete", *Theological Studies* 57 March (1996), pp. 65-88. Again the question of women's ordination forms the background to these articles by Ferrara.

the ordained before God is referred to by Ferrara as self-effacing or apophatic.⁹² Rather than being a stamp of hierarchical authority, Ferrara maintains that the idea of sacerdotal character and of priestly power in Aquinas is strictly instrumental and ministerial (i.e. of service).⁹³ In his analysis, Ferrara focuses on the idea of the 'I' of the ordained being replaced by the 'I' of Christ, particularly in the speaking of the words of consecration by the ordained priest at the Eucharist, the phenomenon of the sacramental rite revealing the action of Christ himself.⁹⁴ According to Ferrara then, the ordained priest does not act as Christ vis-à-vis the community, he submits to his being used by Christ. In proclaiming the words of the institution narrative, the ordained acts as a representative or steward of Christ rather than a representation, or image, of Christ.

There has been criticism of Ferrara's approach by those who question his understanding of causality in Aquinas and in Eucharistic theology which might be deemed impersonal.⁹⁵ We believe further that the 'placing' of the ordained within the ecclesial context is also unclear in Ferrara's theory. However, he does seek to answer the question of exactly how the ordained represents Christ and underlines the notion of service and kenosis into the ministry of the ordained as opposed to power and authority over the church. His approach also guards against a certain semi-pelagian attitude toward the gift of God in the ministry.

⁹² FERRARA, "Self-Effacement", p. 196, Ferrara intends by the use of 'apophatic' "...that self-effacement of the creature before God (in this case of the priest before Christ) which constitutes the "greater unlikeness" in every creaturely likeness to God."

⁹³ *ibid.*, p. 199

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 204-205; 214-215

⁹⁵ See COFFEY, "Common and Ordained Priesthood", p. 233. See also Ferrara's reply to Sara Butler in FERRARA, "In Persona Christi: Towards a Second Naivete." Coffey states that while Ferrara's analysis of Aquinas' theology might be correct, in that the language of scholasticism could not adequately embrace the notion of representation, Coffey believes that representation is an older patristic notion and is found in the medieval theology of Bonaventure if not in Aquinas. The idea of representation is more personal while the notion of instrumental causality is infra-personal. Coffey further adds that Ferrara has a negative view of sacramentality, which, he believes, has to be couched in positive and personal terms.

Despite this, we must agree with Coffey when he says that Ferrara's approach to the ordained priesthood is somewhat negative and impersonal. We would add that Ferrara's basic mistake is trying to over-burden the actions of the ordained and the phrase *in persona Christi*, ascribing to the ordained priesthood attributes of the sacramentality of the whole church. We seek a solution by examining more in-depth the perspectives offered by Power and Coffey.

4.2 The Royal Priesthood of Christ and the Church – Life and Worship

As we have seen, there have been some attempts to unify the three *munera* or offices of the priesthood of Christ, expressed at the Second Vatican Council. David Power has maintained that the documents unnecessarily separate the priestly office of Christ from his prophetic and kingly office, and that the use of the term priesthood in the documents of the Council is imprecise.⁹⁶ The term priesthood is used in the Council's documents according to various designations: the priesthood of the faithful, the priesthood of the baptized, and the relationship of the common priesthood to the priesthood of the ordained. Power believes that the varying uses undermine attempts to explain fully the meaning of the priesthood of the church.⁹⁷

Power considers the priesthood of Christ and the church as used in Scripture, tradition and the reformers.⁹⁸ The message of the Letter to the Hebrews is that through Christ's obedience and suffering he fulfilled his mission to establish the New Covenant.⁹⁹ His once-and-for-all sacrifice is contrasted with the continual sacrifices of the temple. The terms sacrifice and priesthood are metaphors which

⁹⁶ POWER, "Priesthood Revisited", pp. 91-92.

⁹⁷ *ibid.*

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, pp 92- 107

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 92

are used to express the relationship of Christ's suffering and death to the work of redemption. Christ has overcome evil and now has dominance over all creatures. He now intercedes for us with the Father. It is in this context, Power believes, that the suffering of Christians makes sense; in relationship with Christ, Christians are brought from the realms of sin and evil into the realm of his Father.¹⁰⁰

According to Power, the text of I Peter 2, 4-10 refers to the whole people of God; the whole church is anointed by the Spirit to form the household of God.¹⁰¹ The theme of suffering and alienation are treated: Christians may feel isolated but they are in fact a chosen people who share in Christ's victory over sin and death. Power maintains that the text is not about cult and worship but alliance and covenant.¹⁰² In both the Letter to the Hebrews and the First Letter of Peter, the focus is not the cultic action of the community but the whole being and activity of Christ and the people of God expressed in the language of offering.¹⁰³

In the patristic era, Power argues, the activity of Christ the redeemer, who offers himself for our redemption, and the life of the church in imitation of Christ were symbolized in the Eucharist.¹⁰⁴ According to this perspective, in the Eucharist the whole mystery of Christ, his incarnation, death and resurrection, and the final judgement for all those who witness to Christ, is present. The royal priesthood of

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p. 94, "It is in demonstrating the dominance of the Son and his superiority over all creatures, his solidarity in the flesh with suffering humanity and the perfect obedience which he learned through suffering, that the author (of Hebrews) introduces the themes of covenant, mediation, priesthood, kingship and sacrifice."

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*, p. 95

¹⁰² *ibid.*

¹⁰³ *ibid.*, p. 96. Cf. Galot, *Theology of the Priesthood*, pp. 55-66, especially pp. 65-66. Galot argues that the application of this language applies to the ministry of the ordained as well as the whole church.

¹⁰⁴ POWER, p. 99, speaking of the writing of John Chrysostom, "This symbolic and ritual action in which he (Christ) is united with his Body is the representation of his mysteries and so of his once and for all sacrifice. This includes both the act of offering through suffering and death and the priestly intercession that he took on through his access to the Father's right hand. In the bread and wine, over which the bishop prays, and through these signs, Christ's sacrifice and priesthood are represented and made present, so that all may share in them and have access to the Father which Christ gained through his death. It is this last point that provides the foundation for speaking of the royal priesthood of the church."

the church is realized through communion with Christ's body and blood. Thus the connection between Christian life and the sacrament of the Eucharist is not in the sense of 'both...and', as if the life of the self-offering of the Christian and the Eucharistic celebration were two separate aspects of Christian existence, but they imply one another necessarily. In short, Power argues for a re-integration of the priestly and kingly offices of Christ and the church; they are not separate but two aspects of the same dynamic in the life and worship of the Christian.¹⁰⁵

It is against this background that the relationship between the priesthood of the ordained and the priesthood of the baptized should be understood. Orders and ordination are affirmed in the structure of the church but it is the emphasis upon the one priesthood of the church that should dominate.¹⁰⁶ The role of the bishop, and consequently of the presbyter, is representative and symbolic of the dynamic of the participation of the faithful in the pasch of Christ. The bishop manifests and symbolizes Christ and the church at certain moments but this is relative to the overall identity of the church.¹⁰⁷ Power argues for a broadening of the application of the term 'order' to other ministries that aid the church in its nature and mission; in short, every service that emphasizes the kenotic and pilgrim nature of the church's life.¹⁰⁸ We could say, following on from Power, that the quality of service, possessed by the church itself in its basic orientation, is manifest in the various ministries that exist in the church, expressing the church's nature and mission in a public way.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 109-11

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 112-115

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p112, "Every service, ministry, and office must find its place within this eucharistic and eschatological communion." See pages referred to above.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 113-115

4.3 A Pneumatological Perspective – David Coffey

The roots of the debate concerning the phrases *in persona Christi* and *in persona ecclesiae* lie in the sacramental distinction between the two priesthods in the church, and the further distinctions made by the Council in the three offices of Christ's priesthood and subsequently the priesthood of the church. We have seen something of an attempt to synthesize the three *munera* in the theology of Power and his ideas on rooting all ministries in the priesthood in the church. This perspective provides a starting point for David Coffey.¹⁰⁹

Three essential coordinates provide the framework for Coffey in reference to his theology of the ordained priesthood: the ecclesiological reference for the priesthood of the baptized in the term the 'priesthood of the church' or the 'common priesthood'; the integration of a pneumatological ascendant theology with the christological descendant theology in Catholic thought; and the specific identity of the ordained as gathering and bringing to fruition the action of the whole church, especially in the Eucharist.

Coffey believes that there is an assumption in the conciliar documents of *Lumen Gentium* and *Presbyterorum Ordinis* that, while the priesthood of the ordained has a direct christological reference and can be understood from the christological perspective, the priesthood of the baptized has only a specifically ecclesiological reference. This assumes that the priesthood of the ordained represent Christ the Head in a direct way to the community. However, Coffey points out that the representation of Christ as Head is in fact an ecclesial function, for the headship of Christ can only be exercised in the church. Therefore, both priesthods are

¹⁰⁹ COFFEY, "Common and Ordained Priesthood", pp. 209- 213.

essentially related to the priesthood of the church. The priesthood of the ordained can only be understood as christological, therefore, in an indirect way.¹¹⁰

This is not to say that there is no difference between the two, for each is a gift from God, and Coffey accepts the basic teaching of the church that holy orders constitutes a different sacrament.¹¹¹ In other words, both the priesthood of the baptized, or common priesthood, and the priesthood of the ordained emerge in an immediate way from the priesthood of the church; each represents a sacramental reality of the church: the dynamic of faith (the common priesthood) and the headship of Christ (the ordained priesthood).

Looking at *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, paragraph 2, Coffey argues that the priesthood that has been communicated to the church is essentially pneumatological, both in the means of communication of this priesthood and also in terms of the priesthood to which they relate in the church, the priesthood of Christ. This is shown particularly in the summit of Christian activity, the Eucharist. The role of gathering and leading, attributed to the priesthood of the ordained, is a function of the Spirit, while the common priesthood, bound by faith in baptism and confirmation bears the seal of the Spirit.¹¹²

In describing the priesthood of Christ, Coffey attempts to integrate two approaches to christology, the descendant logos christology and the ascendant

¹¹⁰ *ibid.* pp. 211-212, Coffey writes, "This becomes obvious when one inquires about the christological nature of the common priesthood, a subject on which, significantly, the council was silent. But if one draws the conclusion not drawn by the council that the common priesthood is that of the members of the Mystical Body, it is clear, since the Mystical Body is the Church, that this is directly an ecclesiological, not a christological, statement. Its indirect christological counterpart would be that the common priesthood is that of those who are united with Christ the priest in the mystical union of faith and baptism, without however sharing in his headship. While both forms of the priesthood have Christ's priesthood as their ontological ground, they exist and operate as gifts of God to the Church, and indeed as different gifts." Coffey states that the Second Vatican Council did not dwell on the language of the Mystical Body so as not to detract from its main theme of the church as the people of God.

¹¹¹ *ibid.*, pp. 210-211

¹¹² *ibid.*, pp. 213

spirit christology.¹¹³ Coffey states that, traditionally, Catholic theology has tended to view Christ's priesthood in terms of his incarnation; the earthly ministry of Christ as being revelatory of his status as Son of God.¹¹⁴ However, Coffey states that it was predominantly his role as prophet which was shown forth in his earthly ministry. His role as priest and king are *institutionalized* by his death and resurrection, and his role as prophet, after the resurrection, becomes that of teacher.¹¹⁵ This is the priesthood, Coffey argues, that becomes normative for the church. This priesthood is communicated to the church at Pentecost by the gift of the Spirit.

This establishment of Christ in the Spirit shows more easily how the church can share in the priesthood of Christ, communicated by the same Spirit. Coffey sketches out how Christ's entire existence can be seen from the pneumatological perspective. He examines the christologies of John and Luke. The former presents the descendant model, where the pre-existent Son of God takes on humanity and where the anointing of the Spirit is seen something either revelatory or 'added on'. The latter sees Christ as being anointed by the Spirit in his humanity from the moment of his conception. Coffey argues for an integration of the two approaches.

A spirit christology, Coffey believes, can avoid the accusation of adoptionism if two things are borne in mind: firstly, that the action of creating, sanctifying and unifying the humanity of Christ with the Second Person of the Trinity is seen as one act, not three acts in some kind of temporal order; and secondly, if we understand that the missions of the Son and the Spirit are not parallel but are

¹¹³ See pp. 214-223 for what follows. This is in fact a keystone of Coffey's theology and we shall return to this in part two of our thesis. For a fuller exposition of Coffey's theology of grace, see COFFEY, D., *Grace: The Gift of the Holy Spirit*, Sydney, 1979.

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*, p.214

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 215

coordinate, revealing in fact the relationships within the immanent Trinity. The Spirit is always the Spirit of Christ, of sonship, and Christ is always the bearer of the Spirit in a unique and radical way. The Spirit is not incarnate but operates to bring the humanity of Christ into union with the Son, showing that, in the Trinity, the Spirit is bestowed on the Son by the Father as the object of the Father's love. This Coffey derives from the idea of the Spirit as the mutual love of Father and Son.¹¹⁶ This relationship is revealed when the Son returns to the Father in the Spirit, and in his being co-donor of the Spirit to the church.

If we can then look at the priesthood of the church in terms of its own participation in Christ's pasch, in its returning to the Father, both the priesthood of the baptized, united in faith to Christ, and the priesthood of the ordained, as official witnesses to faith and acting as head, coordinate as functions of the priesthood of the church, whose goal is union with God. This is particularly evident in the Eucharistic action.¹¹⁷

Coffey further argues that the ministry of the ordained, as a function of the church, can be looked at sociologically, as forming and leading community. This in turn leads us to understand the ecclesiological perspective, the ordained priesthood aiding the priesthood of the church to achieve its goal: union with God. Both of these perspectives reveal the christological reference, i.e. of Christ's headship in the ministry of the ordained as the apostolic witness, the official ministry, which is constituted also at Pentecost by the gift of the Spirit.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 218-223

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 223-229

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 229-235. Coffey writes, p. 235, "Depending on whether christological or ecclesiological terms of reference are chosen, it (the priesthood of the ordained) can be called the relation of sharing in Christ's headship over against simple union with him through faith, or the relation of official witness (apostolic leadership) in the church over against simple belonging to it through faith and baptism. While both possibilities are correct, the second is more appropriate, as it is expressive of the actual context in which the priesthood exists and operates. In the process the two forms of priesthood will have been seen as intrinsically related as pneumatalogical and

Paul Philibert summarizes Coffey's theology of the ordained priesthood:

The priesthood of the ordained act *in persona Christi* and *in persona ecclesiae* in the following way: logically (and not temporally) he acts *in persona ecclesiae* when he acts in the earthly church, *in persona Christi*, when he acts in the role of Christ as head, and either when the terms '*ecclesiae*' and '*Christi*' mean the whole Christ, head and members.¹¹⁹

In other words, the Spirit, acting in the church and for the church, enables the ordained priest to play a necessary role in gathering the church and leading it in prayer. This the ordained can do because of the configuration of the ordained priest to Christ, the Head of the Church. Further, the ordained can act both in the person of the church and of Christ at certain points in the liturgy and in ministry, where the action symbolizes the action of Christ and his church orientated toward the Father.

A synthesis of the theology of Coffey and that of Edward Kilmartin as regards the ordained priesthood is also offered by Philibert. Considering the ordained priesthood as a sacrament, he believes that we can consider the ordained as a symbolic person and apply the traditional terms of sacramental theology: *sacramentum* (sign), *res et sacramentum* (symbolic reality) and *res* (grace). As sign, the ordained acting in the name of Christ gather the faithful together; as symbolic reality, the ordained lead the community to respond to God's word and encounter God in the sacraments; as grace, the ordained act to spur on the transformation of the community into a new creation of God.¹²⁰ This, we believe, can be seen more clearly in the light of the pneumatological perspective offered

ecclesiological and thus as constitutive elements of the priesthood of the church. And in this way a satisfactory conception of the priesthood of the church will have been achieved." Cf. Coffey, "Priestly Representation", pp. 83-88.

¹¹⁹ PHILIBERT, "Status Report", p. 34. Cf. COFFEY, "Priestly Representation", p. 88.

¹²⁰ PHILIBERT, p. 31

by Coffey's own theology, where grace is the gift of the Holy Spirit, who unites and animates the priesthood of the church in its journey back to the Father.

4.4 Summarizing Power and Coffey

The work of Power and Coffey as regards the terms *in persona Christi* and *in persona Ecclesiae* enables us to say the following: the focus for the work of the ordained is the mission and goal of the church, union with God in love, and as such it serves the church as a graced reality. The integration of descendant and ascendant christology fits in well with the reality of the church and the perspective of pilgrimage as it appears in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, as well as helping to explain the distinction-in-relationship of the two priesthoods.¹²¹ From the perspectives of Coffey and Power, the idea of the ordained as leader implies that sociological phenomena are revelatory of deeper ecclesiological and christological references, and of realities at work in the church. The ordained empower and enable the people of God to be the people of God.

Coffey's pneumatological perspective deepens Power's rooting of the priesthood of the ordained in the dynamic of the priesthood of the church, and he integrates life and liturgy into the mission of the church to consecrate the world to God by relating these ideas more closely to the dynamic relationships in the Trinity (from which the church derives its existence).

Both Power and Coffey emphasize the biblical perspective of covenant and relationship, and show how the ordained priest acts as sacrament of Christ, the Head and Shepherd of the church, without the paternalistic or authoritarian implications of such a term.

¹²¹ Cf. PHILIBERT, pp. 35-36

Coffey's insistence on the ordained priesthood as a related yet distinct gift in and to the church serves as a corrective to the tendencies evident in Power's theology to see the ordained in terms of degree.

Conclusion – Preference for the Term Assurance

From the Second Vatican Council, which affirmed the validity of both the priesthood of the baptized and the ordained and their interrelatedness, through to the theological reflection which further integrated the two priesthoods in the consideration of the priesthood of the church, the gift of the ordained priesthood as that which gives assurance to the church is affirmed. The ordained priest, acting for the church and from the consecration of the Spirit in the church, gathers and constitutes the body of Christ, enabling it to fulfil its goal of union with God.

The theological term of symbolic function, whereby, because the ordained partake of the reality of God's action in the Son and Spirit, their personal actions in liturgy and ministry really do bring the faithful into union with God, is an apt one. However, to use the word 'function' is somewhat impersonal for what is ultimately a personal engagement; the ordained acts personally in cooperation with the Spirit and Christ to form the church. It also suggests that the ordained is an expression of the church and not a gift from God.

We prefer the expression 'assurance' to describe the gift of the ordained to the church for three reasons:

1. It is a more accessible term; it is understood in contemporary culture as that which leadership implies, especially in a faith situation. In times of doubt and repentance, the assurance that one is on the right path yields growth and peace.
2. It is a more personal term and implies action; our assurance comes best not from a text or an edict but from personal engagement with someone who

accompanies and restores confidence. It also moves us away from scholastic terminology to more symbolic language, which implies relationship.

3. In terms of relationship, assurance, while it has necessary connections with authenticity and authority, does not overwhelm. In the context of the church, the ordained, as those who assure and continue to assure throughout the changing fortunes of life and faith, do not dominate.

As indicated above, assurance can only be given if the person who is assuring lives a life of authenticity and has clear authority to give assurance. It is to the ideas of authenticity and authority that we now turn. An examination of both will not only further explain the role of the ordained in general but specify the role of the presbyter in particular.

Chapter Two – Authenticity

1. Introduction

1.1 Authenticity as Restatement and Renewal

In the face of controversy over the nature of the ordained priesthood, the Catholic Church has had a tendency to do two things at once. Firstly, it restates the sacramentality of the ordained priesthood and its importance for church structure. Secondly, it seeks for a renewal in the life of the ordained, and suggests strategies which support the ordained in the living out of the call of ministry.¹

Here, we identify two features of the process of restatement and renewal: on the one hand, the defence of a position in the face of debate; and, on the other, a new articulation of belief (thereby both discovering new approaches and explaining belief to the contemporary world). Both of these are held together and developed, we believe, by the concept of authenticity.

We define authenticity in two ways: firstly, in terms of constancy and authority; and, secondly, in terms of relationship. Constancy and authority, in this context, tend to highlight the continual and traditional. In terms of the ordained priesthood, for example, the constant teaching of the church focuses on the need that the church has for the ordained priesthood and its essentially sacramental nature. In other words, that it is a gift from God that involves a response, and that this divine-human dialogue creates a new situation in the life of the individual which

¹ This is evident throughout the church's history but more particularly in the period following the Council of Trent. The Council established seminaries and guidelines for the education of future clerics, see particularly Canon 18 of the 23rd Session of the Council held from 15th July 1563 (the text of this canon can be found in TANNER, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, Volume 2*, pp. 750 – 753. This teaching has to be set within the context of the demands of the time and the continual call for the renewal of the spiritual life of the clergy in the centuries that followed. See Osborne, *Priesthood*, pp. 248-279.

is necessary for the faith of the church. Authenticity is thus bound up with the 'living up to' of this ideal, this permanent ministry in the church to serve the needs of the church, and also with the belief that this service is indeed a gift of God.

This introduces the second aspect, that of relationship. In trying to live up to an ideal, which one believes is necessary for the well being and growth of the church, there requires the process of being actively engaged in the contemporary relationships that affirm authenticity, i.e. that the person engaged in ministry is being authentic.²

The relationships that constitute the ordained priesthood are with God and the church, perceived and lived out in the church.³ In other words, the offer of grace and the response by the individual and the church are visible in the church (and the world). In the case of the ordained priesthood (as is the case with all Christian existence), the gift of God and the commitment to live according to this giving is not just perceptible with the eyes of faith in the rites of ordination but is also seen in the living out of this gift in behaviour and attitude. Controversy surrounding the

² As a starting point for this reflection see TAYLOR, C., *The Ethics of Authenticity*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1991, pp. 66-67. Taylor argues throughout this work that the true search for the good involves the promoting the 'idea of ideals', i.e. that morally neutral positions or those which simply promote hedonistic notions of self-fulfilment are denying a basic structure within our make-up, which seeks a life worth living in relation to the good. It is no simple matter to apply his theories on morality and relationship to a theological and dogmatic definition of the ordained priesthood. However, since relationships define the being and ministry of the ordained, we believe that there is some mileage in exploring the idea of a life that is worth living, not in terms of self-fulfilment, but in the more basic sense of verifying the ordained priesthood in terms of the relationships that constitute its existence, as a good for the church's life and mission.

³ See ASCHENBRENNER, G. A., *Quickening the Fire in Our Midst: The Challenge of Diocesan Priestly Spirituality*, Chicago, 2002, pp. 27-40. Aschenbrenner lists eight 'charisms' that constitute the basic identity of the diocesan priesthood (we prescind for the moment from the question of the identity of regular clergy). They are applied particularly to the presbyter. These can be condensed into three basic relationships: the ordained priest lives amidst ordinary people and in the church in a manner that emphasizes availability, commitment and exclusivity in service to the people; he represents to the people Jesus Christ as head of the body of Christ, the church; and he ministers in a particular church (a diocese) having a special relationship to his diocesan bishop. We shall consider this last aspect more fully in Chapter Three, because it touches upon a particular ecclesiastical definition of the presbyter. The first two relationships, of service to the people of God and representation of Christ, form the background for our discussion in this chapter.

ordained priesthood often comes when one perceives that there is a failure not only to relate to the contemporary world, thus the call for a new model, but also when there is a perceived failure to 'live up to' the demands that are made by a particular way of life. This results in a loss of authority, a subject that we shall consider in chapter three of this thesis. Whether or not this affects the sacramentality of the ordained priesthood is a question we leave to the final part of this thesis.

1.2 Outline of the Chapter

In this chapter we focus on the teaching of the magisterium of the church, not because we believe that it is the only source of authentic teaching or authenticity in the church, but because it remains, within the structure of the Roman Catholic Church, the telling force in renewal, even if the original impetus and ideas are found with others.⁴ In concrete, we examine the teaching of the late Pope John Paul II. This we do for two reasons. Firstly, the pontificate of John Paul II, one of the longest in church history, was a period in which there was much reflection and debate over the influence of the teachings and perspectives of the Second Vatican Council, and it was also a period in which the changes in society and culture were really felt in the West. This provides, then, a privileged time in the church's history during which attempts were made by the magisterium to restate and renew its outlook on the ordained priesthood. Secondly, the particular interest that this pope had in the ordained priesthood saw the promulgation of one of the most influential documents on the ordained priesthood in the last twenty years,

⁴ Cf. SULLIVAN, F. A., *Magisterium, Teaching Authority in the Catholic Church*, New York, 1983, pp. 174-218.

Pastores Dabo Vobis, the “Apostolic Exhortation on the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day”.⁵

We trace the development in this pope’s teaching from the earlier days of his pontificate, in which he very much presented his viewpoint on the link of the ordained priest with the Eucharist, to the promulgation of *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, a document that looked at the life and ministry of the ordained priest as a whole. This document attempted to present a holistic vision of the ordained priesthood in a way that reflects the collegial nature of the church’s magisterium.

After some initial reflections on the teachings of John Paul II on the ordained priesthood, we shall examine his letter, *Dominicae Cenaе*, which encapsulated his own approach to the ordained ministry in the first half of his pontificate. We shall then proceed to a more detailed consideration of *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, highlighting how the theme of authenticity emerges particularly from this document. We shall end with an analysis of this document in terms of its significance for our theme, asking where the elements of restatement and renewal are present in it and throughout the teaching of John Paul II. Some comment is also made as to the importance of this text by reference to subsequent documents that emerged from the Congregation for the Clergy and the Bishops’ Conference of Scotland.

⁵ JOHN PAUL II, *Adhortio Apostolica Postsinodalis, Pastores Dabo Vobis, Ad Episcopos, Sacerotes, et Christifideles Totius Catholicae Ecclesiae: De Sacerdotium Formatione in Aetatis Nostrae Rerum Conditione*, 25 martii 1992, AAS 84 (1992) 657-804.

2. The teaching of John Paul II on the Ordained Ministry in the First Years of his Pontificate

2.1. General Observations on John Paul II's Approach to the Ordained Priesthood

John Paul II made frequent mention of the ordained priesthood throughout his pontificate.⁶ His keen interest in promoting the ordained priesthood, at a time when the numbers of clergy were falling in the West, showed a tendency to reaffirm his idea of the structure of the church as a hierarchical communion.⁷

Melvin Michalski analyses the restatement of both the permanence of the ordained priesthood and its being essential for the mission of the church in the thought of John Paul II.⁸ He has studied the many statements made by the late pope in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, particularly during the 1980s, and has concluded that during this period John Paul II continually reiterated the indispensable nature of the ordained priesthood for the church, stating time and time again that the ordained priesthood was a gift from God which could not be replaced by any other ministry.⁹ There is also no opposition in the mind of John Paul II between the communal priesthood and the priesthood of the ordained; both reflect the nature of the church. He highlighted the difference between the two priesthoods as being *essential*. To act in the person of Christ the Head of the Body is, according to Michalski's analysis of the thought of John Paul II, the exclusive prerogative of the ordained priesthood for the sake of the church. The ordained is not a delegate of the community; rather the ordained priest is a living instrument

⁶ See JOHN PAUL II, *Priesthood in the Third Millennium: Addresses of John Paul 2 1993*, Princeton and Chicago, 1994. John Paul II's practice of writing a letter to ordained priests on Holy Thursday continued throughout his pontificate. He also visited many seminaries and often referred to himself as, first and foremost, an ordained priest.

⁷ On the number of clergy in Europe over recent years see KERKHOFS, J., ed., *Europe without Priests?*, London, 1995.

⁸ MICHALSKI, *The Relationship between the Priesthood of the Baptized and the Ministerial Priesthood of the Ordained*, pp. 72-88.

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 73

of Christ, taking Christ's place.¹⁰ The ministry of the ordained is to lead the faithful to a conscious appreciation of their priestly calling.¹¹

The focus for much of the John Paul II's teaching during the first years of his pontificate was the link between the ordained priesthood and the Eucharist. He presented the ordained as servants of the mystery of the Eucharist, a service which transcends the power and authority of the assembly. The ordained priest is a sign of the transcendence of God particularly in the Eucharistic celebration.¹² This is linked by Michalski with the concern of this pope to promote the integrity of the liturgical rites and the proper exercise of ministry in the church. John Paul II also emphasized the training of candidates for preaching the message of the Good News particularly in the Eucharistic context.¹³

2.2 The Letter *Dominicae Cenaе* – the Sanctity and Service of the Ordained

In 1980, two years into his pontificate, John Paul II wrote his second letter to priests on Holy Thursday, "On the Mystery and Worship of the Most Holy Eucharist", *Dominicae Cenaе*.¹⁴ This letter in many ways sums up John Paul II's approach to the ordained priesthood in both style and content in the first half of his pontificate.

At the beginning of his theological commentary on the letter *Dominicae Cenaе*, Edward Kilmartin states that John Paul II had four main themes in mind when writing this document: the connection between the church and the Eucharist, the Eucharistic liturgy as the source of Christian ethical life, the relationship of the

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 74

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 76

¹² *ibid.*, p. 75

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 73

¹⁴ See KILMARTIN, E. J., *Church, Eucharist, and Priesthood: A Theological Commentary on "the Mystery and Worship of the Most Holy Eucharist"*, New York, 1981. The Official text of *Dominicae Cenaе* can be found in AAS 72 (1980), 113-148.

common and the ordained priesthood to the Eucharist, and the theology of the Word and the Liturgy of the Word in relation to the Eucharist.¹⁵ Kilmartin states that, throughout, John Paul II employs a meditative, contemplative style, suggesting that the document is the fruit of personal reflection. This means that the intention of John Paul II was not to offer a systematic treatise on the Eucharist.¹⁶ Kilmartin also notes that the letter was a response to the traditionalists in the church who had criticized the missal of Paul VI (1970).¹⁷

We can state that three other concerns loom large in the letter: its pastoral concern, the personal sanctity of the ordained priest, and the foundation of this sanctity in the belief that in the Eucharist one partakes of the life of God.¹⁸ In summarizing John Paul II's approach in this letter we can say that the ministerial priesthood largely exists for and is manifest in the Eucharist. This is not simply put in terms of the power of the ordained to speak the narrative of institution, to play a necessary role in the liturgy taking the part of Christ, but, according to this pope, the ordained priest is defined in his basic attitude and identity by the Eucharist.

Chapters 2, 7, 8, 9 and 12 are the key passages in which John Paul II speaks of the ministerial priesthood. We present the salient points. The institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper, according to John Paul II, provided the context for the institution of the ordained priesthood.¹⁹ While there may have been changes to

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 2

¹⁶ *ibid.* This analysis certainly fits in with the intentions of the document, issued on a day when the liturgy of Holy Thursday has a particularly intimate and prayerful atmosphere. However, it should be noted that this does not mean that we cannot take the document as revelatory of John Paul's theology, and his attitude to the Eucharist and the ordained priesthood.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 18

¹⁸ See the introduction of the letter and throughout, AAS 72, pp. 113-114; pp. 115-119; pp. 127-130. Cf. KILMARTIN, pp. 70; 71-73; 79.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 115-116. Translation by KILMARTIN, p. 71, "The Eucharist is the principal and central *raison d'être* of the sacrament of priesthood which effectively came into being at the moment of the institution of the Eucharist and together with it...Through our ordination – the

the liturgy of the Eucharist over the centuries, the immutable elements derive from the context of the Last Supper itself. The sacredness of the Eucharist obtains directly from the actions of Christ, then as now.²⁰

When John Paul II speaks of the sacrifice of the mass he affirms traditional Roman Catholic theology, which holds that it is Christ himself who acts in the sacraments. When the ordained act in the person of Christ they are doing more than just standing in the place of or acting in the name of Christ; they are identified in a sacramental way with the principal subject and author of the sacraments. The ordained are taken up into the sacrifice and are made part of it. In this, they spiritually unite all those in the Eucharistic assembly with them.²¹ This indicates that not only does the Eucharistic action sacramentally affirm the action and identity of the ordained but that it also has implications for their own sanctity as forming part of their identity. The laity offers the mass with the ordained priest but it is made clear that the sacrificial action largely resides with the consecratory act of the ordained.²² This is to be balanced with John Paul II's statements that the Eucharist is not the property of the ordained but that the Eucharist has been entrusted to the ordained 'for others'.²³

celebration of which is linked to the holy mass from the very first liturgical evidence – we are united in a singular and exceptional way to the Eucharist. In a certain way we derive from it and exist for it...The priest fulfils his principal mission and is manifested in all his fullness when he celebrates the Eucharist..." The use of the 'we' in the pope's statement underlines his identification with the ordained priesthood.

²⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 127-128. Translation KILMARTIN, p. 79, John Paul II writes, "In the course of this history (that of the Eucharist) the secondary elements have undergone certain changes, but there has been no change in the essence of the *mysterium* instituted by the redeemer of the world at the Last Supper...There is a close link between this element of the Eucharist and its sacredness, that is to say, its being a holy and sacred action. That action is holy and sacred because in it are the continual presence and action of Christ, 'the Holy One' of God, 'anointed by the Spirit,' 'consecrated by the Father', to lay down his life of his own accord and to take it up again, and the High Priest of the new covenant." What is unchangeable is the action of God, in Christ, in the Eucharist, which guarantees the sacredness of the act by taking it into the life of God.

²¹ KILMARTIN, p. 80

²² *ibid.*

²³ *ibid.* See chapters 2 and 12 of *Dominicae Cenaе*. Cf. MICHALSKI, pp. 77; 84.

In short, we can say that the Eucharist is the act which, in a sacramental way, perpetuates the sacrifice of the cross, the offering of Christ to the Father. If the ordained are to act in the person of Christ, and are most 'priest-like' when they do, then the overriding characteristic of the identity of the ordained must be bound up with sacrifice, the giving of self to the other. There is then an ethical element that pertains to the very definition of the sacramentality of the ordained priesthood, highlighted by the strong association with the ethical-sacramental action of God in Christ in the Eucharist. The spiritual attitude of service is not just an addendum or help but constitutes the identity of the ordained. Certainly, the Eucharist is depicted as the source and symbol of charity for all Christians, and in the Eucharist the Christian community finds completeness in its union with God in this loving action.²⁴ However, more relevant for our discussion is the emphasis that John Paul II gives to sacramental service as identifying the ordained priest. For him, the relationship of the priesthood of the ordained with the priesthood of the baptized is thus defined principally through the Eucharistic action.

This is reinforced when, returning to the pastoral context of the letter, John Paul II admonishes a sense of individualism in the interpretation of elements of the Eucharistic liturgy. This not only underlines the belief that the Eucharist is a gift to the whole community of the church, and does not belong to the ordained alone, but also emphasizes that the very identity of the ordained priest is threatened if the basic notion of the ordained as servant to the mystery is undermined.²⁵

²⁴ AAS 72, pp. 124-127. Cf. KILMARTIN, p. 77.

²⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 124-127. Cf. KILMARTIN, pp. 90-93

3. Pastores Dabo Vobis

3.1 The Synod of 1990

According to Timothy Costello, the synod of bishops was established by Paul VI in 1965 as a consultative structure which would represent the universal episcopate and aid the ongoing collaboration between the pope and the bishops of the world.²⁶ The theological background to this structure is the theology of communion and the visible sign of this communion in the apostolic succession symbolized in the college of bishops united with the pope.²⁷

In consulting the bishops, Costello writes, three types of assembly are called under the present constitution governing the synod of bishops: ‘ordinary’, with the widest possible number of participants and dealing with matters affecting the universal church; ‘extraordinary’, which involves a smaller number of participants and which treats of particular concerns of the universal church; and ‘special’, which are usually of regional significance rather than universal in interest and scope.²⁸ The selection of a topic for an ordinary synod depends on its being of universal character, of contemporary relevance, and with pastoral application and a doctrinal foundation.²⁹

Costello states that towards the end of the synod of 1987, which focused on the lay faithful, the bishops were consulted as to the topic that might be discussed at the next ordinary assembly of the synod of bishops.³⁰ This consultation yielded an interest in the spiritual formation of the ordained priesthood, which linked thematically with the spiritual formation of the laity considered at the 1987

²⁶ See COSTELLO, T., *Forming a Priestly Identity*, Analecta Gregoriana, Rome, 2002, pp. 55-56.

²⁷ *ibid.*, p.56. Cf. LG 22-23.

²⁸ COSTELLO, p. 56

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 58

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 57

assembly.³¹ In fact, five congregations (meetings of the assembly as a whole) of the 1967 synod had been devoted to the subject of seminary formation, while, as we have seen, the topic for the 1971 ordinary synod was the doctrinal and pastoral concerns surrounding the ordained priesthood after the Second Vatican Council. The 1990 synod was thus connected with both the previous synods on the subject of the ordained priesthood and with the immediately preceding synod of 1987.³²

3.2 The Central Ideas Current at the Synod of 1990

Costello outlines the process leading to the assembly of the ‘Eighth Ordinary Synod’ and considers the themes of the *Lineamenta* and the *Instrumentum Laboris* prepared for the synod of 1990.³³ The themes that were to dominate the discussion at the 1990 synod and the ‘Post-Synodal Exhortation’ were already present in the *Lineamenta* and, in a more focused way, in the *Instrumentum Laboris*. Costello maintains that the three main themes were: the contemporary context in which ordained priests live and from which candidates for the priesthood emerge; the theological identity of the ordained priest; and the concept of human maturity as a basis for the human formation of the ordained priest.³⁴ Additional themes included a review of the agents of formation and the necessity of ongoing formation in the life of the ordained priest.

³¹ *ibid.*, pp. 57-59

³² This can be easily recognized by a review of the synodal topics since Vatican II.

³³ *ibid.*, pp. 60-76. The *Lineamenta* focuses discussion by providing an outline of the topic and the proposed related subjects. This is sent out to bishops’ conferences, Vatican departments and interested parties for their comments and proposals. A committee is then convened to analyse and incorporate relevant suggestions and discussion topics related to the synod. The *Instrumentum Laboris* provides an immediate agenda for the synod and provides a text for reference (a working text) for discussion during the synod and as a stimulus for further reflection. As well as drawing on the commentary from Costello, the author of this thesis has had extensive access to the archives of Bishop Vincent Logan, Bishop of Dunkeld, who was the Scottish Bishops’ representative at the 1990 Synod.

³⁴ COSTELLO, pp. 61- 75

Both the *Lineamenta* and the *Instrumentum Laboris*, Costello says, point to the breakdown in family life, the erosion of morals in society, and the dominance of an individualistic culture as all contributing to the difficulty of establishing a secure sense of identity in prospective candidates for the ordained priesthood. These factors inevitably have an impact upon the formation of the identity of the ordained priest.³⁵

Against this background, Costello maintains, there was a widespread belief, expressed especially in the responses by bishops and others to the *Lineamenta*, that the forthcoming synod should make a clear statement about the mission and the identity of the ordained priest. This would provide a point of reference for the initial and ongoing formation of candidates.³⁶ With this in mind, the doctrinal sections of the two documents emphasize that the identity of the ordained priest is of supernatural origin, i.e. that it is a matter of faith, that it has a human dimension, and that both these have an essential reference to the priestly mission of Christ.³⁷ The ordained priesthood incarnates the communion of the church and exists for this communion. A network of interconnected relationships expresses and maintains the identity of the ordained priest. Thus the ordained priesthood is established in existential terms: in the relationship between bishops, between presbyters and bishops, and among presbyters themselves, as well as the ministerial relationship with the people of God as a whole, at both the local and universal level.³⁸ The most fundamental relationship underpinning all of these is the transforming relationship of the ordained with Christ.³⁹

³⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 61-69

³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 68

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 64

³⁸ *ibid.*, pp 73-74

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 75, "The deep identification with the person of Christ requires a certain transformation of the human personality." Cf. Cardinal Ratzinger's report to the Synod, dated the 1st October

The third main theme to which Costello refers is connected with the living out of this priestly identity, given the demands that are made of the ordained priest at a human level in the context of contemporary society.⁴⁰ Costello states that the optimistic tone of the *Lineamenta* towards the possibilities of living out the priestly vocation in the life of the ordained priest was not reflected in the responses that were given to this document. A more cautionary and nuanced perspective is expressed in the *Instrumentum Laboris*.⁴¹ However, human maturity is seen by Costello as the basis and the key for how both the *Lineamenta* and the more nuanced *Instrumentum Laboris* see the living out and living up to the calling of the ordained priesthood. Human maturity is seen in its relationship to three capacities which have important implications for the living out of the life of the ordained: the desire for personal commitment, the capacity to be faithful, and pastoral effectiveness.⁴² The proper ordering of the relationships that establish and maintain the identity of the ordained priest is rooted in a person's ability to mature. Only by maturing, can a person truly live the ideals, which are presented by the doctrinal section, in the midst of today's world.⁴³

3.3 The Document

The 'Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, On the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day', *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, is addressed to bishops, presbyters, to those engaged in formation, and to the whole church. It is especially

1990, entitled "On the Nature of Priesthood", available from the archive of the Diocese of Dunkeld for that year.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 76

⁴¹ *ibid.*, pp. 63-64

⁴² *ibid.*, p. 64. The notion of human maturity as necessary for the living out of the priestly life is the central theme for Costello's work, see pp. 29-41.

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 72, "The Church understands the priesthood as more than the performance of specific tasks and functions: the priest embodies in his life the message that he preaches." Thus we see the human response to the divine gift as the key for how the grace of the sacrament of holy orders takes root in the person and manifests itself in the modification of the person's actions and life.

addressed to those who are ordained.⁴⁴ Its stated purpose is to continue the renewal of the formation of the ordained as started by the Second Vatican Council.⁴⁵ The continuity with the documents of the Council and with previous synods is explicitly mentioned and is reinforced by the frequent citations of the documents of the Council, particularly *Lumen Gentium*, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, *Optatam Totius*, the ‘Decree on Priestly Formation’ from the Second Vatican Council, and *Gaudium et Spes*.⁴⁶

As an exhortation, the document is aimed at being inspirational rather than legislative.⁴⁷ It is a post-synodal document, and as such it emerges from the Synod at which John Paul II was continually present. It follows the structure already suggested by the *Lineamenta* and *Instrumentum Laboris*, as well as taking into account the contributions from the floor of the synod. It reflects the collegial nature of the magisterium of the church.⁴⁸ It consists of six chapters: on the contemporary situation in which priestly formation takes place, on the doctrinal definition of the ordained priesthood, on the spiritual life of the ordained, on the priestly vocation in the church’s pastoral work, on the formation of candidates for the priesthood, and on the ongoing formation of ordained priests.

Commenting on the style of the document, Costello maintains that, while it follows the structure of the synodal documents and discussions, as well as the

⁴⁴ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (PDV) 4. We shall refer primarily to the English text of the document published by the Catholic Truth Society, London, 1992, in consultation with the Latin text published by Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1992. The official text of the document has already been noted.

⁴⁵ PDV 2-4

⁴⁶ COSTELLO, p. 81

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

synthetic work done after the 1990 synod, it bears the imprint of its author in that it reflects the phenomenological bent of John Paul II.⁴⁹

We examine firstly the relationships that define the ordained priest under the headings of Christology, Trinitarian theology, Ecclesiology, anthropology, and the sacrament of orders as they appear in the document itself, with particular reference to the first four chapters. We also seek to offer some analysis with the help of selected authors. We then offer a synthesis of the vision offered by the document and the relevance of the document for the theme of authenticity.

3.3.1 Christology

As we have previously indicated, the christological reference is primary for John Paul II's vision of the ordained priesthood. The three images that dominate the document's presentation of Christ are: Christ as Shepherd, as Suffering Servant, and as the continually present founder of the church in the apostolic succession.

By introducing the words of the Apostolic Exhortation with a quote from Jeremiah 3, 15, "I will give you shepherds after my own heart", John Paul stresses the particular way in which God manifests himself as Saviour; in the situation of a needy people who have strayed and are in need of guidance.⁵⁰ The quote also stresses the initiative of God in reaching out to his people. The identification is immediately made with Christ the Good Shepherd as portrayed in the Gospel of

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 82-84. Costello sketches out John Paul II's background in phenomenology, reflected in his own scientific work, *The Acting Person*, published in Polish in 1969. Costello writes, pp. 82-83, "Where the scholastic mode of argumentation seeks to establish the truth by succinctly proving a proposition and refuting counter propositions, the phenomenological method tends to examine a question by moving from less to more adequate insights as it describes the various dimensions of the problem."

⁵⁰ PDV 1. Cf. COSTELLO, p. 81.

John (10, 11) and the Letter to the Hebrews (13, 20).⁵¹ Christ is the fulfilment of the Father's promise to shepherd his people; he is the revelation of the Father's heart and intention.

Christ's abiding presence is assured in the structures that he wills, as he passes onto his successors, the apostles, the ministry of shepherding.⁵² Thus we see the explicit will of Christ that the essential aspect of his priesthood will be carried on in the church in the establishment of the ministry of shepherd. There is then a strong accent on the incarnation, the 'enfleshing', of the intentions of God towards humanity in the life, ministry, and death of Christ, and in the visible continuance of Christ in the ordained priesthood.

Starting the second chapter of the document with a quote from the Gospel of Luke 4, 20, the incident when Jesus reads from the scroll containing the words of the prophet Isaiah, the document presents a Christ who is the icon of God to be contemplated.⁵³ Again we see the strong incarnational emphasis; the offices of priest, prophet and king are already exercised by Christ in his earthly ministry. The correlation of the attitude of contemplation is clearly the presentation of Christ; he is offered to us as an object for devotion and meditation through the initiative of God.

In his life, and especially in his death and resurrection, Christ is the mediator who establishes the covenant between God and humanity; the content of his

⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁵² PDV 5, "Certainly there is an essential aspect that does not change: the priest of tomorrow no less than the priest of today must resemble Christ. When Christ lived on this earth he manifested in himself the definitive role of the priest, by establishing a ministerial priesthood with which the Apostles were the first to be invested." This section is a pivotal text for defining the relationship of the ordained to Christ, the Spirit, the church, and society, and is one to which we shall return. Cf. PDV 14, "Their (ordained priests') mission is not theirs but the same mission of Jesus." Also PDV 15, "...priests are called to prolong the presence of Christ, the one High Priest, embodying his way of life and making him visible in the midst of the flock entrusted to his care."

⁵³ PDV 7, "These are the features of Christ (the Messiah, who is priest, prophet and King) upon which the eyes of faith and love of Christians should be fixed."

priesthood is his obedience in being sent by the Father and his sacrificing himself on the cross.⁵⁴ It is this sacrifice that defines him as High Priest. We see then the definition of Christ's priesthood in terms of service, of *kenosis*. It is the work of this sacrificial High Priest to gather his flock and tend them.⁵⁵ The principal action of Christ is his offering of himself in sacrifice. The result of this sacrifice is to bring humanity into communion with God. This effects communion among human persons as they imitate his sacrifice and service. In the reference to the washing of the feet (PDV 13) we see, as with the Letter *Dominicae Cenaе*, the Last Supper, as well as the actual sacrificial act of the cross, as providing the context and source for the life of the Christian and the ordained priest.

Dermot Power in his work on the spiritual theology of the ordained priesthood has drawn attention to the recovering of the christological principle in John Paul II's theology of the ordained.⁵⁶ In his work Power analyses the christology of Hans Urs Von Balthasar as it applies particularly to the priesthood of the ordained. Von Balthasar was a theologian whose work influenced John Paul II and, as Power portrays his thought, we can see the connections between his theology and that of the late pope particularly in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*. Power maintains that Von Balthasar perceived the ordained priesthood as having an

⁵⁴ PDV 12 & 13; PDV 13, "Jesus brought his role as mediator to complete fulfilment when he offered himself on the cross, thereby opening to us, once and for all, access to the heavenly sanctuary, to the Father's house (cf. Heb 9: 24-28)."

⁵⁵ PDV 13- 16; PDV 13, "Jesus is the promised Good Shepherd (cf. Ez. 34), who 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 (cf. Jn. 10: 11-16). He is the Shepherd who has come "not to be served but to serve" (Mt. 20:28), who in the Paschal action of the washing of the feet (cf. Jn 13: 1- 20) leaves to his disciples a model of service to one another and who freely offers himself as the "innocent lamb" sacrificed for our redemption (cf Jn 1:36; Rev 5:6, 12)."

⁵⁶ POWER, *A Spiritual Theology of the Priesthood: The Mystery of Christ and the Mission of the Priest*, pp. 11 ff.

objective status: configuration to Christ, the High Priest. The subjective growth in the life of the ordained is their ongoing life of sanctification.⁵⁷

The foundation of the ordained priesthood, the *sine qua non*, according to John Paul II in this document, is the incarnate Son of God, given as the fulfilment of God's promise. The objective element in the life and ministry of the ordained is the conformity to the Christ of sacrifice and service, which is the content of the relationship of Christ to his people as Head and Shepherd; a relationship continued in the ordained priesthood.

3.3.2 Trinitarian Theology

The key text of PDV 5 firmly places the role of the Holy Spirit as a guide to discerning the spiritual needs and human expectations in today's world. What is clearly stated is that the work of the Holy Spirit is not only in assisting the discernment of the motives and ideals of people today but also to help plan a response.⁵⁸ In 'reading the signs of the times' the revelation of the respective roles of the persons of the Trinity provides us with a blueprint: the light given to us by the Holy Spirit allows us to distinguish the truly positive aspects of society from the negative ones (not a simple task of listing goods and ills), while keeping in mind Christ as the centre and interpretive key of history, confident in the fidelity of the Father's promises.⁵⁹ The Holy Spirit inspires us, enlightening and driving forward our personal and collective search. The revelation of God in Christ remains the objective element, in that conformity to Christ is the immediate goal of our lives. The Father remains the source and final goal of our journey of

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 94 ff.

⁵⁸ PDV 5, "For our part we must therefore seek to be as open as possible to light from on high from the Holy Spirit, in order to discover the tendencies of contemporary society, recognise the deepest spiritual needs, determine the most important concrete tasks and the pastoral methods to adopt, and thus respond adequately to human expectations."

⁵⁹ PDV 10

salvation (thus the eschatological dimension is introduced into the theology of the ordained priesthood).

This is a presentation of the economic Trinity, a God who is involved with the human search for truth and salvation. The God who gives and takes the initiative in salvation is the dominant feature of this discourse. The model of Trinity that is at work is that of the processional model, the Father who reveals himself in sending the Son, who, together with the Father sends the Spirit. Salvation consists in the experience of the ‘reversal’ of this model, from the personal experience of the Spirit, who conforms the believer to the Son, while the Spirit and the Son confirm our trust in the Father.⁶⁰

The Spirit remains the immediate source of communion with God⁶¹, the source of calling and commissioning⁶², and the source of faith.⁶³ The Spirit calls the person, gives apostolic authority, and sends the person on their mission.⁶⁴

Crucial to the document is the revelation of the relationships that constitute the Trinity. The relational dimension of the church, and that of the ordained ministry, arises from the nature of God himself, the God who offers himself in love.⁶⁵ While the different roles of the persons of the Trinity are elaborated, the common experience of all three is the outreach of God towards humanity to share the communion that the three persons of the Trinity enjoy.

⁶⁰ Cf. COFFEY, *Grace: the Gift of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 45 -177.

⁶¹ PDV 11

⁶² PDV 14

⁶³ PDV 16

⁶⁴ PDV 14

⁶⁵ PDV 12, “It is within the church’s mystery, as a mystery of Trinitarian communion in missionary tension...(that is the origin of every Christian)... the priesthood which arises from the depths of the ineffable mystery of God, that is from the love of the Father, the grace of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit’s gift of unity...”

3.3.3 Ecclesiology

The image of the church that emerges from *Pastores Dabo Vobis* is of one united in communion and mission, a communion and mission that is served by and guaranteed by the hierarchical priesthood. Its mission in obedience to the command of Christ to preach the Gospel cannot be fulfilled without the ordained priesthood.⁶⁶ There is no substitute for the ordained priesthood, and the lack of ordained priests in some regions of the world is a serious obstacle to the growth of the church.⁶⁷

However, the ordained priesthood is not seen as something apart from the church. The church's being in and as communion derives from the relational life of the Trinity itself, and it is this life in relation and communion that provides the necessary context for the ministry of the ordained priesthood.⁶⁸ The visible communion of the church is thus underlined in the hierarchical priesthood.

John Paul II characterizes the mission and life of the church as priestly.⁶⁹ The real participation of the whole church in the priesthood of Christ is affirmed and he explores the notion of this priesthood in relation to the Letter to the Hebrews and the First Letter of Peter.⁷⁰ It is this priesthood that is served and enabled by the ordained priesthood.⁷¹ There is no opposition between the communion model of the church and the hierarchical emphases that John Paul II makes in relation to the church. In fact, according to him, the distinction in relation between the two

⁶⁶ PDV 1

⁶⁷ PDV 7

⁶⁸ PDV 12, "It is within the church's mystery, as a mystery of Trinitarian communion in missionary tension, that every Christian identity is revealed, and likewise the specific identity of the priest and his ministry."; and again in PDV 12, "...the ecclesiology of communion becomes decisive for understanding the identity of the priest, his essential dignity, and his vocation and mission among the People of God and in the world. Reference to the church is therefore necessary, even if it is not primary, in defining the identity of the priest."

⁶⁹ PDV 13

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

⁷¹ PDV 15

priesthoods, the common and the ordained, establishes and serves this communion.⁷²

3.3.4 Anthropology

What kind of person is envisaged as fulfilling the requirements of the ordained priesthood according to the document? Certainly, the document emphasizes the general human need for God and the particular need for guidance and shepherding.⁷³ The spiritual needs of humanity are the deepest human expectations and it is these needs that are to be served by the ordained priesthood.⁷⁴ An understanding of humanity, therefore, is essential for the ordained priest, and, when it deals with the formation of candidates for the ordained priesthood, the document puts human formation at the top of the list of requirements.⁷⁵ There are echoes here too of *Gaudium et Spes*, and *Lumen Gentium*.⁷⁶ The person who is called to the ordained priesthood is to be open to human needs and thus requires formation in humanity.

Two important anthropological themes are those of being as opposed to having, and openness as opposed to being closed.⁷⁷ In the introduction to the document, John Paul makes mention of the lack of energy experienced by the ordained in the

⁷² PDV 17-18; 28

⁷³ This appears very strongly at the beginning of the document with the aforementioned quote from the prophet Jeremiah: the situation of a needy people who encounter God precisely and always as saviour, PDV 1.

⁷⁴ PDV 5

⁷⁵ PDV 43, "The Priest, who is called to be a 'living image' of Jesus Christ, Head and Shepherd of the Church, should seek to reflect in himself, as far as possible, the human perfection which shines forth in the Incarnate Son of God and which is reflected with particular liveliness in his attitude towards others in the Gospels... 'Every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God' (Heb 5:1). So we see that the human formation of the priest shows its special importance when related to the receivers of the mission: in order that his ministry may be humanly as credible and acceptable as possible..." The incarnation of Christ is stressed again; it is through the human that the divine is revealed in the ministry of the ordained priest.

⁷⁶ Cf. LG 8; GS 1,4, 11, 22

⁷⁷ Cf. GRESHAKE, *Ser Sacerdote*, p. 239.

face of the demands made by contemporary society.⁷⁸ Part of the solution lies in being generous in the face of the needs of the world, and aware of the generosity present in contemporary society, for example among the young.⁷⁹ Discernment is required when analysing the goods and ills of the world and in having a deeper appreciation of humanity.⁸⁰ This generosity and openness is a fundamental structure of the person called to and exercising ministry in the church, expressed in giving rather than having.⁸¹

The dynamic concept of human maturity present or otherwise in candidates for the ordained priesthood is given special attention by Timothy Costello. He sees the statement by the document in paragraph 43, that the human formation of candidates for the ordained priesthood is essential, as emphatic, and as strengthening previous magisterial statements.⁸² *Pastores Dabo Vobis* is clear, Costello maintains, in stating that the attractions of contemporary society, which are based on partial, superficial, and illusory understandings of human nature, impede full human maturity and diminish human authenticity.⁸³

The goal of the human formation of the prospective ordained priest, therefore, is to aid the developing of those human qualities which will enable the candidate to live out the reality of the bond between the ordained priest and Christ, the Shepherd. In other words, in this context, human formation is not orientated specifically to enhance personal potential but to enhance the candidates'

⁷⁸ PDV 3

⁷⁹ PDV 8

⁸⁰ PDV 10

⁸¹ PDV 6- 9. This is central to the theme of pastoral charity to which we shall shortly turn our attention.

⁸² COSTELLO, p. 88

⁸³ *ibid.*, pp. 87-88

effectiveness for the church's mission and this is the vital element in the formation of those presented for ordination.⁸⁴

Costello identifies three specific methods for promoting the human maturity of candidates. The first is to cultivate the candidate's interior freedom so that the candidate may give of self in love and service. In fact, this is seen as being essential to any authentic human existence.⁸⁵ This interior freedom is seen as the necessary condition for a response to a genuine vocational call,⁸⁶ for the fostering of pastoral effectiveness,⁸⁷ and is expressed in heartfelt obedience of one's own being to the meaning of one's own existence.⁸⁸ Interior freedom does not occur spontaneously but is an achievement of human existence and is sustained with difficulty.⁸⁹

The second objective in encouraging human maturity in candidates for the ordained priesthood is the development of a sound moral conscience. This increases the responsible exercise of personal freedom and thereby enhances the ordained priest's human maturity.⁹⁰

Thirdly, the development of affective maturity in the candidate is vital: the ability to give oneself in relationship to others. Thus love is seen to be central to human life and, therefore, to the life of the ordained priest.⁹¹

⁸⁴ PDV 57. See COSTELLO, p. 88, "Even more than theological learning or specific pastoral skills, the human personality of the priest is the essential instrument for this (the church's) mission."

⁸⁵ COSTELLO, pp. 88-89

⁸⁶ PDV 8; 36

⁸⁷ PDV 25-26

⁸⁸ PDV 43

⁸⁹ PDV 37

⁹⁰ See PDV 44. Costello writes, pp. 80-90, "The priest's credibility and pastoral effectiveness is undermined when there is a lack of congruence between his personal life and his proclaimed values. A healthy moral conscience, by contrast, opens the person to the objectivity of a truth that transcends self-deception."

⁹¹ See PDV 8; 44. See COSTELLO, p. 90, "Contained in this proposition is the anthropological implication that 'being' has priority over 'having' such that human authenticity is to be found more in the loving gift of self than in the possession of material things..."

Costello maintains throughout his work that, while human maturity is seen as necessary for the identity of the ordained priest, it is not, in and of itself, sufficient.⁹² Cooperation with divine grace is essential, and Costello goes on in his work to see how identity takes shape in the concrete living out of this cooperation according to certain models which assess the development of human behaviour and personhood.⁹³

3.3.5 The Ordained Priesthood

Given all of the above relationships and requirements, what is the vision of the ordained priest that emerges from the document? The essential element is, as we have indicated above, the christological reference. The ordained priest has to resemble Christ in his life and ministry; his very identity at the deepest level is determined by this bond, his symbolizing of Christ, the Head and Shepherd of the church.⁹⁴ In fact, this reference is repeated in practically every section of the document, often several times. This ‘objective content’ of the ordained priesthood is presented visibly by the apostolic succession, which is the sign of the transcendence and gratuitousness of God.⁹⁵ The communion which the ordained priesthood serves is manifested firstly in this ‘vertical’ dimension, expressed in the hierarchical relationship of the presbyter with the bishop. This is the visible sign that the ordained priesthood is a new gift from God to the person who is

⁹² COSTELLO, p. 100

⁹³ Costello’s is a work of anthropology, which takes into consideration the Christian vision of the human person but also incorporates the insights of psychology and sociology, in particular the ideas of L.M. Rulla, see pp. 121 ff. It lies outwith the scope of this thesis to investigate Costello’s findings, though they are closely related to our theme.

⁹⁴ PDV 5; 11; 15

⁹⁵ PDV 5; 16

ordained and to the church, and is not simply reducible to a particular manifestation of a person's baptismal consecration.⁹⁶

This configuration to Christ is established and lived out, on the one hand, by the ordained priest's living according to the example of Christ's sacrificial love, particularly in the preaching of the word, the celebration of the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, and in the forgiveness of sins.⁹⁷ On the other hand, the call to holiness and the configuration to the mind of Christ, in the context of the discernment of the needs of humanity and the church, is the work of the Spirit.⁹⁸ In other words, the consecration to Christ that enables the ordained to be a symbol of Christ, the Head and Shepherd, is the gift of the Spirit. This gift is expressed in the priest's essential ministry in word and sacrament and in an attitude of self sacrifice, crystallized in the notion of pastoral charity.⁹⁹ Thus the ordained priest is a "living instrument" of Christ and the Spirit, whose missions coincide in the ministry of the ordained.¹⁰⁰

The ordained represents not just Christ to the church but the church to the world in an official capacity.¹⁰¹ Thus the ordained priesthood, as a symbol of Christ, Head and Shepherd, is not only relevant to the church but also to the rest of society as it seeks the truth of human existence.

Ultimately, the identity of the ordained is founded in the mystery of the Trinity as it reveals itself in human history and in the church. The ordained, called and animated by the Spirit, and thus enabled to share the mind of Christ, minister in pastoral charity to the needs of the church and the world. The world is to be

⁹⁶ PDV 17-18

⁹⁷ PDV 15; 22-23; 26

⁹⁸ PDV 19; 24

⁹⁹ PDV 21; 24-25

¹⁰⁰ PDV 25

¹⁰¹ PDV 16

consecrated to God, brought into the realms of God, and returned to the Father who is the creator.¹⁰² Because of the gift of ordination, in ministering in a particular context and in a particular way, the ordained priest is a particular symbol of Christ's love of God and love of neighbour.

Quoting B. Winters, Costello states that the document provides a coherent, balanced and comprehensive understanding of the identity of the ordained priesthood in the contemporary context. It articulates more clearly than do the conciliar documents of Vatican II the ecclesial, christological, and pastoral relationships that theologically identify the ordained priest.¹⁰³

4. *Evaluating Pastores Dabo Vobis*

In this section we seek to offer some comment on the significance of the post-synodal document in terms of restatement and renewal and thus, according to our earlier definition, its link with our theme of authenticity. In analysing any magisterial document, it is important to realize its context and purpose. This document emerged from a synod that was called to examine a particular question, i.e. the formation of the ordained priest in the context of contemporary society, and, we believe, with particular reference to western culture.¹⁰⁴ We have to

¹⁰² PDV 19, "In particular, the Spirit reveals to us and communicates the fundamental calling which the Father addresses to everyone from all eternity: the vocation to be 'holy and blameless before him...in love' (cf. Eph. 1: 4-5). This is not all. By revealing and communicating this vocation to us, the Spirit becomes within us the principle and wellspring of this fulfilment. He, the Spirit of the Son (Gal. 4:6), configures us to Christ Jesus and makes us sharers in his life as Son, that is, sharers in his life of love for the Father and for our brothers and sisters." Cf. PDV 13

¹⁰³ COSTELLO, pp 94-95. Costello presents these relationships as four: the ordained priest's sharing in the life of the Trinity and his particular configuration to Christ, the Head of the church (PDV 12-13); the relationship of hierarchical communion between the presbyter and bishop, between bishops, and between presbyters (PDV 16 -17; 31); the relationship that places the ordained at the service of the Christian assembly, and which rests on the mutual complementarity of the common and ordained priesthood (PDV 17); and the relationship with those beyond the visible confines of the church, emphasizing the missionary aspect of the work and life of the ordained (PDV 16). In Costello's view, the document represents a clear solution to the crisis of identity felt by ordained priests after the Second Vatican Council.

¹⁰⁴ There is no doubt that the centre of the Roman Catholic Church is shifting and has shifted, in terms of numbers, to the developing world, especially Asia and South America. However,

examine the document from this perspective and admit that much of the text is taken up with practical and theoretical instructions, and suggestions for the formation of candidates to the ordained priesthood. We also have to take into account that this is an exhortation, not an encyclical, nor a conciliar document. However, as we have stated, in the document there is enough of a systematic and coherent vision of the ordained priesthood in theological terms to make a significant contribution to the debate on the ordained priesthood in general and the theme of authenticity in particular.¹⁰⁵

We take forward this analysis by looking at the missions of Christ and the Spirit in the life of the ordained priest and the relationship of the ordained priest to the church. We shall then look briefly at how the Congregation for the Clergy took forward the themes offered in the document in three subsequent documents and compare the approach adopted in these documents, again briefly, with an example of the norms for priestly formation as issued by the Bishops' Conference of Scotland.

4.1 Christ and the Spirit in the Life and Ministry of the Ordained

As we have indicated above in the sections on christology and the identity of the ordained priest, the document makes frequent mention of the deep and permanent bond that the ordained has with Christ, the Head and Shepherd of the church. The ordained priest at the deepest level of his being is a sacrament, a sign and living

despite this, there is still a tendency to address western culture, especially in its more negative aspects, in magisterial and papal pronouncements. This is evident from the reading of almost any significant magisterial text produced in the last forty years. One recognizes that globalization has spread western culture and values throughout the world but the process is never clear-cut, see OSBORNE, *Orders and Ministry*, pp. 1-38.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. COSTELLO, pp. 44-49 on the interpretation of synodal texts. What emerges here is an emphasis upon the hermeneutical understanding of the text in terms of its internal coherence, the circumstance of the text, and the link with more important bodies of teaching, e.g. the Second Vatican Council and the larger body of magisterial documents from the past.

presence, of the leadership of Christ and his sacrificial love of his people. This constant reference eclipses other statements of the relationship between the ordained and the Spirit and the Father. While this is indeed a restatement of church doctrine, the language used at times might suggest an over-identification between the ordained and Christ.¹⁰⁶

This impression is reinforced when the document speaks of the ordained priest's ministry in word and sacrament. In the English translation consulted the document states, "...priests are a sacramental representation of Jesus Christ, the Head and Shepherd, authoritatively proclaiming his Word, *repeating* his acts of forgiveness and his offer of salvation..." (italics mine).¹⁰⁷ The word 'repeating', or 'imitating', which is perhaps closer to the Latin text, certainly emphasizes the action of Christ in the sacraments but does not suggest the new encounter between the person and Christ, without at least some further reflection on how the ordained priest imitates the actions of Christ.¹⁰⁸ Nor does it necessarily imply the involvement of the personality of the ordained or the inspiration that new contexts might provide for the ministry.

However, this is balanced by the idea of the ordained priest as a 'living instrument', and it is in the use of this term, and the perspectives offered by

¹⁰⁶ The references to the ordained priest's being the sacrament of Christ, the Head and Shepherd are too frequent to cite but for an example of the language used see PDV 15-17. See PDV 16, for example, "The priest's fundamental relationship is to Jesus Christ, Head and Shepherd. Indeed, the priest participates in a specific and authoritative way in the 'consecration/anointing' and in the 'mission' of Christ (cf. Lk 4: 18-19). But intimately linked to this relationship is the priest's relationship with the church. It is not a question of 'relations' which are merely juxtaposed, but rather of ones which are interiorly united in a kind of mutual immanence. The priest's relation to the church is inscribed in the very relation which the priest has to Christ, such that the 'sacramental relationship' to Christ serves as the basis and inspiration for the relation of the priest to the Church."

¹⁰⁷ PDV 15. The Latin text reads "...repraesentatio sacramentalis Christi Capitis et Pastoris: cuius verba cum auctoritate proclamant, cuius misericordis indulgentiae gestum salutem offerentem imitantur..."

¹⁰⁸ Cf. PO 5; LG 21; 26. The language used in the documents certainly conveys the primacy of Christ in the sacraments but avoids using terms that would somehow see the sacraments as mere repetitions and, crucially, always involves the response of the faithful in the description.

chapter three of the document, that we see the involvement of the Holy Spirit in forming the identity of the ordained.¹⁰⁹ It is also, crucially, in this chapter that we see the development of the notion of pastoral charity, in which John Paul II finds a key and founding principle for the life and ministry of the ordained priest.¹¹⁰ The document suggests, we believe, at least the beginnings of a renewal of a theology of the ordained priesthood in terms of the mission of the Spirit and the Son.

A starting point for this renewal is provided by the dynamic of call and response in the life of Christ himself explored in the opening of the third chapter of the document. The Spirit is seen as the one who anoints and consecrates Christ for his mission, indeed who penetrates his very being.¹¹¹ This same Spirit is the source of holiness and consecration for every Christian and reveals our true purpose: life in holiness and love before and with God.¹¹² However, the Spirit is always the Spirit of the Son and configures us as brothers and sisters in Christ.¹¹³ The process of call, configuration, and mission is the work of the Spirit who brings us into the life of God, which is fundamentally dialogical. Our experience of the Spirit is commensurate with the experience of Jesus Christ.

The particular call and configuration that the Spirit works in the life of the ordained priest is encapsulated in the terms ‘living instrument’ and ‘pastoral charity’. As a living instrument the ordained priest consciously and freely

¹⁰⁹ PDV 20; 25

¹¹⁰ Cf. PO 14; GALOT, *Theology of the Priesthood*, pp. 135-142. The term ‘pastoral charity’ is used throughout the document and is referred to no less than thirteen times in this chapter alone.

¹¹¹ PDV 19, “The Spirit is not simply ‘upon’ the Messiah, but he ‘fills’ him, penetrating every part of him and reaching the very depths of all that he is and does...Through the Spirit, Jesus belongs totally and exclusively to God and shares in the infinite holiness of God, who calls him, chooses him and sends him forth.” Although it is not stated explicitly, there is more than a suggestion here of the role of the Spirit in the incarnation of the Son of God, uniting the humanity of Jesus with the Second Person of the Trinity and being the principle of the union with and vision of God enjoyed by Jesus.

¹¹² *ibid.*

¹¹³ *ibid.*

responds to the personal relationship with Christ and his people. He is not passive but active; he has been chosen by Christ and called by the Spirit "...not as an object but as a person."¹¹⁴ This theme of personal involvement and engagement in the life and activity of the ordained priest is further developed with regard to the main functions of the ordained. While affirming the action of Christ (*ex opere operato*), the document makes it clear that the personal holiness of the ordained has a direct bearing on the effectiveness of the proclamation of the word, the celebration of the sacraments and the shepherding of God's people.¹¹⁵ According to the document, in liturgical and spiritual matters the ordained priest is a steward of the mystery that is none other than the action of Christ in the Spirit.¹¹⁶ We can argue that, both in terms of subjective action and the purpose of this action, the personal engagement with the Spirit of Christ enters into the essential definition of the life and ministry of the ordained priest. This is underlined when John Paul II speaks of the ordained priest's need for spiritual renewal in the sacrament of penance, as penitent, and as a believer in the word of God before he is a preacher of that word.¹¹⁷ The spiritual life of the ordained priest, defined as a particular call to holiness, is not a mere addendum or aid to life and ministry but part of its foundation.

Pastoral charity is first of all seen in its christological and ecclesiological references: it is a quality that is exemplified by Christ "who came not to be served

¹¹⁴ PDV 25

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹¹⁶ PDV 26

¹¹⁷ *ibid.* On the issue of the sacrament of penance, John Paul states, "The priest's celebration of the Eucharist and administration of the other sacraments, his pastoral zeal...in a word, the whole of his priestly existence, suffers an inexorable decline if by negligence or for some other reason he fails to receive the Sacrament of Penance at regular intervals and in a spirit of genuine faith and devotion. If a priest were no longer to go to confession or properly confess his sins, his *priestly being* and his *priestly action* would feel its effects very soon, and this would also be noticed by the community of which he is the pastor." This quotes the post synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia* (1984) 31, 6, AAS 77 (1985) 265-266.

but to serve”.¹¹⁸ In imitation of Christ, the ordained priest is to incarnate the principle of love which is directed towards the needs and governance of the people of God. Pastoral charity means total commitment on the part of the ordained priest both in and in the forefront of the church.¹¹⁹ It is the “internal principle that constantly guides and orientates” the ordained.¹²⁰

The content of pastoral charity is the gift of self, which is enabled by the Holy Spirit. It is in answering the call by the Holy Spirit that the person is placed into a loving relationship with God and the church in Christ; the ordained is configured to the sacrificial Christ.¹²¹ In the pastoral context, i.e. in the giving of self to ministry and relationships in the church, the ordained find the particular way of bringing together love of God and love of neighbour. We can conclude that this is the way to salvation for the ordained priest.

4.2 The Ordained Priest and the Church

The stress on the apostolic succession and the need that the church has of the hierarchical priesthood, which is the sign of this apostolic succession, is clear from the document.¹²² The emphasis in the document upon there being no substitute for the ordained priesthood, a restatement of traditional Catholic theology, is probably a response to the difficulties experienced by ordained priests when faced with the ministries of others in the church.¹²³ The almost total absence

¹¹⁸ PDV 21, quoting Mk 10, 45.

¹¹⁹ PDV 22

¹²⁰ PDV 23

¹²¹ *ibid.*

¹²² PDV 1; 7; 15

¹²³ Cf. COSTELLO, pp. 93-94. Costello quotes the then Cardinal Ratzinger in his essay on “The Nature of Priesthood”. A Latin text of Ratzinger’s reflections on the nature of the ordained priesthood and which was used by the Synod Fathers was sourced from the archives of the Diocese of Dunkeld. Ratzinger refers to the use of protestant exegesis in the work of some Catholic theologians on the question of the priesthood of the whole people as being problematic. This, along with the spread of lay ministries and the resulting confusion in some areas, no doubt led to the relevant emphases in the document.

of a consideration of the ordained priest's role in coordinating and working with other ministries in the church is noticeable, and there is thus a lack in this regard of a broader view of the contemporary situation of the church.¹²⁴

The themes of the common priesthood and the priestly work of the people of God are discussed in the document, as is the theme of communion. The hierarchical priesthood as enabling the priestly being of the people of God and the distinction of the common and ordained priesthood as serving communion are certainly in line with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, but further elaboration of what this priestly work might be is not present.¹²⁵

However, the document does state that the church provides the necessary context for the calling, the life, and the ministry of the ordained priest, and it makes clear that he is not apart from the church but serves it.¹²⁶ This again is covered by the notion of pastoral charity. Above all, the ordained priest is a sign of the transcendence and gratuitousness of God towards the church; the ordained priesthood is a gift from God.¹²⁷

There is evidence of two ecclesiologies at work in the document, one which maintains that Christ willed the basic structures of the church before the resurrection and Pentecost, at least in terms of establishing leadership, and the other which sees the role of the Holy Spirit in calling and consecrating the ordained priest for mission in the face of the needs of the church. However, one would have to conclude that the former view is favoured, again in line with the

¹²⁴ PDV 26 makes mention of the ordained priest's role in recognizing and coordinating charisms and gifts in the community but this is the only reference and makes no mention of ministry in the church apart from that of the ordained.

¹²⁵ PDV 12; 17-18; 28. Cf. LG 10; PO 7-9

¹²⁶ PDV 5; 12; 15

¹²⁷ PDV 16

documents of the Second Vatican Council.¹²⁸ In terms of ecclesiology, there is more of restatement than renewal. The role of the Spirit in the founding of the church is not elaborated.

4.3 Other Relevant Documents

We can see the influence of *Pastores Dabo Vobis* on the documents issued by the Congregation for the Clergy in the years following its promulgation by their frequent citation of the Exhortation and by the similar tone adopted in them.¹²⁹ In the ‘Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests’, the basic ideas on the configuration of the ordained priest to Christ and the theme of pastoral charity are present. The being of the ordained priest, according to this document, *is* pastoral charity, in imitation of and resulting from configuration to Christ.¹³⁰

The ‘Directory’ also seems to take its lead from the document’s silence on the ministries of others in the church (and the background to the anxiety felt over the identity of the ordained priest in the context of the wider question of ministries) to reiterate that there should be no confusion about the role of the ordained priest: the ordained alone are to be considered pastors of the flock.¹³¹ It also deals with the contemporary religious situation in which the church finds itself, in particular in the face of new religious movements and sects.¹³² The duty of the ordained priest seems to be to protect the integrity of the faith and the church.

¹²⁸ Cf. LG 18; PO 2

¹²⁹ CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, Vatican City, 1994; CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *The Priest and the Third Millennium*, Vatican City, 1999; CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *The Priest, Pastor and Leader of the Parish Community*, Vatican City, 2002. These documents are downloadable from the web site of the Holy See: www.vatican.va

¹³⁰ *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests*, sections 43-46

¹³¹ *ibid.*, sections 16-19.

¹³² *ibid.*, section 36.

In the documents on the role of the ordained in the third millennium and the ordained priest as teacher and leader, the missionary aspect of the ordained is stressed. The ordained priest would seem to be the main agent of the missionary activity of the church.¹³³ The ministry of the ordained priest is identified with his person, i.e. there is no separation between person and ministry.¹³⁴

The 'Norms for Priestly Formation in Scotland' summarize the teaching of *Pastores Dabo Vobis* and the conciliar documents on the basic configuration of the ordained to Christ. However, this document also speaks of the ordained in the context of other ministries in the church and speaks openly of the need for collaborative ministry and partnership with others in the church.¹³⁵ At least at a national level there seems to be the recognition of the nature of the whole church as being fundamentally ministerial.

The documents from the Congregation for the Clergy tend to restate the official teaching of the church, even to the extent of being retrograde. The more local document from Scotland emphasizes the element of renewal in a broader theology of ministry.

¹³³ See the first three chapters of the document, *The Priest and the Third Christian Millennium*, and chapter one, part three of *The Priest, Pastor and Leader*. The theme of evangelization as the context for the ministry of the ordained is emphasized in COMISION EPISCOPAL DEL CLERO, *La Formación Pastoral*, Madrid 1998, pp. 53-56.

¹³⁴ See part three, chapter two, section a) of *The Priest, Pastor and Leader*, "The very life and work of the priest – his consecrated person and his ministry – are inseparable theological realities."

¹³⁵ BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF SCOTLAND, *Norms for Priestly Formation*, Ayrshire, 2005, pp 13-17.

5. Conclusion – Authenticity and Authority

Logically we might have considered the foregoing chapter in terms of authority rather than authenticity. While it is seen as a servant of the mysteries of Christ, the magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church is the authoritative body in the interpretation of Scripture and tradition.¹³⁶ Papal and curial documents fall under the heading of the exercise of this authority. Furthermore, authenticity might well be considered in its general ethical sense and in an analysis of the failure of individuals to live up to the calling of ministry, as well as the abuses in the exercise of their position which are a threat to the perceived authenticity of their office.

However, we have chosen to consider some recent teaching of the magisterium under the heading of authenticity for two reasons which are connected with the theological identity of the ordained priesthood. Firstly, whatever the arguments in recent years about the ordained priesthood in terms of celibacy, the issue of women priests, or the scandals that have affected the church, the understanding of the ordained priest, as one who preaches the word, celebrates the sacraments, leads the people of God, and lives a life of self-giving, has not changed significantly through the centuries. There are questions about the role of other ministries, and historical questions about who exactly presided at the Eucharist in the early church, as well as the shape of the ordained priesthood as it emerged in that period. However, the coordinates which place the ordained priest in the life of the church remain constant and these are restated in the documents that we have surveyed. As we understand them, restatement and continuity with the past are marks of authenticity.

¹³⁶ See LG 20

The second reason for considering this material under the heading of authenticity is to introduce the ethical dimension into the definition of sacrament. In other words, we believe that the ethical dimension does not only deal with behaviour that is consistent with an office or a stated belief, we also believe that statements about what the ordained priest should be have a relevance for what the ordained priest is. In fact, as we have already suggested, the ethical content of the ordained priest's life and ministry in responding to the call of the Spirit by living a life of pastoral charity and spiritual renewal determines, to a large degree (evident in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*), his identity. If the ordained priest fails in this ethical imperative, then there are questions over the reality of the presence of God and thus questions over the identity of the individual as an ordained priest. In this sense, authenticity enters into the theology of grace.

Chapter Three – Authority

1. Introduction

The 1990 synod directly acknowledged and attempted to address the issues thrown up by contemporary society as they affected the formation of candidates for the ordained ministry. In doing so, the synod and the subsequent papal document realized the need for a clear statement on the identity of the ordained priest. Perhaps today the most pressing issue confronting the identity of those who exercise the ministry of the ordained is that of authority, not just in terms of church governance and teaching but also in the context of how people accept authoritative teaching or statements. This is bound up with the way they think and reach decisions regarding their lives. This latter question forms the background for our discussion in this chapter as it relates in particular to the place and perception of the ordained priest, and will constitute the first section of our chapter.

Discussion of contemporary problems leads us into a consideration of the authority structure of the Roman Catholic Church, and it is here that we begin the process of distinguishing between the orders of bishop and presbyter. The ordained ministry exists in the Roman Catholic Church in the threefold offices of bishop, presbyter, and deacon, the first two only sharing in the ordained priesthood. Section two will delineate the authority of the presbyter according to church teaching and to what is proper to his ministry according to selected authors.

The third section will constitute the conclusion not only of this chapter but also of the first part of our thesis, briefly considering some images of the presbyter as

they will have emerged from our discussion up to that point. Here we argue that the role of ‘assurer’ is the one that best fits the data thus far reviewed.

2 Authority as an Issue for the Ordained Priesthood

2.1 Religion in Contemporary Society

Two important changes in the perceived attitude of western society have affected the authority of religious institutions and their leaders. The first is bound up with the emphasis upon the ‘ordinary’ as being the source of identity, and the second, connected with this, is the perceived changing of the role of religion in people’s lives.¹

By the affirmation of the ordinary in our lives, Charles Taylor intends that, while in the past the narration of the heroic or the espousing of some great cause, religious or otherwise, dominated our understanding of the good and explained meaning, it is now within the framework of our everyday lives, with all the elements that make it up (work, sex, daily relationships) that people articulate the good. This has meant the diminishing of the role of any particular group or individuals who would claim to mediate meaning for us.² Right at the beginning of his work, he draws three axes that can be seen to govern moral action today: a sense of respect or obligation towards others, a desire for a full life, and the upholding of individual dignity.³ In the affirmation of ordinary life, Taylor sees

¹ We do not use the word ‘general’ to describe the attitude of those living in the West towards religion for two reasons. Firstly, it would suggest an accepted premise based on a massive amount of data, the analysis of which lies outside the scope of this thesis. The second reason is that there may be disagreements about how general or well founded this attitude is. We use the word ‘perceived’ to indicate that, while there is little doubt about the impact of philosophical ideas and political attitudes on the whole idea of authority, we do not intend a proof, analysis, or summary of this phenomenon.

² TAYLOR, C., *Sources of the Self, the Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge, 1989.

³ *ibid.*, pp. 3-114.

the working out of these principles as being the individual's responsibility in concert with others as equal partners.

In religious language we might argue that it is in the ordinary and the everyday that people find meaning and that it is in the ordinary that people find the sacred, rather than in the 'space' defined and provided by religious authority. However, would it be fair to say that the 'search for God' is still a major preoccupation in the lives of, say, people in Britain?

Steve Bruce covers the question of the so-called implicit religious sentiment that is said by some to exist in Britain.⁴ Bruce's main contention that the secular paradigm has triumphed in this country is a difficult one with which to disagree. Actual church attendance can be an indicator of the status of religious belief, and this is falling. Yet, there has been an implicit understanding in some quarters that, despite the drop in the number of those attending religious services, there exists a vague spirituality or a need for religion in the lives of most people. This can be witnessed 'on the ground' by the return to church at crucial moments, baptism, marriage and funerals. While this still happens, there is now serious reason, at least in the British context, and probably elsewhere, to suspect that spirituality and religion are understood in a totally different way from the past, or even that a spiritual dimension does not now play a conscious part at all in the lives of many (if not most) Britons.⁵

⁴ BRUCE, S., *God Is Dead, Secularization in the West*, Religion in the Modern World, Malden, Oxford, 2002. See p. 203 where he expresses reservations about the view that we can assume that people are innately religious even if they express no interest in religion.

⁵ *ibid.* See pp 60-74 for an analysis of attendance figures. Pages 186-203 deal with what Bruce calls 'latent religiosity' outside the church or chapel. The census figures of 2001 which show that over two thirds of Britons consider themselves to be Christian also have to be taken into account. How people understand Christianity is another question. Census figures from the 2001 Census reveal that the Catholic population in Scotland has remained more or less at the same figure for the previous ten or so years, at around 800,000. In the same period the number of diocesan presbyters has dropped from 823 to 697 while the number of ordained priests who are religious

As part of a hierarchy and a social system that was seen as at once coherent and comprehensive, ordained priests are living through what most in western society have experienced as a revolution in the way we define ourselves as a community and as individuals. If people now define their own 'hierarchy' and do not look so much to authorities for the interpretation of their lives as to their own experience, and those in their immediate social circle, then, as part of a hierarchical structure, the ordained priesthood is bound to feel these changes acutely. The question that we raise at this stage is whether the sacramental has been too bound up with authority and hierarchy to the extent that, as a failed authority, there is also a failure, at least in people's perceptions, of the symbolic and prophetic personality of the ordained priest. The second question we might ask at this stage is if the ordained priest is a catalyst for the religious quest, where does the ordained priest start his religious dialogue with others in a situation where the 'God question' might not even be asked?⁶

2.2 The impact of scandal on the Authority of the Church

More public events have led some to challenge the church to review its theology of the ordained priesthood as well as its practice: the ongoing cases involving child abuse committed by clergy and religious, the apparent rise in the number of ordained priests who are homosexual (both practising and not), charges of sexual

has dropped from 214 to 148. Data can be sourced from the Census of 2001 and BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF SCOTLAND, *Catholic Directory for Scotland*, Glasgow, 1992-2002.

⁶ If we take seriously the conclusions from the works of Bruce and Taylor, one from the point of view of philosophy, the other from religious sociology, a picture emerges of a society that still has values but does not necessarily look to religion or God to establish, interpret, or apply them. One can certainly argue with the statistics and even the conclusions that Bruce puts forward, though he is careful to qualify his claims. One could argue that Taylor's analysis, though insightful, is limited in its scope. However, one can not fail to grasp from even a casual glance at their conclusions that the assumptions that some have made up until fairly recently, about people's longing for God, or their seeking to articulate a religious sentiment, or how much they engage in a search for meaning, might be quite fundamentally flawed.

misconduct in Africa and elsewhere, and the handling of all of these issues by a magisterium that seems increasingly to play the authority card.

Donald Cozzens points to problems in the leadership of the church, with special reference to the United States but with possible applications to other countries. He is particularly critical of the Vatican Curia and its handling of clerical celibacy, and is scathing of its attitudes towards the vocations crisis.⁷ The crisis in authority that these issues have raised, Cozzens argues, has led to a whole reinterpretation of the role of the ordained priest.⁸ The role of the ordained priest, as someone with general relevance and authority in the community, e.g. as parish priest, has been transformed into that of accompanying ‘chaplain’, ministering to specialized needs and to an increasingly specialized clientele.⁹ Again the question of the perception of the leadership offered by the ordained priesthood leads us to question the role of the ordained ministry in peoples’ lives.

2.3 Power and Community

The crisis of identity in the ordained priesthood has indeed been sparked off by a change of context. As Paul Philibert has observed, the once ‘universally accepted’ notion of the ordained priest was bound up with a particular world/church view.¹⁰ Part of this view was that of a church as a perfect society, a

⁷ COZZENS, D. B., *The Changing Face of the Priesthood: A Reflection on the Priest's Crisis of Soul*, Collegeville, Minn., 2000; COZZENS, D. B., *Sacred Silence: Denial and the Crisis in the Church*, Collegeville, Minn., 2002.

⁸ COZZENS, *Changing Face of the Priesthood*, p. 137, “Caught in the wake of the church’s authority crisis, priests have seen their moral authority, their ability to lead and to offer moral guidance, likewise diminished...They are still welcomed as pastoral caregivers, of course, but their prophetic preaching of the gospel message is taken by many with a grain of salt. Still welcomed as ‘chaplains’ to comfort and console, they are less likely to be welcomed as pastors who bear a word from the Lord.”

⁹ The consumer approach to religion and church attendance has been noticed, the tendency of people to pick and choose which church they go to and which style of presbyter suits, see PHILIBERT, P., “Issues for a Theology of the Priesthood”, p.2. Cf. OSBORNE, *Orders and Ministry: Leadership in the World Church*, pp. 109.

¹⁰ PHILIBERT, p. 1; 4

fortress against the world, and a true reflection of the 'Kingdom of Heaven on Earth'. Within this anterior vision of a perfect and hierarchical society the presbyter, along with the bishop, had great power and influence.¹¹ How power and influence has been exercised in the church and should be exercised has been the focus of much attention.¹²

The dominant biblical image that lies behind the idea of the church is that of community: the community of disciples, gathered together, nourished, and strengthened by the presence of the risen Christ. This community of disciples is sent out to preach the good news, make disciples of the nations, and baptise them into the life of God. They are united in preaching, in celebration of the Eucharist, and in charity (Mk. 16, 15; Mt. 28, 19; Lk. 24, 13-35; Acts 2, 37-47; 4, 32-37). This calling into community was prefigured in the Old Testament and established by Christ following the will of his Father. However, James D. Whitehead believes that "(T)his New Testament vision of a community of disciples does not yet account for the appearance of leadership".¹³ What emerges as Christians ask themselves how best to follow the Lord is how best to lead the community.

There is no doubt that any community has need of leadership, but the model offered in the Catholic Church in the past has led to a hierarchical structure where, Whitehead argues, the community play the role of disciple while the role of Christ is assumed by the leaders of the community. In such a case it is easy to

¹¹ *ibid.*, pp. 3-4. Philibert points to a number of factors that have affected the social status of the presbyter, including the upward social mobility of Catholic laity and the increasing opportunities for education. He argues that there has been a relative decrease in the role of the clergy as social leaders.

¹² See in particular COWAN, M. A., *Alternative Futures for Worship Volume 6: Leadership in Community*, ed. LEE, B. J., Collegeville, Minnesota, 1987. Of special interest here is the analysis of the dynamics of leadership provided by the Whiteheads, James and Evelyn, pp. 23 – 80.

¹³ WHITEHEAD, J. D., "'Stewardship: The Disciple Becomes a Leader'," *Alternative Futures for Worship Volume 6, Leadership Ministry in Community* 6 (1987), pp. 69-80, quote p. 69.

see power as exercised by individuals as their possession rather than as a gift to the whole community.¹⁴

Whitehead believes that an image that we might find helpful is that of the steward. Employing this figure in our thinking can remind us that there can indeed exist in the community a leadership responsibility, exercised on behalf of someone else, over someone else's 'property', without that 'property' or power becoming the possession of the one who exercises this stewardship. Yet, the figure of the steward does not include the notion of servility but real authority; it combines service, authority, and dependence. In the end, the steward hands back to the owner both property and authority. This notion of stewardship honours the Lord until his coming again.¹⁵ It also has the merit of not excluding the ministry and position of others in the community.¹⁶

Whatever images we use, the issue at stake is the exercise of power in a community of brothers and sisters who are equal and co-heirs with Christ to the Kingdom of God. Any power in such a community has to be shared and recognized, and involves an awareness of the group dynamics of power and how it affects intimacy, inclusion and effectiveness.¹⁷

2.4 Globalization and its Affects on Ordained Ministry

In his latest work on orders and ministry, Kenan Osborne considers the negative and the positive impacts of globalization on the Catholic Church in general and on ordained and lay ministry in particular.¹⁸ In his first chapter he presents various

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 70

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 71

¹⁶ O'MEARA, *Theology of Ministry*, pp. 199-224.

¹⁷ WHITEHEAD, E. E., "Leadership and Power: A View from the Social Sciences", *Alternative Futures for Worship, Volume 6, Leadership Ministry in Community*, ed. COWAN, M. A., vol. 6, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1987, pp. 39-68.

¹⁸ OSBORNE, *Orders and Ministry: Leadership in the World Church*.

definitions of globalization as they manifest themselves today: the impact of the mass media, of global economics, and the relationship between cultures.¹⁹ Osborne also notes the definitions of globalization that centre on economic forces driven by multi-national companies and institutions like the World Bank, the IMF, and the WTO, but focuses on that given by R.J. Schreiter which highlights the three major elements as political, economic, and technological.²⁰

He points out that there are positive and negative aspects to globalization which are of themselves not easily categorized. From the positive side, globalization unites different cultures and groups together in an unprecedented and profound way. From the negative side, it can destroy characteristics of individual groups and cultures that are worth preserving.²¹ The picture, however, is far from clear: unity and diversity are the underlying factors that result from the globalization process but not always (or perhaps ever) in a controllable or understandable way. The very forces that have a negative impact and destroy regional and local cultures also allow those cultures to be heard and seen on the world stage through the mass media and the internet. Multinational companies, who are often accused of dominating markets and forcing their goods onto a locally weak economy, do adapt their market techniques to take into account local consumer trends; thus is

¹⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 1-39

²⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 16-18; pp. 17-18, "There is no one accepted definition of globalization, nor is there consensus on its exact description. Nearly all would agree, however, that it is about the increasingly interconnected character of the political, economic and social life of the peoples on this planet. Depending again how one sees this interconnectedness, it is a phenomenon of the latter part of the twentieth century (the term 'globalization' first appeared, in English, in 1959), or began with the European voyages of discovery in the late fifteenth century; or dates from the emergence of intercultural trade in the Later Bronze Age...Globalization certainly has its antecedent in the European colonizing process, but there are distinct differences in its late twentieth century manifestation. To understand this, we must first note three processes that have shaped the globalization phenomenon in a special way. The first is political, the second is economic, and the third is technological." Osborne's quote is taken from R.J. SCHREITER, *The New Catholicity: theology between the global and the local*, New York, 1997.

²¹ OSBORNE, p. 19

born the term 'glocalization', the drive to make products more sellable by taking cultural and regional differences into account when manufacturing and selling those products.²²

The effects of globalization, Osborne maintains, are brought wittingly or unwittingly into the structures of the Catholic Church. While the late Pope John Paul II and his successor Benedict XVI have referred to the forces of globalization as promoting secularization and a lessening of moral sensitivities, the actual effects are, Osborne believes, again both positive and negative.²³ On the positive side, the Catholic Church is more readily identifiable as a global phenomenon, almost as an international organization; the idea of the universal church is strengthened. The down-side of this is that the individual and local cultural expressions of church are often sacrificed. Again, on the plus side, the impact of the personality of the late Pope John Paul II on the world stage has been undeniable, and the use of the mass media to bring his personality and the role of the papacy to the fore has done much to raise the profile of the international church. The same forces of globalization condemned by the church are, Osborne maintains, themselves useful in spreading the message of the church. This is as true for local churches as they alert the world to issues affecting them as it is for the central government of the church to micromanage local situations.²⁴

However, the micro-management of the Church by the central authorities in Rome has reached an unprecedented scale, Osborne states. While some issues are probably better dealt with locally, the opportunities for the disgruntled to make themselves heard at the highest levels of church government abound, and responses in the settling of disputes and in dealing with local issues can come

²² *ibid.*, p. 14

²³ *ibid.*, p. 14; pp. 19-20

²⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 74-84

swiftly with sometimes little regard for local circumstances. While the Second Vatican Council affirmed the importance of the local church and cultural differences, in practice these are often ignored as edicts are issued from a central authority.²⁵

The perception among some is that racism and gender discrimination continue in the church, ruled as it is by an all-male celibate clergy proceeding from a predominantly white and western mentality, even though much of the church's growth is in the southern hemisphere and in other world cultures.²⁶ Accordingly, says Osborne, the Catholic Church's understanding of the forces that govern our world and the church needs reviewing.²⁷

2.5 The Desire for Change

Given all that we have said in the preceding sections, we ask if there is a real call for change. In examining the popular perceptions of the presbyter and bishop, Osborne has called attention to the images of the ordained priesthood as communicated by films, television, and books.²⁸ Osborne believes that the standardized and stereotypical notions of the ordained are reinforced by these media, and that the popular view is that bishops and ordained priests have always looked the same, dressed the same, and acted the same.²⁹

In the context of globalization, the recognizable character of presbyters and bishops has helped the Catholic Church to 'market' the ordained as a 'brand'. The visibility of the Catholic Church in the modern world as a global organization has

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 81-84

²⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 110-111

²⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 106-109

²⁹ *ibid.*

been strengthened as a result. Osborne states that so successful is this marketing that even the failures of those in ministry serve only to underline the stereotype.³⁰

In one survey, when recently polled about what gives them most satisfaction, ninety percent of those presbyters asked replied that it was administering the sacraments and presiding over the liturgy, with a close second that of preaching the Word.³¹ Coming third, nearly twenty percent less, was involvement in peoples' lives. At a time when less people in the West are identifying themselves through the celebration of the sacraments, presbyters still define themselves largely in sacramental terms and less, perhaps, as an accompanier or fellow pilgrim. The issue of self-identification was also covered in the same work. It was found that those who had been ordained before the 1960's and those ordained after the 1980's had the strongest sense of identity. Particularly those who have been ordained in the more recent period tend to see their ministry in sacramental terms.³²

There is then the danger of being caught in the classic dilemma: while many might wish that the Church and its ministers were more relevant to today's needs and heed the call to evangelization, and while theologians and the magisterium might see the need to construct a better theology in order to articulate the full

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 107, "The ordinary Roman Catholic...is comfortable with this image and with the function of priests and bishops in conformity with that image. Even if one moves to a hybrid culture like that of Latin America, this is the case. Moving farther afield, say, to Africa, Oceania, or Asia, this image is taken as the standard for what a priest or bishop is to be. Anyone who thinks, for example, that the masses of Catholics in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea or the deserts of Namibia are clamouring for a different kind of priest is mistaken. On the whole, Roman Catholics not only think that priests and bishops *are* the same worldwide, but they also *want* their priests and bishops to conform to that image, an image that has been enforced by the artefacts of popular culture in film, TV, and, for the literate, books."

³¹ HOGE, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood, Changes from Vatican 2 to the Turn of the Century*, pp. 19-45. This survey is particularly valuable as it received the cooperation of clergy and bishops.

³² *ibid.*, pp. 61-78

significance and contribution of the ordained priesthood, the question remains as to whether people in the church really desire change.

3. The Place of the Presbyter

3.1 The Bishop and the Presbyter

At the Second Vatican Council discussion centred upon the sacramentality of the ordained priesthood *per se* and particularly upon the episcopacy.³³ The clear teaching from Vatican II was that the episcopacy represents the fullness of the sacrament of order. The office of bishop draws its sacramental power and its authority in the church not from a juridical act or appointment but from the sacrament of the episcopacy, conferred by the power of the Spirit and the laying on of hands, and its subsequent relationship with the college of bishops and the pope as the head of that college. A sacred character is imprinted upon the candidates so that they may function as bishop.³⁴

According to the Council, the ‘fullness’ of the sacrament of order means that bishops are ordained priests in a visibly prominent way, undertaking the role of teacher, shepherd, and high priest, acting in the person of Christ.³⁵ The bishop is the “steward of the grace of the supreme priesthood”³⁶ and a “legate of Christ” with regard to the governing of churches.³⁷ This eminent position in the church comes from the belief that bishops are successors of the apostles and are a sign of

³³ ARNAU, R., *Orden Y Ministerios*, Madrid, 1995, pp. 157-166. Cf. GALOT, *Theology of the Priesthood*, pp. 181-187.

³⁴ LG, 20-28; ‘Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church’, *Christus Dominus* (CD), 4; 8. LG 21, “The synod teaches that the fullness of the sacrament of order is conferred by episcopal consecration; and this ...is undoubtedly called the supreme priesthood, the highest point of the ministry.”

³⁵ LG 21

³⁶ LG 26

³⁷ LG 27

the continuing apostolic succession, which derives in an unbroken chain from the apostles' intentions to establish a hierarchically structured church.³⁸

Presbyters, along with deacons, are the co-workers with the bishop in serving the church.³⁹ As the presbyter is related to the apostolic succession through the episcopacy, the presbyter's ministry and authority derive, in part, from the bishop.⁴⁰ It is clear from the council documents that the bishop remains *the* ordained priest of the diocese, while presbyters exercise their priesthood only in communion with the bishop and the people of God.

Reflecting on the sacramentality of the episcopacy, Susan Wood has emphasized two characteristics of the office: unity and authority.⁴¹ As representative of the church and the college of bishops, the episcopate is a sign of the unity of the church with Christ and among the local churches; the ecclesial element is an essential component of the sacramental sign.⁴² Wood maintains that the episcopate signifies and realizes something beyond itself, and that this is ecclesial as well as christological. The bishop represents the church and in particular the local church. This representative function, whereby the bishop represents the faith of the local church and the communion of churches in the universal church, is that which ultimately distinguishes the bishop from the presbyter.⁴³ We can see the emphasis placed upon the relationship of the bishop to

³⁸ LG 20

³⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰ PO 1-2

⁴¹ WOOD, S. K., *Sacramental Orders*, Lex Orandi, ed. LAURANCE, J. D., Collegeville Minnesota, 2000, pp. 28-85.

⁴² *ibid.*, pp. 66-67; p. 66, "Contemporary sacramental theology identifies Christ as the fundamental sacrament, the Church as the sacrament of Christ, and seven sacraments as sacraments or signs of the Church. That which is signified by a sacrament is made present in the 'real symbol', which contains what it signifies. Consequently the *res et sacramentum*, the sacramental reality, contains an ecclesial dimension in addition to the christological dimension as part of that which is signified by the sign of the sacrament, the *res et sacramentum*."

⁴³ *ibid.*, pp. 68-69

the local and universal church in the ‘Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church’, *Christus Dominus*, which analyses these matters in great detail.⁴⁴

The other distinguishing characteristic of the bishop, Wood believes, is authority. She states that the sacrament of orders signifies the structure of the church as well as the activity of the church.⁴⁵ In her analysis of the rite for the ordination of bishops, Wood focuses on the aspect of governance which she believes is underlined by the liturgical rite as a whole.⁴⁶ Again this distinguishes the role of bishop and presbyter; while the presbyter is related to the needs of the universal church, he cannot exercise such an authority.

3.2 The Rite of Ordination of Presbyters

In her analysis of the 1990 ordination rite of presbyters, Wood points to several contradictions in the ordination ritual. The fundamental relationship with Christ and the church is represented in the rite by the prayers and symbols that highlight the presbyter’s relationship with the people of God and with the bishop.⁴⁷ However, there are mixed messages given out by the interplay between word and symbol. For example, the preparatory rite does include the ‘election by the people’, and implicit is the idea that the candidate for ordination has shown in his life the necessary spiritual qualities for a life of prayerful service. The language of the 1990 ordination prayer at the beginning does, Wood believes, eliminate the

⁴⁴ See CD 4-11. While the Decree *Christus Dominus* spells out the various duties and tasks of the bishop, these are framed within the ecclesial coordinates emphasized by Wood.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 68

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 28-57; p. 57, “The bishop’s role in governance is especially prominent in the ordination rite in the references to shepherd with the accompanying symbolism of the pastoral staff, responsibilities to build up the church, and in the ordination prayer for a governing Spirit. In addition, high priesthood, with the emphasis on the qualifier ‘high’, is also related to governance.”

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 86-116

status language of the 1968 rite.⁴⁸ However, in the explanatory rites, the presentation of the stole and chasuble, the anointing of the hands and other rites, while they may symbolize other aspects of the ministry of the ordained, tend, Wood states, to underline power and status.⁴⁹

The explicit relationship between the bishop and presbyter is spoken of in the ordination prayer. Again, there have been changes in the 1990 rite which emphasize the presbyter as a co-worker with the bishop. The request by the bishop for fellow workers in the epiclectic part of the prayer, Wood maintains, is not seen as a concession to the weakness of the bishop but emphasizes the shared ministry between bishop and presbyter; there is clear reference to the personal and sacramental relationship between them. The Spirit guarantees that the gift of the presbyterate is from God with the purpose of ordering God's people with the bishop. This stresses the collegial nature of the relationship, Wood believes, and suggests a charismatic structure to the sacrament of holy orders.⁵⁰

Two specific points emerge from Wood's treatment of the rite of ordination of presbyters: the specific authority of the presbyter in relation to the people of God, and the ecclesiological vision behind the rite of ordination of presbyters. As we have seen above, the authority that the presbyter exercises is in communion with the bishop in a collegial manner. The ordination prayer of 1990 further refers to the duties of the presbyter as being spiritual: the celebration of the Eucharist, anointing, penance, and preaching. There is no specific mention of his role in

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, pp 93-94; 97-105. Wood compares the opening of the 1968 prayer, where God is addressed as "the source of every honour and dignity", with the equivalent section of the 1990 prayer, where God is addressed as the "author of human dignity and bestower of every grace", p. 99. The 1990 prayer places less emphasis on status and highlights God's giving in the midst of humanity. We can note the influence of *Gaudium et Spes* here, see GS 1; 4; 9 et. al.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 105-107

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 102-105. We note that the word 'weakness' still occurs in the 1990 rite with reference to the bishop.

governance and in the explanatory rites there are no symbols that specifically mention his leadership of the community.⁵¹ All of this emphasizes the presbyter's spiritual role in the outpouring of God's love in particularly needy life situations and in the celebration of the sacraments that are specifically linked with key moments in the person's life.

The second specific point that Wood makes is with reference to the ecclesiological vision dominant in the rite. This is exemplified by the change in the promises made by religious presbyters. The promise of obedience to the local ordinary taken by religious as well as secular presbyters is a new addition to the rite. This has caused some controversy, and Wood treats this as a special question.⁵² She does point out that this inclusion in the rite was made without proper consultation and without rigorous theological reflection. It could lead, in her opinion, to a clash of loyalties and a strain between the needs of the local and universal church. However, she is broadly in favour of the thinking behind the change.⁵³

It has been a constant understanding in the Catholic Church that presbyters are generally ordained for a local church. Exception has been made for religious presbyters in recognition of their particular charisms for the good of the universal church and the smooth running of religious orders and societies. There have been tensions between the need of the local church and the authority of the bishop, on the one hand, and the desire of religious orders to move personnel according to their needs, on the other.⁵⁴ This latter concern, however, has been relativised, Wood says, in relation to the ecclesiological understanding of ministry. Canon

⁵¹ *ibid.*, pp. 104-107

⁵² *ibid.*, pp. 107-113

⁵³ *ibid.*, pp. 112-113

⁵⁴ *ibid.*

Law (Canons 573, 576) gives autonomy to religious orders for the good of their charism, but the growth of the order according to the vision of their founder is not an absolute. The promise of obedience taken to the bishop underlines the essential relationship between the bishop and every presbyter in his diocese. Ultimately, Wood states, this raises the whole question of why presbyters are ordained, which is ultimately for a local church.⁵⁵

Wood continues this theme in her analysis of the nature of the promise of obedience. Obedience, she states, is a ‘two-way street’ and implies mutual respect between bishop and presbyter. Following an argument presented by Alois Müller, she points out that this promise of obedience to the bishop is in fact a promise of obedience to the church, of which the bishop is a representative. Thus the promise of obedience is to the church as it is lived and experienced by the majority of Catholics today.⁵⁶

We can be in general agreement with Wood over the ecclesial context for the inclusion of the promise of obedience taken by religious presbyters: the presbyter’s ministry is specific in its relationships, and the anomaly allowed under Canon Law may be coming to the end of its usefulness. The celebration of the sacraments in a local community and in a local church is, and indeed should be, the norm. In fact, this is the situation for many if not most religious societies and orders. Religious presbyters (where they exist) often have responsibility for a parish and in so-called ‘mission’ countries they exercise this role in a particular

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 109-110, “This forces the question: when and why is ordination necessary? The answer: for sacramental, teaching, and governing ministry that requires official and public representation of the ecclesial community in the name of Christ whose body the Church is. Priests were originally ordained in many communities to serve the sacramental needs of their community. The proliferation of ordained ministers in many religious communities dates to the practice of private masses...The practice of ordaining members who minimally exercise their priesthood is questionable.” References to the Code of Canon Law come from, CANON LAW SOCIETY OF AMERICA, *Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Edition*, Washington, 1983.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, pp 111-112

way. There is growing commonality too between the ministry of diocesan presbyters and those carried out in the past (and still in the present) by religious presbyters. The specialized ministry, once exercised almost exclusively by the religious presbyter, is a feature of the lives of more and more diocesan presbyters who are called to specific chaplaincy work.⁵⁷

3.3 The Presbyter and the Parish

Despite changes in the ministry of presbyters over the years, the model that still predominates is that of the presbyter attached to a parish with responsibility for the church in that particular area.⁵⁸ Wood, in an article on presbyteral identity and the parish, maintains that "...the diocesan parochial model is normative for the theology of ordained ministry in the documents of Vatican II..."⁵⁹ On this basis, she seeks to offer a theology of the identity of the priesthood that is historically contextualized and which deals with the specific identity of the presbyter.⁶⁰ She does this in two ways. Firstly, by correlating the ministry of the ordained to the levels of ecclesial territory, i.e. the local church as related to the bishop and the parish as related to the presbyter, and this within a theology of communion. Secondly, by presenting a theology of the parish developed from the theological reflections of Rahner and orientated to the reality of the baptized community in a particular place.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Cf. LOUDEN, S. H., FRANCIS, LESLIE J., *The Naked Parish Priest, What Priests Really Think They Are Doing*, London and New York, 2003. See pp. 30-43 where the authors analyse the response from presbyters as to the adequacy of their training for specific ministries. It is clear that both religious and diocesan clergy see strengths and weaknesses in their specific chaplaincies and ministries. We can conclude that religious presbyters are not alone in feeling able to exercise specific tasks in the church.

⁵⁸ WOOD, "Presbyteral Identity within Parish Identity", p. 175. Cf. canons 515; 519 of the Code of Canon Law. See also WOOD, *Sacramental Orders*, pp. 126-130.

⁵⁹ WOOD, "Presbyteral Identity", p. 175.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, pp 176-178

⁶¹ *ibid.*, pp. 179-185

Wood argues that as a bishop is defined in terms of his being pastor of a local church so the presbyter can be defined as a pastor of a parish. Although the church has defined ministry largely in terms of altar worship as a Eucharistic community in a local church or diocese, the fact is that it is around local places that the church organizes itself. The concrete experience of the Catholic is most often not as a people gathered around the local church and bishop but as a member of a parish.⁶²

Karl Rahner has reminded us that the mystery of salvation and the work of the Spirit becomes effective and is manifested in a particular space and time, sociologically, historically and sacramentally; the church is fundamentally territorial.⁶³ This territorial reality is exemplified by the church in the context of what he calls 'neighbourliness', which is so important to human social relationships and is served by the activity of the parish. This human and lived reality has theological as well as sociological consequences.⁶⁴ This territorial reality of the church Wood sets within an ecclesiology of communion: as the bishops are united among themselves, and so are a sign of the unity of the church, so the presbyter is in a necessarily collegial relationship with the bishop, and so is a sign of the unity of the local church with its parishes.⁶⁵

Referring to the theology of the parish as developed by Karl Rahner, Wood argues that Rahner's definition of the parish related to the Eucharist has to be

⁶² *ibid.*, pp. 179-180. Here Wood refers to SC 41 where the church is defined ministerially through the presence of the bishop and as most manifest in the Eucharist celebrated around the altar of the local church. However, she argues that this is not the common experience of Catholics. She refers to LG 28 which does mention the local parish as being the church of God.

⁶³ RAHNER, K., "Theology and Spirituality of Pastoral Work in the Parish", *Theological Investigations Volume 19*, New York, 1983, pp. 86-102. Referring to the Eucharist, Rahner writes on p. 89, "Here the Church is present in its completeness and here it is unquestionably in place, in the local community, which is not absolutely necessarily but preferably and normally the parish community."

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 91, "As far as it is possible and necessary the work of the parish and the pastor may and should relate to the secular reality of local neighbourliness as such."

⁶⁵ WOOD, "Presbyteral Identity", pp. 179-180

complemented by a theology of the parish related to baptism. She portrays the parish as *the* place of Christian formation, in terms of coming to faith as well as in terms of the development and nurturing of that faith.⁶⁶ The missionary task of the church, she argues, is highlighted both by reference to baptism and to the local community.⁶⁷

With this in mind, Wood offers a definition of the presbyter both in terms of place and ministry.⁶⁸ The presbyter, Wood states, supports ecclesial communion in the local community by his ties with the local bishop. The presbyter is not a sign of communion between the universal and local church, nor is he directly connected with the apostolic succession; it is only in communion with the bishop that his priesthood is included in these. He is a sign of these ecclesial realities only in the local community, which has what it needs for salvation only in communion with the local church. The presbyter is a pastoral leader in the context of the baptismal community, organizing ministries and being a focus for the journey of faith. Furthermore, in his function as prophet, he preaches the word of God and acts *in persona Christi* and *in persona Ecclesiae*. He can act at times over and against the community, even though he must be part of it.

The strength of Wood's definition of the presbyter in terms of the parish lies in the connections that she makes between the presbyter and the bishop and between the presbyter and the community of the baptized in an historically contextualized theology of place and time. She offers a vision that delimits the authority of the

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 185, "Within a theology of baptism, the parish is the contextualized and particular *place* of Christian formation. With reference to Karl Rahner's theology of the universal Church coming to *event* in the parish, we can add that it comes to *event* in a particular *place*, in particular circumstances and a particular culture and within a particular community. Even though baptism is ritualized in the sacramental rite of baptism, the ritual marks a number of stages within a process of initiation that encompasses the entire life of the parish community. The initiation of adults is the responsibility of all the baptized..."

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 186-192 for what follows.

presbyter, while at the same time providing a positive context for the ministry of word and sacrament which the presbyter exercises in a local situation. She also does justice to the role of the presbyter in being a spiritual leader, accompanying both the baptized and the person who is searching on their journey of faith. In this her model is in concert with that of the 'Rites of the Christian Initiation of Adults'.⁶⁹ It also has the virtue of tying in with the historical development of the presbyterate as outlined by authors such as Kenan Osborne.⁷⁰

However, there are certain weaknesses in Wood's defining the presbyter solely in relation to the parish as she presents the latter ecclesial reality. Firstly, there are the other aspects of the presbyter's ministry in relation to institutions and bodies and specialized ministries, even though these are often carried out in a particular geographical area or in relationship to parish boundaries. The character of parishes and the reality of the presbyter's ministry are changing: presbyters in the West are being asked to minister to two or more parishes, even while these retain their parochial identity sustained by the people in that area. Further, individuals often attend churches that are not in their area but do so because of preference or personal circumstances, this latter phenomenon being connected with greater mobility and varying lifestyles.⁷¹ The place of religious presbyters is still problematic and is not completely explained by Wood's analysis. It could be argued, for example, that the ministry of the religious presbyter is conducted within particular boundaries which could be defined as 'parochial'.

⁶⁹ See ICEL, *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, London, 1987, General Introduction.

⁷⁰ OSBORNE, *Orders and Ministry: Leadership in the World Church*, pp. 130-138. Here Osborne analyses recent scholarship on the orders of bishop and presbyter in the New Testament and the early church, pointing out that the office of presbyter developed into a leadership role of local communities in the face of the expansion of the church.

⁷¹ See footnote 9. To my knowledge, there has been no major study conducted into this phenomenon in Scotland but personal anecdotal knowledge and conversation between presbyters points to this as an issue.

4. Conclusion – Images of the Presbyter

In this chapter we have examined the general cultural context for the ministry of the ordained priesthood in terms of authority, and have delineated the competence of the presbyter's ministry in relation to the bishop and the local community. This has enabled us not only to contextualize the ministry of the ordained priesthood in general but also to call attention to the personal and territorial framework which further defines the presbyter in his sacramental and pastoral identity. It is important, we believe, to take into account the perceptions others have of the ministry of the presbyter. These have a bearing on relationships and thus pastoral effectiveness. How others respond to the presbyter also defines his ability to act as a shepherd, guide, and assurer, terms which encapsulate his primary sacramental role. We conclude this chapter and the first part of our thesis by examining some of the images of the presbyter (and the ordained ministry in general) that have been offered by theologians and the magisterium of the church.

4.1 Shepherd

Shepherd is the image of the bishop and presbyter favoured by the magisterium of the church. Along with its corresponding and more commonly used term 'pastor', it has the advantage of having biblical roots, especially as it connects the ordained minister with the ministry of Jesus as portrayed especially in the Gospel of John.⁷² As we have seen, it can also be used to describe the founding identity of the ordained priest, bringing together the various functions and ministries under one title. It suggests the dynamic of a pilgrim people being led into God's Kingdom by the abiding presence of Christ through the ministry of the ordained

⁷² By the ministry of Jesus we also refer to the work of redemption which the title 'shepherd' implies. See BROWN, R. E., *The Gospel According to John (1-12)*, Anchor Bible, London, 1966, pp. 395-400.

priest. It also brings in the notion of sacrificial love, which is a feature of authentic service in pastoral charity.

However, it suffers from being seen as paternalistic and anachronistic, unintelligible to many contemporary urbanized people. Further, it is perhaps more applicable to the ministry of the bishop, who is seen as the figure in the local church with authority in governance and teaching, emphasized by the symbols associated with the episcopate, particularly the crosier.

4.2 Steward

This term, as we have seen, has been suggested by James Whitehead, as well as by others, to describe the ministry of the ordained.⁷³ It underlines that the ordained priest is not the sole possessor or controller of the gifts of God but is dependent on the authority of Christ. It emphasizes the role of overseer and yet allows for the authentic (and authoritative) ministry of others within 'God's household'. It also has the advantage of having roots in New Testament imagery, alluding to the notion of the responsible Christian and the work of the apostle (Lk. 12, 42; 1 Cor. 4, 1-2). It frames the ministry of the ordained within an eschatological perspective.

Yet stewardship in the New Testament points to the absence of the Lord rather than his presence and conjures up ideas of management, rather than personal involvement. It again runs the risk of being less relevant to the modern mind, though perhaps more so than the image of shepherd.

⁷³ Cf. PHILIBERT, P., *Steward of God's Mysteries: Priestly Spirituality in a Changing Church*, Collegetown, Minnesota, 2004. Cf. WOOD, *Sacramental Orders*, p. 113.

4.3 Leader and Guide

The leadership role of the ordained priest is again emphasized by both magisterium and theologian. We have seen that spiritual leadership is the particular role of the presbyter within the local community, underlined by the ordination rite of presbyters. Connected with this role as spiritual leader, and taking into account the above observations made by Donald Cozzens, the idea of the ordained priest as a guide calls attention to the role of accompaniment that is very often the hallmark of the presbyter in the everyday spiritual lives of people today.

To attribute either of these terms to identify the presbyter, however, would have to be done with qualifications. Depending upon the situation, others in the community may act as leaders, and the presence in the church of properly trained spiritual directors, ordained, religious and lay, is a feature of modern Christian life.

4.4 Assurance

All of the above may be used to describe the ministry and the life of the presbyter; all of them are valid terms to identify one or more aspects of the ministry of the ordained according to the orders of bishop and presbyter and deacon.⁷⁴ We are not suggesting that the term ‘assurer’, which may sound awkward and strange, simply replace the above images. However, we are suggesting that assurance best describes the gift of the presbyterate that is given to the church.

⁷⁴ The deacon participates in the ministry of preaching, leading the community in prayer, and ministering to the poor. He witnesses marriages and can lead funeral rites. He can be involved then in crucial moments of peoples’ lives.

At the conclusion of chapter one, we argued that this term is more personal and takes into account the real action of the ordained priest in ministering to a pilgrim people who need to be assured that the grace offered in the sacraments and the Gospel is authentic. The one who assures has also to be authentic; there is no authoritative assurance unless the person so invested answers the call by the Spirit to undertake the work of Christ in their life and behaviour. Yet, the one who assures does not dominate either the lives of the people to whom he gives surety. The idea of assurance, within the sacramental context, also includes the belief that it is Christ in the Spirit who assures; despite the failings of the minister, the action of God is offered.

Historically, this idea of assurance also fits in with the original role of the presbyter in at least some areas of the early church, acting as an advisor to the bishop and an elder of the community, from which the term presbyter came.⁷⁵ In today's church, the collegial role of the presbyter has yet to be fully realized but is enshrined in the documents of Vatican II and the 'Code of Canon Law'.⁷⁶

To see the presbyterate as the gift of assurance in the church is to call attention to the needs of the people of God in the church in the ordinary and the everyday. As we have seen at the beginning of this third chapter, it is in the ordinary and the everyday that people find meaning. As we have also seen, it is in the context of the local community that people still, for the most part, experience the preaching of the Gospel and the celebration of the sacraments. The presbyter is an influential figure in the ordinary and the local faith lives of communities, and we believe this is not by accident but by design.

⁷⁵ OSBORNE, *Priesthood, a History of Ordained Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church*, pp. 40-160.

⁷⁶ See Canons 495-502

PART TWO – GIFT AND RETURN

Chapter Four- Participation in the Life of the Trinity

1. Introduction to Part Two and Chapter Four – the Sacramental Encounter

During the last century, Catholic theologians attempted to move away from defining sacraments in propositional terms to explaining them in terms of the personal encounter between God and the believer. By sacrament or sacramental we intend not only the specific celebration of the seven chief rites of the Roman Catholic Church, commonly called sacraments, but also the broader application of the terms to describe the relationship with God in human history and life events. By encounter, we mean the self-disclosure of a free God and our response to that revelation in faith and ethical behaviour. In this part of our thesis we express this encounter using the terms ‘gift’ and ‘return’. By using the expression ‘gift’, we highlight God’s loving initiative in revelation. In using the expression ‘return’ we intend the response of faith, as understood and shown in a person’s life.

We have already seen that relationship is crucial to the definition of the ordained priest: he is there for others; he is defined in his active relationships with God and others in the church. Relationship is also fundamental to the contemporary definition of any sacrament. In order to understand more fully how this is so, and in order to deepen our appreciation of the specific place of the presbyter in the sacramental dialogues that constitute the church, we shall examine some contemporary contributions to the field of sacramental theology. This discussion goes further into the theological background of some of the authors we have already introduced into our discussion

As indicated in the introduction to this thesis, many works dealing with the ordained priesthood do not root their discussion in an elaborated sacramental

theology. We believe that by more fully discussing some of the foundations of sacramental theology in modern debates we can see how the ordained priesthood, and the presbyterate in particular, reveals itself as a key sacrament of the church, and specifically how it helps the everyday encounter between God and his people.

All Christian relationships are founded in the Trinity. If relationship is crucial to the definition of sacrament then it is important to show how the activity of the three persons of the Trinity is shown as the foundation of sacramental relationships. The work of Edward Kilmartin specifically focused on the connection between sacramental life and the Trinity, and it is to his theology that we turn in chapter four. Firstly, we examine the roots of his theology in the attempts of certain twentieth century theologians to explain the presence of Christ in the liturgy of the church and in the lived experience of human beings.¹ In short, the divine-human encounter. We then move onto the sacramental theology of Edward Kilmartin itself.

In particular he showed how a theology of the Holy Spirit is necessary to understand the activity of God in the world and the life of the believer. The dynamic that is revealed in the examination of Kilmartin's theology is that of gift and return; the giving God who elicits a response in faith from the believer. The response of the believer is seen not just as an effect of the sacrament but as part of the definition of the sacrament. Both the elaboration of a theology of the Holy Spirit and the whole dynamic of gift and return sheds light on the place of the ordained priesthood, which exists to facilitate this dynamic. It explains more clearly the link between Christ and the believer and Christ and the ordained priest as the work of the Spirit, and reveals the ordained priesthood as a gift from God

¹ In this chapter we make little distinction between the liturgy, a term encompassing the whole prayer of the church, and the sacraments. For the purposes of this thesis we believe that the whole prayer life of the church can be defined as sacramental.

to the church. Thus the sacramental encounter produces something new in the life of the church. The ministry of the ordained priesthood is seen not just to imitate Christ and his work in the sense of mere historical repetition but to participate in the ongoing of Christ and the Spirit for the transformation of the community.

In chapter five this dynamic of gift and return is further elaborated with reference to the concerns of theologians who have tried to address the problems thrown up by postmodern philosophy for our subject. Two important themes will emerge more clearly from our discussion in this chapter: the ethical response, the option for the other that is crucial to the contemporary definition of the sacrament, and the 'everyday' as providing the necessary context for understanding the sacramental encounter. Both of these themes have direct bearing upon the life and ministry of the presbyter. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* emphasized the ordained priest as someone who exists for others and underlined the element of pastoral charity. The themes explored in chapter five help us to see how this indeed forms part of the definition of the ordained priesthood. The context of the everyday, the ordinary, specifically relates to the presbyter, whose ambit is the everyday life of Christians.

These chapters form a connection between the first and third parts of our thesis. On the one hand, they provide a deeper theological reflection on the relationships introduced in the first three chapters, assurance, authenticity, and authority. Particularly they show how the gift of accompanying leadership, the love of others, and the realm of the ordinary help to define the presbyter sacramentally; in other words how these elements form part of the sacramental identity of the presbyter.

On the other hand, these chapters look forward to the final main chapter of this thesis in which we explicitly consider the presbyter in the life of the church. The first connection with our final chapter is made in the three statements we shall make at the end of chapter five on God, the church, and the sacramental encounter. The relationship between God and the believer in the church is the main concern of the presbyter. In the gift of the ordained priesthood to the church something of the relational nature of God, revealed in Christ and the Spirit, is shown. The second connection concerns the themes explored by an examination of the theology of contemporary sacramental theology. We can better understand the ministry and life of the presbyter in personal and dynamic terms, as one who gathers the people of God and acts to foster the relationship between God and his people, if we spend some time on a systematic examination of some of the main tenets of the sacramental theology of our chosen authors.

2. The Roots of the Theology of Edward Kilmartin - The Sacramental Encounter in Twentieth Century Theology

2.1 The Presence of Christ in the Sacraments

Both Kilmartin and Jerome Hall have summarized the approach taken by sacramental theologians during the early part of the twentieth century as they reacted against neo-scholastic theology.² Hall states that before the Second Vatican Council there was much discussion on the nature of Christ's presence in

² HALL, J. M., *We Have the Mind of Christ: The Holy Spirit and Liturgical Memory in the Thought of Edward J. Kilmartin*, Collegeville, Minnesota, 2001, pp 1-37; KILMARTIN, E. J., "Theology of the Sacraments: Towards a New Understanding of the Chief Rites", *Alternative Futures for Worship: Volume 1 General Introduction*, ed. DUFFY, R. A., vol. 1, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1987, pp. 123-175, especially pp. 123-131; KILMARTIN and DALY, *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, Kilmartin in this last work gives the fuller analysis. Hall had access to Kilmartin's notes on this period. See Hall's acknowledgments and references throughout the first chapter of his book.

the liturgy.³ The first chapter of Hall's work centres on the attempts made by certain theologians to explain this presence by synthesizing liturgical, scriptural, patristic, and Thomistic theology. These attempts, he claims, provided a starting point for Kilmartin.⁴

2.1.1 Aquinas and Neo-Scholastic Theology

Hall states that Catholic theology had for centuries explained the sacraments as means or causes of grace.⁵ This developed from the theology of Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas believed God to be the principal cause of grace and that God used two instruments in communicating this grace: the humanity of Christ and the sacraments.⁶ In his *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas states that grace could be communicated from God to humans because "considered in itself grace perfects the essence of the soul in virtue of the fact that this participates, by way of a kind of likeness, in the divine being."⁷ According to Hall, Aquinas believed that "God communicates sacramental grace through the sacramental sign, the prayer of the church, and the faith of the one receiving the sacrament".⁸ Aquinas related the effects of sacramental grace to the sacrament's character as a sign of Christ's passion.⁹ Hall believes that Aquinas saw the relationship between the deeds of Christ to the present and the future in the following manner: the passion of

³ HALL, pp. 2-4. Kilmartin states that attempts were made to incorporate the insights of Scripture and the Fathers of the church and draws a comparison between the achievement of the twelfth century theologians and the theology of the early twentieth century in trying to achieve a synthesis. Cf. KILMARTIN, *Eucharist in the West*, pp. 267-269.

⁴ The subject of Hall's work is the development of Kilmartin's work on the theme of anamnesis on the liturgy.

⁵ HALL, p. 4

⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 4-6

⁷ AQUINAS, T., *Summa Theologiae*, 3a., 62, 2 as found in Blackfriars, London and New York, 1975, Vol. 56, p. 57, translation by David Bourke.

⁸ HALL, pp. 4-5. Cf. POWER, D., *Sacrament: The Language of God's Giving*, New York, 1999. Power claims that Aquinas placed limits on how far efficient causality could express the communication of grace by relating it to the genus of sign. However, Power claims that this proved somewhat unsatisfactory when Aquinas considered Christ's presence in the Eucharist.

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 5

Christ is the cause of human salvation, given as the gift of grace in the present and the promise of eternal life in the future.¹⁰

Neo-scholastic theology, Hall claims, worked on the basis that the sacramental sign was an *indication* of the bestowal of grace. The sacramental celebration was seen as the instrumental cause of God's bestowal of grace upon the soul. According to this approach, by an extrinsic juridical act, God applies the merits of Christ's passion upon the individual. Emphasis was thus placed on the effect of the sacrament on the individual.¹¹

2.1.2 Odo Casel and the Presence of Christ in the Liturgy

Hall says that, reacting against this juridical interpretation of sacramental grace, Odo Casel and others tried to show how the church's liturgy is the occasion for a saving encounter with the person of Christ. Casel developed a theology that attempted to express the whole of Christian life and belief from this perspective.¹² According to Hall and Kilmartin, the key concept for Casel was that of 'mystery', the presence in the liturgy of the divine plan of salvation under the veil of symbol.¹³ The first great mystery is the presence of God through created realities. This is a revelation of himself as the only transcendent God in glory. God is, above all, present in Christ and in his saving deeds; this is the basic mystery of Christianity. Christ in his turn makes himself present with his saving deeds in the liturgy. The mystery of worship shapes and constitutes the church by conforming Christians to Christ's dying and rising. Christ is present in the liturgy in all his

¹⁰ HALL, p. 4

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 5. Hall maintains that neo-scholastic theology did not focus on the personal presence of Christ, crucified and risen, p. 5, "(in neo-scholastic theology) (T)he liturgical anamnesis of Christ, then, was not emphasized; stress was placed on 'the principal of the sacraments,' their efficacy."

¹² See HALL, pp. 6-15; KILMARTIN, *Eucharist in the West*, pp. 268-277. We shall largely follow Hall's analysis in this section with reference to Kilmartin.

¹³ *ibid.*

fullness and calls Christians to configure themselves to his pattern of dying and rising. This, Hall and Kilmartin believe, is what Casel intended by the term grace. In other words, grace is not just an effect of the presence of Christ in the sacraments.¹⁴

According to Hall's analysis, Casel's theological system sees the sacraments as re-actualizations of Christ's deeds which are present in the mystery of the performance of the sacramental rite. Christ's passion must be present substantially in the sacrament in order to conform the Christian to his dying and rising. The God-Man is present in a 'symbolico-real' fashion. Christ's deeds are not historically present but re-presented by Christ through the sacramental sign.

Each of the sacraments configures the Christian to the pasch of Christ. Christ's pasch as the *kernel* of the redemptive mystery is present in the liturgy.¹⁵ Casel, Hall states, made appeal to scripture, the Fathers, and the theology of Aquinas to support his ideas. He made particular reference to Romans 6, 3-4 where Paul states that the Christian is baptized into Christ's death and resurrection in order to share new life.¹⁶

Commenting on Casel's theology, Kilmartin believes that Casel highlights the christological dimension of the economy of salvation and underlines the essential holiness in the sacraments themselves. Grace is thus seen in terms of the elevation

¹⁴ HALL, pp. 6-8; p. 8, "According to Casel's mystery theology, Christianity is not primarily a doctrine to be accepted by an intellectual act of faith but is rather 'a deed, a history in which we can participate; a history which, in a fashion, becomes contemporaneous with all the generations to come.'" (Here Hall is Quoting ELOI DEKERS, *La Liturgie, mystère Chrétien*).

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p 10

¹⁶ On this particular passage see KILMARTIN, *Eucharist in the West*, p. 280, "Scholarly opinion seems to agree that this text does point to a certain operational presence of the mysteries of Christ in the one being baptized, but that the precise mode of operational grace cannot be deduced from the text with any degree of certainty." Kilmartin also critiques Casel's view of the Old Testament whereby he downplayed the element of mystery in the cult of Judaism.

of the whole person through contact with Christ and his redemptive work, and the church's participation in the mystery of Christ.¹⁷ He goes on,

Theology of liturgy is one way of doing theology. This theology aims at a unified comprehension of the mystery of the divine and human. It does not escape the task of seeking to articulate the connection between the liturgical symbolic actions and the whole mystery of the life of faith within the scope of the comprehensive Christian perception of reality.¹⁸

According to Kilmartin, any theological system based on the liturgy of the church has to be subject to the examination of systematic theology, incorporating other insights from the Christian tradition. Kilmartin attempted to do just this in his own theological enterprise.

2.1.3 Further Reflection on Christ's Presence in the Liturgy

Hall and Kilmartin both state that the teaching of Pius XII in his encyclical *Mediator Dei* reflected some of the insights of Casel's theology, though they seem to differ as to how far it was influenced by Casel.¹⁹ Kilmartin states that *Mediator Dei* does not accept the objective presence of Christ's past deeds in the sacramental presence but does affirm the sacramental presence of the crucified and risen Christ. According to this view, the historical mysteries exist in as much as they have affected Christ, and, Kilmartin believes, there is more than a suggestion in the encyclical that through Christ these mysteries exercise an effect upon the recipient of the sacrament.²⁰ Kilmartin maintains that the encyclical teaches that the presence of the risen Lord is the ground for the relationship between his historical saving acts and the liturgy of the church.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 269-270

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 282

¹⁹ HALL, pp. 32-34; KILMARTIN, *Eucharist in the West*, pp. 291-300. See Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, AAS 39 (1947), 521-9.

²⁰ KILMARTIN, pp. 299-300

According to Kilmartin, the encyclical seems to suggest that through the risen Christ a causal unity is affirmed between the historical acts of Christ and the liturgy.²¹ It is according to this schema that the encyclical presents the mutual presence of Christ and the church in the liturgy.²² Hall claims that the encyclical defines the liturgy in terms of the upward movement of the worshipper towards God in his majesty and does not affirm the downward movement of the divine reality under the veil of symbol. He further argues that it did not affirm the objective presence of Christ crucified and risen but saw him present only in his power. This despite claims by some supporters of Casel who stated that the encyclical confirmed Casel's position.²³

Having considered the reactions to Casel and the teaching of the church, two questions remain for Kilmartin and Hall: first, the connection between Christ and the church (and the individual worshipper) in the sacrament, in other words the encounter; and second, how Christ can be present with the effects of the acts of his passion, death and resurrection, an event which occurred in the past.²⁴ We can only appreciate how Kilmartin attempted to provide a possible answer to these difficulties once we have reviewed his work on the sacraments. However, some initial comments on his findings are made here.

We shall begin with the second problem: the presence of Christ and his saving deeds as celebrated in the liturgy. Kilmartin states that it has generally been assumed in sacramental theology that because the historical life of Christ has passed, it cannot be rendered present in the liturgy. However, he also maintains

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 300

²² HALL, pp. 32-34

²³ *ibid.*, p. 34

²⁴ HALL, pp. 16-31; KILMARTIN, pp. 300-338. It is not our intention to follow the whole discussion here but to select one or two points to help fill in the background for Kilmartin's work.

that there has been an assumption, since the time of Casel, that some element of the redemptive act can and is made eternal or timeless. He believes that this latter opinion is favoured by much of the literature in the twentieth century on the sacraments. This attitude is critiqued by Hall as being inconsistent with Thomistic metaphysics, even though Casel used this system to attempt to explain the presence of Christ's saving acts in the liturgy.²⁵

Kilmartin believes that Brian McNamara provides a possible solution. McNamara suggests that two things have to be borne in mind when speaking of the actions of God. The first is that God is eternal: he is outside time and therefore any idea of a succession of events, even when conceived of as timeless, has no bearing on how God operates.²⁶ This implies, according to Kilmartin's analysis, that everything is present to God simultaneously. From the perspective of the divine plan, therefore, the meaning of the world is the single *transitus* of the Incarnate Word to the Father. The intelligibility of the Christ event lies within God's perspective because he knows and wills eternally.²⁷ In other words, no succession of events can be rendered timeless or enter into the divine life. However, the meaning and the purpose of those events is understood from the divine perspective.

Secondly, in terms of Thomistic metaphysics, Kilmartin believes that McNamara's theology explains how God as principal agent can act on humanity without himself being changed.²⁸ According to his reading of McNamara's theory

²⁵ KILMARTIN, p. 312; HALL, pp. 24-31. Referring to the work of Jean Hervé Nicolas, Brian McNamara and others, Hall maintains that, according to the metaphysical system elaborated by Aquinas, no element of any act can be a-historical since acts possess no substance but remain fixed in their historical context. The belief that some element can be eternalized destroys the integrity of the act itself. This applies even to the deeds of Christ.

²⁶ KILMARTIN, pp. 312-319

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 314

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 315

in this regard, God is present to humanity by *acting* on humanity, the instrumental agent being the humanity of Christ. The effect of the action of God, which is commensurate with the action itself, is on the human being who is brought into union with God in the liturgy. This union is brought about by the person being configured to Christ. Thus it is the power of God and his understanding of the purpose of the divine plan that is present in the person of Christ (just as it was the power of God present in the historical Christ event).²⁹ Therefore, no element of Christ's saving deeds can be timeless as such, but the power of the eternal God acts on human beings who participate in the liturgy to configure them to the pattern of Christ's life. This pattern is reproduced in the individual's return to the Father. All elements of the divine plan, including the passion and death of Christ, are present simultaneously to God and, according to Kilmartin's reading of McNamara, the agent (God), the instrument (the humanity of Christ), and the effect (the configuration of the individual to Christ), are co-existent.³⁰

As we shall see, according to Kilmartin's theological enterprise, a fuller explanation of how God and the human being might encounter one another in the liturgy is possible only by integrating theological anthropology and the role of the Holy Spirit into a comprehensive view of liturgical action. We consider the first of these elements, theological anthropology, in the work of Schillebeeckx and Rahner.

2.2 The Theology of Schillebeeckx and Rahner

Edward Schillebeeckx and Karl Rahner stand out as two of the most influential Catholic theologians in the second half of the twentieth century. Both theologians

²⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 315-316

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 317

stressed the incarnation as the norm for explaining the divine-human encounter and both reinterpreted traditional theology from within an existential framework.³¹

2.2.1 Edward Schillebeeckx – the Divine-Human Encounter in the Humanity of Christ

In explaining the sacramental encounter, Schillebeeckx takes as his starting point the hypostatic union, with a particular understanding of Christ's divinity in relation to his humanity. For Schillebeeckx, Jesus is the divine acting in human form.³² In Jesus' humanity, therefore, we encounter God, his person and actions. Jesus' humanity reveals not only God's initiative but also the perfect human response. Jesus, then, is *the* sacrament of the encounter with God. Schillebeeckx believes Jesus' self-offering on the cross to be the final disclosure of his fundamental option for his Father and the revelation of God's incredible love returned in the human.³³

According to Schillebeeckx, Jesus' person and activity in his crucified and glorified humanity is the sacrament that founds all other sacramental activity in the church. In fact, Schillebeeckx believes that Jesus is unthinkable without his redemptive community. The life, death, and resurrection of Christ result in the forming of the community of the church, which is a continuation of Christ's mission and presence, his body. It is the *visibility* of the sacrament, and thus the

³¹ RAHNER, K., *Foundations of Christian Faith, an Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, New York, 1985; RAHNER, K., "Consecration in the Life and Reflection of the Church", *Theological Investigations Volume 19*, New York, 1983, pp. 57-72; SCHILLEBEECKX, E., *Christ, the Sacrament of the Encounter with God*, New York, 1963. Their influence is attested by the many references to their work by modern Catholic theologians.

³² SCHILLEBEECKX, p.14

³³ *ibid.*, pp. 15-17

possibility of personally assenting to the offer of God in a concrete way, that is crucial to Schillebeeckx' christology and sacramental theology.³⁴

Schillebeeckx highlights the action of the theandric Christ. He is the God-Man in heaven, who, through his glorified humanity, is still able to encounter the human. From our side, the possibility of encounter is established by the visibility of the sacraments through which Christ acts, and our Christ-given ability to follow where he has gone. Christ has divinized human nature and has brought it into the realms of God.³⁵

In the celebration of the sacraments, the minister of the sacrament acts as a servant of the mystery of Christ with his church; in other words as a minister of sacramentality.³⁶ The minister must serve the visibility of God's offer of grace in the fullest possible way. It is this visibility, the revealing in history of God's offer of grace, and the reality of its acceptance by the individual, which is the key to explaining the sacramental encounter. The recipient of the grace of the sacrament cannot celebrate the sacrament without paying attention to the basic visible form. The acceptance of God's offer has to be both free and historical. According to Schillebeeckx, the believer must at least be able to 'listen' to the offer of grace for it to be received.³⁷

Hall points out that Schillebeeckx' arguments rest on the belief that in Christ there is not a fully constituted human person but a particular humanity united to the person of the Word.³⁸ According to Hall's analysis, Schillebeeckx believes that the divine Word personalized self through his human actions and that these human actions participate in the eternity of the divine Word and so become trans-

³⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 47 ff.

³⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 40-45

³⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 100-109

³⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 108-109

³⁸ HALL, p. 22

historical, in other words perennialized, a concept with which Hall has problems from the point of view of the Thomistic analysis to which we referred above.³⁹ However, on further examination, we must point out that Schillebeeckx does distinguish between the divine perspective and the human in a way that is at least suggestive of McNamara's theology. We believe that it is not simply the case that Schillebeeckx perennializes Christ's action in the sacraments but that the visibility of the sacramental ritual and the sending of the Holy Spirit conform the person to Christ, this taken from the human side, or 'from below' as Schillebeeckx would have it.⁴⁰ From 'above', or the divine perspective, the intelligibility of Christ's actions are taken up into the divine knowing and willing.⁴¹ These ideas feature in Kilmartin's own theological synthesis.

2.2.2 Karl Rahner - the Divine-Human Encounter within an Evolutionary View of the World

1) Anthropology and Christology

Rahner believes that the very basis of the human subject's ability to act freely and to accept God's grace in freedom is the self-communication of God in the creation of the human person. Faced with the mystery of one's own existence, Rahner states, the person is led to the appreciation of the founding of this mystery in the absolute mystery, which is God.⁴² This is a process that takes place in history for human beings are historical. This view of salvation history is a history

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 23. Cf. POWER, D., *The Eucharistic Mystery, Revitalizing the Tradition*, Dublin, 1992, p. 275. Here Power seems to agree with Hall's analysis of Schillebeeckx' making the actions of Christ trans-historical. However, Power states that these views were modified in Schillebeeckx' later works.

⁴⁰ SCHILLEBEECKX, p. 74

⁴¹ *ibid.*, pp. 74-76

⁴² RAHNER, *Foundations of Christian Faith, an Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, pp 116-133.

of transcendence.⁴³ God reveals himself precisely as saviour in the historical. Thus the history of revelation and salvation history are one and the same.⁴⁴

Within an evolutionary view of the world, Rahner sees the unity of matter and spirit as constitutive of the human, and the human as the being in whom “the basic tendency of matter to discover itself in spirit through self-transcendence reaches its definitive breakthrough.”⁴⁵ The essence of what it is to be human is revealed in this journey of self-transcendence, which is always a free gift of God at every stage. This human journey reaches its ultimate and unsurpassable phase in the incarnation, in a sense the beginning and the end of God’s involvement with the world. The incarnation is thus the source and the summit of our union with God.⁴⁶

It is faith in Jesus Christ, first and foremost, that constitutes Christian belief but that belief, according to Rahner, is both historical and ecclesial. The proclamation of the faith has its roots in a community of faith, and this is commensurate with a truly human faith. To be historical and therefore participate in the mystery of salvation, individual faith has to have a public dimension.⁴⁷ Rahner does state that belief has to be a personal decision, an exercise of one’s proper subjectivity, but faith is not of one’s own invention, it has an objective content and form which help orientate the individual’s subjectivity.⁴⁸ The Christian is, therefore,

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 140, “...man as subject and as a person is an historical being in such a way that he is historical precisely as a transcendent subject; his subjective essence of unlimited transcendentality is mediated historically to him in his knowledge and in his free self-realization.”

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 141. Cf. RAHNER, "Consecration in the Life and Reflection of the Church", pp. 60-61.

⁴⁵ *Foundations*, p. 181

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, “In the first instance this hypostatic union may not be seen so much as something which distinguishes Jesus from us, but as something which must occur once and only once when the world begins to enter upon its final phase, which does not necessarily mean its shortest phase. In this phase it is to realize its definitive concentration, its definitive climax and its radical closeness to the absolute mystery which we call God.”

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 329-331

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 344, “...a genuine subjectivity which sees itself situated in God’s presence, and therefore knows to begin with that it has to allow itself to be at the disposal of something objective which it has not established, this subjectivity understands what church is within the

necessarily 'ecclesial' and "receives the concreteness of his life from a community of persons, from intercommunication, from an objective spirit, from a history, from a people, and from a family. The Christian develops his or her faith only within this community."⁴⁹

How does this view of the history of God's self-communication and the human response, based on the incarnation and the subject's orientation within the church, connect explicitly with the sacraments in Rahner's thinking? The connection is succinctly made when Rahner considers the church as sacrament, and the seven chief rites (or sacraments) of the church as existential moments in the life of the individual.⁵⁰ The church for Rahner is the sign of God's irrevocable offer of grace in Jesus Christ, the historical community in which Christ is present in the Spirit and where the individual can find the basic orientation for the life of salvation.⁵¹

The seven sacraments, commonly understood and defined by the Councils of Florence and Trent (DS 1310 and 1601), are understood by Rahner as the church addressing itself to individual and existentially decisive moments in the life of the individual.⁵² In the case of the sacraments of consecration, for example, baptism (the basis for the other sacraments), confirmation, matrimony, and holy orders exist as particular callings and consecrations of a more basic consecration to God already communicated to a person in their fundamental freedom and orientation to

realm of the religious: it understands, namely, that there is something which obliges me, and which forms a point around which I can orientate myself, but which is not present only when I begin to be religious with my own subjectivity."

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 389

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 411-430

⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 412, "As the ongoing presence of Jesus Christ in time and space, as the fruit of salvation which can no longer perish, and as the means of salvation by which God offers to an individual in a tangible way and in the historical and social dimension, the church is the basic sacrament. This means that the church is a sign of salvation, and is not simply salvation itself."

⁵² *ibid.*, pp. 412-413

God in creation.⁵³ The seven chief rites are the means by which God offers grace and enables human response in the particular circumstances of life.⁵⁴

According to Rahner, the Eucharist stands apart from the other sacraments because it represents the basic activity of the church and is bound up with Christ's redemption and the founding of the church. The Eucharist is *the* activity of thanksgiving in which humanity is brought into the presence of God.⁵⁵

II) The Trinitarian Theology of Karl Rahner

a) Rahner's Basic Axiom

For Rahner, it is vital that we understand the Trinity as a mystery of salvation. The Trinity is not primarily a concept or an appendix to theology or piety but an existential reality: God with us. The Trinity as it reveals itself (the economic Trinity), Rahner believes, *is* the Trinity in itself (the immanent Trinity); otherwise there can be no salvation.⁵⁶ Therefore, the mystery of the Trinity, far from being an addendum to theology must occupy the centre of theology.⁵⁷

To show the correspondence or coherence between the economic and immanent Trinity, Rahner considers the incarnation as a generally accepted confirmation of this correspondence. Rahner states that it is revelatory of the Trinity that the Logos became the incarnate Son and that humanity was not assumed by one of the

⁵³ RAHNER, "Consecration in the Life and Reflection of the Church", pp. 64-72.

⁵⁴ RAHNER, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, p. 415.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 424-427

⁵⁶ RAHNER, K., *The Trinity*, DONCEEL, J., English ed. London, 1970, p.21, "The isolation (from mainline Christian theology and life) of the treatise of the Trinity has to be wrong. There must be a connection between the Trinity and man. The Trinity is a mystery of salvation otherwise it would never have been revealed." His axiom in this connection appears on p. 22, "The basic *thesis* which establishes this connection between the treatises and presents the Trinity as a mystery of salvation (in its reality and not merely as a doctrine) might be formulated as follows: the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity."

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 21

other persons in the Trinity.⁵⁸ Furthermore, Rahner believes, the human nature of the divine Logos really does tell us something about the Logos itself since his nature is not a mask or a mere instrument; it is not something created before the incarnation and merely assumed for the purpose of ‘acting out’ in history. There is a real relation between the humanity of the Logos and the divine person. Thus the humanity of Christ is a real symbol of the Logos. However, while his humanity is revelatory of the Logos, it is also revelatory of our sonship in Christ and of the possibilities of the human person.⁵⁹

b) The Trinity as it Opens out to the Human

Rahner believes that the word ‘person’ as attributed to the Trinity is problematic.⁶⁰ In its modern psychological sense, the communication of personhood is impossible, yet self-communication by God, Rahner maintains, is essential to our understanding of salvation.⁶¹ He believes that the term person as applied to the Trinity has to be understood both in its more primitive sense, as a distinct manner of subsisting, and as a relative concept.⁶²

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p.30, “...we cling to the truth that the Logos is really as he appears in revelation, that he is *the one* who reveals to us (not merely *one* of those who might have revealed to us) the triune God, on account of the personal being which belongs exclusively to him, the Father’s Logos.”

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 33 “...human nature is not a mask (the *προσωπον*) assumed from without from behind which the Logos hides to act things out in the world. From the start it is the constitutive real symbol of the Logos himself. So that we may and should say, when we think our ontology through to the end: man is possible because the exteriorization of the Logos is possible...what Jesus is and does as man reveals the Logos himself: it is the reality of the Logos as our salvation amidst us. Then we can assert, in the full meaning of the words: here the Logos with God and the Logos with us, the immanent and the economic Logos, are strictly the same.”

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 49-57

⁶¹ *ibid.*, pp. 87-90

⁶² *ibid.*, pp. 49-76. Rahner points out that this understanding of the person in Trinitarian theology is not without its difficulties. He depends on the idea of the absolute mystery of God as prior to his explanations and maintains that his theological system elaborates only what has been revealed in salvation history and elaborated in church teaching. For an analysis of the concept of person in Rahner’s Trinitarian theology see LADARIA, L., "La Teología Trinitaria De Karl Rahner", *Gregorianum* 86/2 (2005), pp. 276-307. Ladaria believes that the concept of person must be defined in relationship to the Trinity, not the other way around, see pp. 305-306.

In the immanent Trinity, according to Rahner, unity is not something that is a given before the relations within the Trinity but must in some way emerge from their relationship.⁶³ This is revealed, he maintains, by the very possibility of a relationship with the persons of the Trinity in salvation.⁶⁴ In the work of salvation, Rahner argues, God must somehow communicate himself in a personal way and that this must correspond with who he really is.⁶⁵

The encounter in the life of grace between the Triune God and the human person is treated by Rahner in his grouping together of certain ‘aspects’ or features of God’s self-communication, aspects which he uses ostensibly to explain the correspondence between the God of salvation (the God of Scripture and our experience) and God as he is in himself.⁶⁶ While Rahner principally uses these to demonstrate how the self-communication of God in history as Son and Spirit can be understood, by using these ‘aspects’ he is also presuming human engagement within a view of the world that sees history as unfolding towards God’s purpose. In this way he attempts to link the biblical world-view with the idea of the human person in development and growth. In Rahner’s consideration, the self-communication of God can only be to the one who is capable of receiving his self-communication, namely the human person.⁶⁷

⁶³ *ibid.*, pp. 103-114. Rahner understands the doctrine of the Trinity as one God *in* three persons, their unity and diversity being reflected in the relationships that proceed from the Father and the Son.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 76-77. Rahner refers to what he calls the traditional church teaching on the Trinity whereby the Trinity acting *ad extra* is one, and the particular way in which a person of the Trinity operates in the history of salvation is viewed under the character of appropriation, e.g. that it is appropriated to the Second Person of the Trinity to become human. However, Rahner argues that this does not mean that these relationships between the persons of the Trinity and the human in salvation are not real. He distinguishes between the relationship between God and creation as being of the order of efficient causality, while the relationship between human beings and the Trinity are governed by what he calls a quasi-formal causality. In this he attempts to show some kind of personal relationship established between ourselves and the persons of the Trinity.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 87

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 87-88.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 88-89

He couples these aspects under the headings a) Origin – Future, b) History – Transcendence, c) Invitation – Acceptance, and d) Knowledge – Love. While Rahner believes that the aspects of origin and future, history and transcendence, and invitation and acceptance, are ‘self-explanatory’ in the human and biblical experience of God, he states that we might have some initial difficulty with the coupling of knowledge and love. Yet this coupling, Rahner believes, is vital to understanding the self-communication of God to humanity in Word and Spirit.⁶⁸

He compares truth, as knowledge come to full expression, and love, in the experience of humanity, with the distinct yet united self-communication of God in Word (truth) and Spirit (the love of God). In this way, as communication of truth and love, the self-communication of God has to take place for it to make sense to humanity, to square with the fullness of human experience.⁶⁹ This self-communication of God brings with it the possibility of acceptance in his creation of human subjectivity.

Rahner goes on to state that the difference-in-unity between truth and love, must exist in God, otherwise it would not be self-communication but be of the order of creation, of a sign of God’s presence rather than his being present to us as a relational being.⁷⁰ In this way, Rahner connects his anthropological perspective not only with his understanding of the incarnation of Christ but also with the

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 89-96. See p. 94, “Knowledge and love in their duality describe the reality of man. Hence a self-communication of God to man must present itself to man as a self-communication of absolute truth and absolute love.” He goes on in pp. 95-96, “Truth is not first the correct grasping of a state of affairs. It consists first in letting our own personal essence come to the fore, positing oneself without dissimulation, accepting oneself and letting this authentic nature come to the fore in truth also in the presence of others... This true ‘revealing’ – letting our nature come to the fore in the presence of others – is (when it includes a free commitment to the other) what we call ‘fidelity’”. Cf. O’DONNELL, J., “Karl Rahner on Easter Faith,” *Gregorianum* 86/2 (2005), pp. 357-367.

⁶⁹ RAHNER, pp. 89-96

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 99-103.

revelation of the Trinity. Because of our human experience we can grasp the self-disclosure of the God who creates and founds our human nature and personhood.

2.3 Summary

Hall and Kilmartin noted the concern of theologians in the early twentieth century to move away from the language of cause and effect to explain the sacramental action towards an appreciation of the personal presence of Christ in the liturgy. From a desire to explain salvation and sacramental action in more existential terms, and in order to trace the origins of Kilmartin's own theological approach, we turned to the theology of Schillebeeckx and Rahner. We now see how Kilmartin integrated the insights gained in the twentieth century into his own theology.

3. Sacrament: the Encounter with the Triune God – Edward Kilmartin⁷¹

3.1 Our Approach to Kilmartin's Theology

Kilmartin attempts a synthesis that explains the connection between Christ as the Son of God and the Christian as the child of the Father as shown forth in the sacramental life of the church.⁷² We believe that there are three important

⁷¹ The subtitle for our section is borrowed from MAGNUSEN CHAPP, C. M., *Encounter with the Triune God: An Introduction to the Theology of Edward J. Kilmartin*, San Francisco, 1998. In this introduction to the theology of Kilmartin, the author deals with three important areas of Kilmartin's work: the theology of the Eucharist, the theology of ministry, and the theology of sacraments in general.

⁷² For what follows see KILMARTIN, *Christian Liturgy: Theology and Practice*; KILMARTIN, "Theology of the Sacraments: Towards a New Understanding of the Chief Rites"; KILMARTIN, E. J., "The Active Role of Christ and the Spirit in the Sanctification of the Eucharistic Elements", *Theological Studies* 45 (1984), pp. 225-253. Jerome Hall, in the above quoted work, outlines Kilmartin's theological enterprise thus, pp. 36-37, "...three areas emerged for possibly fruitful reflection. First was the relationship between the sacramental symbol, and the imagination of Christians at worship. Kilmartin would, in large part, treat that relationship under the category of human celebration. Second was the interrelationship of the modes of Christ's liturgical presence. Kilmartin would address this task through consideration of the liturgy as action of the Christian assembly and through examination of liturgical rites and prayer texts. Third was the dialogic character of the mystery that the liturgy celebrates. Kilmartin would make the investigation of the Trinitarian self-communication and of the human response of self-

concepts for understanding his theology of the sacraments. Firstly, for Kilmartin, there is a necessary correlation between liturgy and life. The process by which a person matures in faith is closely linked with the celebration of the sacraments, and must be explained in contemporary existential language. This, we believe, represents one of the most important aims of Kilmartin's theology. Secondly, for Kilmartin, the theology of the liturgy is a theology of the Trinity. Kilmartin argues that there is a correlation between the celebration of the chief rites of the church and the revelation of God in his redemptive plan for humanity. Thirdly, the whole notion of encounter is essential for him. According to Kilmartin, in the celebration of the rites and sacraments, the believer meets the God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and it is in celebrating the presence of the Triune God among us that we are brought to conversion. This links the first two ideas we have outlined, and ultimately depends upon Kilmartin's understanding of the dialogical constitution of the Trinity and of humanity.

Kilmartin's theological endeavour also grew out of a desire both to respond to the demands of the Second Vatican Council and to achieve a theological synthesis that would serve the contemporary church in a way that the Scholastic synthesis had served the church in the middle ages.⁷³ Furthermore, in the course of his life and work, he sought a meeting of minds between the theologians of the East and

offering a central concern of his work. In that investigation he considered the response of Christ in his humanity to the divine self-communication, seeking to connect the life of faith of Christ, of the Church, and of the Christian."This is a more nuanced reading of Kilmartin's intentions in keeping with Hall's emphasis upon his analysis of Kilmartin and the pursuit of the themes developed in the first chapter of his work. We have opted for a different order and a slightly wider outline of Kilmartin's concerns, though the two schemes, we believe, correlate. For a wider list of influences on Kilmartin's thought see FAHEY, M., "In Memoriam: Edward J. Kilmartin, S.J. (1923-1994)", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 61 (1995), pp. 5-18.

⁷³ KILMARTIN, *Christian Liturgy*, pp. 4-5.

the West, and it was in the course of this ecumenical involvement that he formulated his approach to the role of the Holy Spirit in the liturgy.⁷⁴

3.2 Human Growth in Personhood – Worship and Culture

3.2.1 The Human Person as Embodied Spirit

The documents of the Second Vatican Council, particularly *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the church's 'Constitution on the Liturgy', exhort the faithful to actively participate in the liturgy.⁷⁵ This implies commitment and maturity in the faith, and growth in the development of personal relationships between the participants and God, and between the participants themselves. While it is important for Kilmartin in his theology that it is the church that realizes itself in the sacraments, he is anxious to make connections between life as generally experienced and the liturgy. He turns both to the human sciences and the theology of Karl Rahner for his own systematic exposition of these ideas.⁷⁶

A basic idea in Kilmartin's theology is that of the human person as an embodied spirit, one who matures in the encounter with the other and in the processes of physical and emotional life. The body is seen by Kilmartin as the 'real symbol' of the spirit, a symbol being defined by Kilmartin as something that participates in

⁷⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 2; 261-268, and indeed throughout this work.

⁷⁵ SC 2; 11; 14

⁷⁶ For the influence of Rahner on the theology of Kilmartin see HALL, pp. 40; 77-84. Hall is mostly concerned with the influences of Rahner, Cowburn and Balthasar on the Trinitarian theology of Kilmartin and his development of the role of the Holy Spirit. It is important to note at this stage, before going on to examine Kilmartin's anthropology, that Rahner's anthropological starting points are present throughout Kilmartin's work. As an example of this correlation see RAHNER, *Foundations of Christian Faith, an Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, pp. 24-43. On p. 32 Rahner writes, "In the fact that he experiences his finiteness radically, he (man) reaches beyond his finiteness and experiences himself as a transcendent being, as spirit. The infinite horizon of human questioning is experienced as an horizon which recedes further and further the more answers man can discover. Man can try to evade the mysterious infinity which opens up before him in his questions. Out of fear of the mysterious he can take flight to the familiar and everyday. But the infinity which he experiences himself exposed to also permeates his everyday activities." The issue of finitude and the role of the everyday and ordinary in systematic theology comes to the fore in postmodern critiques of this position and leads to a questioning of the idea of human history as the expression of a subjectivity already 'given'.

the life of that which it symbolizes.⁷⁷ In the symbolic, there is a unity of being between the signifying and the signified. According to Kilmartin, as the body experiences physical and emotional changes, so human beings question their existence and are referred to something beyond themselves; they become participants in their own mystery. In this questioning, they realize that they are free to make decisions about meaning and direction in their lives and so come to crucial decisions for their future. This process is referred to by Kilmartin as one of confronting 'boundary situations'.⁷⁸

Kilmartin believes that the human person does not come to establish meaning in a vacuum. He or she is also a participant in history and a historical process, and so comes face-to-face with the traditions that have been handed down that both interpret and illuminate moments of crisis as well as furnishing a possible response.⁷⁹ Kilmartin believes that the human sciences, while they illuminate and explain to some extent the human processes that are at play, do so in terms of the rational domination of human development. The language of sacrament and prayer, on the other hand, leads to the conclusion that the ultimate mystery with which we are engaged is not at our disposal.⁸⁰ The response of the community to life situations in prayer signifies the presence of God with us.⁸¹

As one engages with meaning, with beauty and truth, one realizes, according to Kilmartin, that these experiences are mediated by human engagement but that this human engagement is not the source of the engagement. In other words, personal encounter is necessary for our growth as persons in the search for meaning but this personal engagement leads us to seek the basis of this experience. This finally

⁷⁷ KILMARTIN, *Christian Liturgy*, pp. 22-24; 41-47.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, pp 23 ff.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 18-21

⁸⁰ See RAHNER, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, pp. 44-89.

⁸¹ KILMARTIN, *Christian Liturgy*, p. 23.

leads us to acknowledge that each and every meaningful encounter is one of gift, and that the ground of our personal encounter, God, is free; he is not controllable.⁸²

Kilmartin introduces the notion of appreciative consciousness which orientates one to the contemplation of the mystery dimension of human life.⁸³ As opposed to an attitude where rational attainment is the goal, utilizing persons and things as means, an alternative disposition is required of the one who experiences the symbolic dimension of human existence: contemplation. Catechesis on the sacraments, Kilmartin argues, requires that the person be orientated to the contemplation of the holy; that life has not only to be led but contemplated. This can emerge from an appreciation of shared human conditions and values that can orientate one towards the transcendent.⁸⁴ Implicit in these considerations is the question of how a person deals with the fragmented nature of life and the problem of suffering.⁸⁵

3.2.2 The Phenomenon of Religious Worship and Culture

Kilmartin takes the phenomenon of religious cult as a given and considers it initially from the view that cultural analysis might offer of a social grouping with its own aims and objectives. He accepts two definitions of culture, from the Second Vatican Council's 'Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern

⁸² *ibid.*, pp. 23 ff. The sciences of sociology and psychology, Kilmartin maintains, lead us to draw comparisons between the symbols of the liturgy and the adult symbols of life. Sociology in particular examines groups and institutions in terms of the activities that constitute them and lead them to growth. The phenomenon of liturgical activity makes the basic activities of the church liable to such scrutiny.

⁸³ KILMARTIN, "Theology of the Sacraments: Towards a New Understanding of the Chief Rites", pp. 145-146.

⁸⁴ *Christian Liturgy*, pp. 27 ff.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p. 31

World', *Gaudium et Spes*, and from Charles Geertz.⁸⁶ Culture is defined by these sources as a given, and as material from/by which humanity can communicate, develop, and perpetuate knowledge and attitudes toward life. A cultural field, according to Kilmartin, is constituted by a system where there is a coherence of images, codes and rites, and where there are rules founded on language of speech, texts, and conduct. This system enables one to take one's stance in space and time, to identify and to realize one's personhood.⁸⁷

Kilmartin believes that a subculture can make a selection from the dominant culture and arrive at a new synthesis. Subcultures do have the capacity, he notes, to become the dominant culture. The various symbols and symbolic action of a subculture both enable identity within the community and also enable interaction with the surrounding culture. Religious worship, Kilmartin maintains, falls within the definition of a subculture and thus is among those phenomena that can be analysed by social critique, while maintaining its own distance from such analysis because of its vertical dimension.⁸⁸

Kilmartin highlights three key elements of religious worship from a phenomenological perspective, while critiquing them from a particularly Christian viewpoint. These are orientation, expression, and affirmation, which are coordinated by the community in order to celebrate the transcendent good of its collective life.⁸⁹

Orientation, Kilmartin believes, provides a didactic function, an instruction on the nature of the world. This is particularly necessary in a Christian context where Christian values are set aside or at odds with the prevailing *mores*. There is a

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 31- 47 for what follows. See *Gaudium et Spes* 53; 2. Kilmartin refers to GEERTZ, CLIFFORD, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York 1973, p. 89.

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 32-36

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 36-47 for what follows.

necessary dialogue between the past and present as the traditions of the church and its history relate to present day needs.

Expression, Kilmartin says, is the articulation of the relationship between the human and the divine, and allows the individual and the community to respond to the action of God. This has to be done in conjunction with what was said about orientation, which can instruct the community and the individual on new ways of opening up to praise and thanksgiving in her or his particular circumstances.

One of the main features of Christian worship, as Kilmartin sees it, is the Christian need for *affirmation* in the search for meaning, salvation, and liberation. Again hermeneutics are necessary because of the historically conditioned forms of experience of a particular age. Ideally Christian worship advances human dignity but it can also oppress it.⁹⁰

3.2.3 Inculturation

Kilmartin believes that the history of the church is not linear but rather exhibits cycles which involve the rediscovery of original riches and the re-expression of insights in new and relevant ways. The relationship between the past and present is understood in a dynamic way.⁹¹ Here Kilmartin seems to be in favour of a mutually critical relationship, between prevailing and local culture, on the one hand, and the liturgical and local expressions of the church's belief in the actions of Christ, on the other. However, this process has to be undertaken, Kilmartin

⁹⁰ *Christian Liturgy*, p.37. Cf. POWER, *Sacrament: The Language of God's Giving*, pp. 247-264. Power states the need for a critical analysis of texts and celebrations that show signs of oppression or the furthering of a particular ideology.

⁹¹ *Christian Liturgy*, pp. 42-44; 67

believes, within the global perception of the church's faith; the church is not bound to any culture but embraces all cultures.⁹²

Human beings, Kilmartin states, are bound to their cultures, which provide them with essential elements for their identity and personality. For a full life in faith, inculturation is essential.⁹³ This dialogue between cultures and expressions of faith is one which deepens unity rather than threatens it. "The Christian community", Kilmartin writes, "must live in a cultural milieu, and express best its life of faith, including worship, in and through elements of the native culture."⁹⁴

3.2.4 Human Communication in the Liturgy

Seen from the point of view of communication through speech and symbolic action, and bearing in kind the depth dimension of liturgy (i.e. the liturgy is celebrated with the eyes of faith), Kilmartin believes that the human dimension can be integrated into the global vision of the sacramental economy.⁹⁵

Referring to Alexandre Ganoczy and *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, he goes on to say that both the scriptures and the liturgy are witnesses to saving revelation, not the revelation itself. This introduces the important notion of mediation; there is no direct communication from or access to God. The difference between the scriptures and liturgy as Kilmartin sees them is that the liturgy allows a response,

⁹² *ibid.*, pp. 42-44; p. 42, "The relation of revelation, Christian life, and worship to cultures took on particular significance at Vatican II, as the Council struggled with the problems of liturgical reform. The revelation of God and the various ways of the response of humankind to that revelation are necessarily bound to a culture. But there exists no overarching, superior culture which transcends and, at the same time, includes all other cultures. This fact leads to the conclusion that the full reception of Christian faith, conveyed in the clothing of one culture, by those of another culture, entails inculturation."

⁹³ *ibid.*, p. 43

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 44

⁹⁵ *ibid.*, pp 44-50; p. 45, "(H)uman beings allow access to themselves by free self-communication through already established symbol systems. Through these systems they communicate themselves and receive communication from others. As both communicator and communicant, individual persons are located in a context that locates and exercises controlling influence over all the parties involved. But in the case of liturgy, there is the mystery aspect that does not allow it to be conceived and interpreted merely as an exercise of group dynamics." Here Kilmartin follows the ideas of Alexandre Ganoczy.

both corporate and individual, to the saving action of God now, and in a way to which the form of the liturgy testifies.⁹⁶ In the sacramental celebration, participants are seen as active subjects and not just passive receivers of grace.⁹⁷ The liturgy also witnesses to the global expression of the church's faith and so transcends the individual's limited assimilation of the depth dimension of Christian and human existence.⁹⁸

3.3 The History of Salvation and the Liturgy

The essentially relational nature of human beings is rooted in creation for creation is God's speaking and our answering in thanksgiving. God, Kilmartin maintains, is not a structure of human existence but comes to us as gift.⁹⁹ Human growth in personhood comes about in the process of self-realization in dialogue with the other in love. This love is the self-offering of one to another as each recognizes the worth of the other. God reveals himself fully, according to Kilmartin, but from the human side we can talk only about revelation as occurring in degrees, since we can only communicate ourselves in a partial manner. Therefore, while God shows himself fully in love, our awareness of this love and ability to respond are conditional.¹⁰⁰

For Kilmartin the history of salvation culminates in the Christ event and the sending of the Spirit upon the church. This establishes the dialogue between the Christian community and the Triune God, who thus reveals himself as a personal

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 284-289. In these pages Kilmartin reviews the history of word and sacrament and reaches the conclusion that a Catholic understanding of sacrament involves the response in faith of the community and the individual in its very definition.

⁹⁷ KILMARTIN, "Theology of the Sacraments: Towards a New Understanding of the Chief Rites", pp. 149-150.

⁹⁸ *Christian Liturgy*, pp. 45-46

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 65

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*

and relational God. The liturgy is the privileged place *of* and *for* this dialogue.¹⁰¹ That which we can consider from the sociological point of view is qualified by the liturgical context. For Kilmartin, the liturgy is where the basic activities of the church (preaching, service of love and neighbour, and worship) meet and receive their fullest expression and meaning because all these actions of the church are summed up by the giving and receiving of love. It is in the liturgy that we experience the ultimate in God's giving and our returning of love.¹⁰²

According to Kilmartin, the experience of God is ultimately a liberating one in which we can grasp our true freedom. Under the symbol of the cross, the liturgy proclaims the liberation of the human being from every form of servitude and establishes us as God's children free to address him as Father.¹⁰³ In the liturgy we are called to commitment to the Gospel and the transformation of society. It is within this context of conversion and liberation that Kilmartin calls to mind the teaching of Aquinas on the sacrament as the commemorative sign of the passion of Christ and the meaning of what is effected in us for the future.¹⁰⁴ The experience of liberation is thus linked with the passion and death of Christ as an ethical reality in the life of the believer. Ultimately we are challenged in the liturgy, prayer and sacrament, to allow God to be the Lord of history, and to participate in this transformation of the self and the world.¹⁰⁵ Kilmartin maintains

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*, pp. 53-55

¹⁰² *ibid.*, pp. 75-78; p. 76, "We all know what celebration is from our own experience. As a humanizing event, it is primarily an expansion of consciousness. Without the loss of contact with the real world, liturgy enables an expansion of consciousness in a way that is proper to it." See also p. 77, "Liturgy is primarily the exercise of the life of faith under the aspect of being together in the name of Jesus for the realization of communion..."

¹⁰³ *ibid.*, pp. 81-82

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*, p. 82

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 83-85

that in the liturgy we are liberated from egoism and recognize not only the ‘other’ who is God but also the inestimable value of our neighbour.¹⁰⁶

3.4 Trinitarian Theology

3.4.1 The Theology of the Trinity and the Theology of the Liturgy

In the quest for a systematic theology of the liturgy and the sacraments, Kilmartin believes in the integration of the *lex orandi* and the *lex credendi*. If we emphasize one at the expense of the other, then there is an imbalance in our perception of the whole faith life of the church.¹⁰⁷ The task of systematic theology is to show how the liturgy serves as a transparency for the faith of the church; *how* the divine-human encounter takes place in prayer and sacrament. He believes that the foundation for the faith of the church is the divine communication of God in Word and Spirit and the free response of the community and the individual, which leads to sanctification. Therefore, Kilmartin maintains, the theology of the liturgy has to be a theology of the Trinity.¹⁰⁸

Kilmartin considers what he calls a “typical modern Catholic approach to the Trinity.”¹⁰⁹ Presupposed in such an approach, he states, is a processional model of the Trinity, which takes for granted the relationships within the Trinity and the distinction between the work of God in creation and his work in redemption. This, he believes, is often done without an elaboration of the role of the Spirit or a fully

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 93-95. Kilmartin cites Casel as a theologian who stresses the law of prayer over that of belief, which Kilmartin believes can lead to misunderstanding. In his *Eucharist in the West*, p. 343, he believes that in the western church the ‘fixing’ of the moment of the Eucharistic change at the institution narrative is an example of how the law of belief can distort the overall form and meaning of the Eucharistic prayer. This is set within a wider discussion of the relationship between the two ‘rules of faith’. See pp. 342-352, in which he covers the work of Prosper of Aquitaine on the subject. Cf. *Christian Liturgy*, p. 97; HALL, pp. 50-52.

¹⁰⁸ *Christian Liturgy*, pp. 100-102

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 103-106

worked out theology of the Trinity's role in the sanctification of human beings.¹¹⁰ In this approach, the dominant anthropological starting point considers humans as embodied spirits who grow gradually into the image and likeness of God. The christological starting point is the hypostatic union. The humanity of Christ receives created grace in its fullness and communicates this grace to humanity. As the risen Lord he becomes co-sender of the Spirit on the church. The church is seen as a 'broadening' of the mystery of Christ within humanity. The Spirit is seen as the soul of the church, but the church is not considered to be the sacrament of the Spirit but of Christ.¹¹¹ In the liturgy of the church, the unity between Word and Spirit is stressed while the work of Christ in raising the assembly into union with God is emphasized. The Trinity, as it were, stands in the background.¹¹²

Kilmartin believes that such a theological system does not fully consider the role of the Trinity as a whole in the liturgy and downplays, in particular, the mission of the Spirit.¹¹³ In developing a theology of the Trinity in a way that tries to show more clearly the encounter between God and the Christian assembly in the liturgy, Kilmartin develops his ideas on the personal mission of the Holy Spirit by conducting a dialogue between the theologies of the East and West. He also incorporates the trinitarian theology of David Coffey.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 108-109

¹¹¹ *ibid.* Cf. LG 8.

¹¹² *ibid.*, pp. 105-106

¹¹³ *ibid.*, pp. 106-111; p. 110, "In the Trinitarian approach to liturgy, the God whom Christians encounter in the worship of the Church is the Triune God. The Trinitarian God does not stand behind the risen Lord, who is present to his community assembled in his name. Rather the risen Lord is present to the assembly as its Head 'in the Spirit.' The Spirit, whom Christ possesses in fullness, whom Christ promised to his Church, is possessed by the holy assembly."

¹¹⁴ For comment on the interrelation between Coffey's theology and that of Kilmartin, see HALL, p. 101.

3.4.2 The Personal Mission of the Spirit

The ecumenical dialogue between Christian denominations on the roles of Christ and the Spirit in the Eucharist provided a starting point for Kilmartin's own reflections on the role of the Spirit in the liturgy of the church. In his article on the role of the Spirit in the sanctification of the Eucharistic elements, he analyses the various agreed statements made by the churches involved in bilateral discussions during the 1960s and 1970s.¹¹⁵ Analysing the Roman Catholic consultation with the Orthodox Church in the U.S.A. during this period, Kilmartin notes that the churches' interpretation of the roles of Christ and the Spirit in the Eucharist is bound up with the manner in which the two churches conceive of the sending of the Spirit by the risen Lord and the Father.¹¹⁶

Kilmartin states that traditional Catholic theology attributes the sanctification of the Eucharistic elements to the action of Christ through the presiding ordained priest. Through the theandric action of Christ, the divine power of the Trinity works the transformation.¹¹⁷ This reflects, Kilmartin believes, the traditional Catholic teaching that the Trinity acts outwardly as one, with any particular role or mission being attributed to a divine person by appropriation.¹¹⁸

Orthodox theology, Kilmartin claims, does assign a role to the presiding ordained priest of acting in the *person* or, for some, in the *name* of Christ, but it sees the work of the transformation of the elements to be the work of the Holy Spirit, not the Trinity as a whole. Kilmartin also states that Orthodox theology understands the work of the Trinity to be revealed in the two missions of the

¹¹⁵ KILMARTIN, "The Active Role of Christ and the Spirit in the Sanctification of the Eucharistic Elements"; KILMARTIN, E. J., *Toward Reunion: The Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Churches*, New York, 1979.

¹¹⁶ KILMARTIN, "The Active Role of the Spirit", pp. 232-233. For an outline of the history of the bilateral discussion in the U.S.A see KILMARTIN, *Towards Reunion*, pp. 17-34.

¹¹⁷ KILMARTIN, "The Active Role of the Spirit", pp. 233 ff.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 236-237

Word and the Spirit but that there is no full explanation of the coordination of the two roles. The sending of the Spirit in Orthodox theology is attributed to the Father through the Son.¹¹⁹ However, it is the theology of some of the Orthodox churches that provide Kilmartin with an important starting point for his own reflections on the role of the Spirit.

Normally, Kilmartin believes, Orthodox theology distinguishes between the earthly acts of Christ and the theandric acts of Christ after his resurrection.¹²⁰ According to this theological schema, during his earthly life, Jesus had the authority to communicate the Spirit to individuals who would receive his power in faith. After the resurrection, Christ was able to send the Holy Spirit in its fullness to the whole church. This second sending by the risen Lord is sacramental, establishing the church and offering the Spirit to individuals who will receive it in the life of grace. According to Kilmartin, Orthodox theology believes that the theandric act of Christ is not a substitute for the divine act but that the sending of the Spirit is “a theandric act, the sacrament of the sending of the Spirit, which occurs by a purely divine act of the Father.”¹²¹ Kilmartin says that the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church can agree on the sacramental nature of the sending of the Spirit, i.e. that the Spirit now comes to us in sacramental form through the God-Man Jesus Christ, who is the basis for this sacramentality, in the church and the sacraments. However, they disagree on the manner of the sending of the Spirit: the Catholic Church insists that the sending of the Spirit is also by the Son on his own authority; he becomes co-sender of the Spirit.¹²²

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 238. The role of the ordained priest is important to Kilmartin’s theology but for the moment we leave it to one side, focusing on the liturgy as an act of God and the whole community.

¹²⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 241-242

¹²¹ *ibid.*, p. 242

¹²² *ibid.*, p. 247; *Christian Liturgy*, pp. 130 ff.

3.4.3 The Procession Model of the Trinity and the Bestowal or Return Model of the Trinity in the Theology of David Coffey

1) The Trinitarian Theology of Augustine, Aquinas, and Rahner

We have already seen something of Coffey's approach to the Trinity in chapter two of our thesis. We go into more detail here. In a dialogue between the biblical doctrine of the Trinity and the theology of Augustine, Aquinas, and Karl Rahner (along with others), David Coffey seeks to establish a model of the Trinity that will explain more fully the relationship of the Triune God to human beings. This he calls an 'ascendant' model of the Trinity which complements what he calls the traditional 'descendant' model adopted by both the churches of the East and the West.¹²³ He takes as his starting point both the mutual love theory of Augustine and the Christology of Rahner.¹²⁴

Augustine's better known analogy of the Trinity, Coffey states, is the so-called psychological model. This sees the Son and the Spirit proceeding from the Father by knowledge and love as from a single principle. Coffey states that he also used a model of the Trinity that emphasizes the manner and the purpose of the processions of the Trinity which believes the Holy Spirit to be the mutual love of the Father and the Son.¹²⁵ Both of these models, he believes, were adopted by Aquinas.

¹²³ The works of Coffey reviewed for this section are COFFEY, *Grace: The Gift of the Holy Spirit*; COFFEY, D., "The 'Incarnation' of the Holy Spirit", *Theological Studies* 45 (1984), pp. 466-480; COFFEY, D., "The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love of the Father and the Son", *Theological Studies* 51 (1990), pp. 193-229; COFFEY, D., *Deus Trinitas: The Doctrine of the Triune God*, New York, 1999. We shall make reference to Coffey's main works, *Grace: the Gift of the Holy Spirit* and *Deus Trinitas*, but for the purposes of this thesis we believe that his main ideas are contained in the two articles cited. Coffey sees the economic Trinity as the 'goal' of Trinitarian theology, that is the economic Trinity represents the full *understanding* of how God relates to us, see "Holy Spirit as Mutual Love", pp. 194-195.

¹²⁴ See COFFEY, "Incarnation of the Holy Spirit", pp. 466-467 for his dependence on Rahner. For Coffey's starting point from Augustine and Aquinas see "The Holy Spirit as Mutual Love", p. 193; *Grace: the Gift of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 11-30.

¹²⁵ COFFEY, "Holy Spirit as Mutual Love", pp. 193-194.

As presented by Coffey, Aquinas' Trinitarian theology holds that both knowledge and love are operative in the Trinity. The Father's self-knowledge leads to the generation of the Son while their mutual love leads to the breathing forth of the Spirit, and this is understood as not two actions but as one. The Son proceeds from the Father by knowledge and the Spirit by love as two modalities of the same operation. The breathing forth of the Spirit brings to rest the inner dynamism of the processions.¹²⁶

Furthermore, Coffey states that the theology of Aquinas also enables us to see the manner of the relationships in the Trinitarian processions.¹²⁷ An examination of the notional acts of the Trinity (i.e. those that are not essential), which define the relationships within the Trinity as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, can help us to see how personhood is given to the Holy Spirit by the active spiration of both the Father and the Son. This can also show how the donation of the Spirit is the act of love one upon the other.¹²⁸ He states, however, that this theory must connect with the revelation of the Trinity in the New Testament, and, in particular, with the life and consciousness of Jesus himself.¹²⁹

Coffey believes that the functional language of salvation found in the New Testament does not distinguish clearly between Christ's humanity and his divinity; the experience of the New Testament is that Jesus reveals the divine in a human way.¹³⁰ According to Coffey, the 'split' between his humanity and divinity comes about in the debates leading up to the Councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon

¹²⁶ COFFEY, *Grace*, p. 22.

¹²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 12

¹²⁸ Cf. HALL, pp. 101-106

¹²⁹ COFFEY, "Holy Spirit as Mutual Love", pp. 193-201. Coffey states that Augustine equated the immanent Trinity with that found in the New Testament. Coffey favours a dialogue between the functional Trinitarian theology of the New Testament, which is not fully systematized but simply states the 'fact' of the Trinity in the work of salvation, and the theology of later thinkers. Cf. COFFEY, *Deus Trinitas*, pp. 9-28.

¹³⁰ COFFEY, "Incarnation of the Holy Spirit", p. 467.

and the definition of the indwelling of his two natures in one person.¹³¹ The relationship between the two natures of Christ in the one person is best expressed, Coffey believes, in the christology of Karl Rahner, who sees the incarnation of the divine Word as expressing the fulfilment of the obedient potential of humanity. Christ in his humanity is the most perfect expression of that of which we are capable as human beings.¹³² This is not to say that the divine person is fully realized in Christ's humanity. Coffey states that "whatever is communicated from God to man in the incarnation is bestowed in a divine way but received in a human way."¹³³

Rahner's trinitarian theology, emerging Coffey says from his christology, also enables us to explain the divinization of human beings as the work of the Holy Spirit. Coffey believes that this is in line with the patristic witnesses who saw the Holy Spirit as the divinizer and the sanctifier.¹³⁴ Furthermore, the Holy Spirit, Coffey maintains, is the one who, from the moment of Jesus' conception (and not just at his baptism) anoints Jesus' humanity, creating it and unifying it with the eternal Word.¹³⁵

This, Coffey believes, presents us with an ascending christology which can complement the descendant christology of Aquinas who assigns a different role to the Holy Spirit in the incarnation. In Aquinas' view, it is the Word that assumes humanity and sends the Holy Spirit afterwards as the principle of habitual grace. Thus the grace of union precedes the habitual grace achieved by the indwelling of

¹³¹ *ibid.*, p. 468

¹³² *ibid.*

¹³³ *ibid.*, p. 469

¹³⁴ *ibid.*

¹³⁵ *ibid.*, "In the one act of nature and grace, the humanity of Christ was created by the Triune God, and so radically sanctified by the Holy Spirit, sent thereto by the Father, that it became one in person with the eternal Son, and so the Son of God in humanity." Cf. COFFEY, *Grace*, pp. 141-142. Coffey makes reference to Luke 1, 35, the descent of the Holy Spirit on Mary, see *Grace*, pp. 120 ff.

the Holy Spirit.¹³⁶ Aquinas' model, Coffey states is centrifugal, i.e. it sees the Father reaching out in the Son and the Spirit. Coffey claims that his model is centripetal, i.e. it sees the binding of the Son to the Father in the mutual love of the Holy Spirit.¹³⁷ Coffey admits that the theology of the Holy Spirit as he develops it does not harmonize with the theology of the immanent Trinity as traditionally understood, and it must be rooted both in the life of Jesus and be explainable in theological terms.¹³⁸

II) The Biblical Doctrine of the New Testament

Coffey turns to the life of Jesus in order to found his theory in biblical data. He believes that the descendant model of Trinity is developed from Christ's consciousness and knowledge of his Father, as witnessed in the New Testament. His suggested variant model, an ascendant model of the Trinity, is based on Jesus' dedication in love to his Father, also witnessed in the New Testament.¹³⁹

According to Rahner, Coffey states, Jesus' knowledge was human and therefore he came to knowledge of his divinity in a human way. He expressed his faith according to the religious context of his day. This respects the integrity of the humanity of Jesus, which stands over and against his divinity.¹⁴⁰ Not only did Jesus know his Father in his humanity, Coffey states that it is also clear that he loved his Father in his humanity, he was dedicated to him, and this was revealed in his life and, in a definitive way, in his death.¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 469-470

¹³⁷ COFFEY, *Deus Trinitas*, pp. 66-82.

¹³⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 470-471. The task of fully explaining his theological approach in terms that harmonize with traditional theology is one of the major tasks of *Deus Trinitas*, pp. 33-81.

¹³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 471

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 473-474. Coffey qualifies Rahner in that while Rahner believes that Jesus had an immediate vision of the Father, Coffey says that he sides with Pannenberg in stating that no human vision can be unmediated, even if Jesus' relationship is unique.

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 474

This love of Jesus for his Father was unique and was grounded in the pure gift of grace given to him by the hypostatic union, which preceded all the historical actions of Jesus. This response to the Father's love, his gift, was seen in the acts of Jesus all the way to his death. His categorical acts proceed from his divine Sonship but are actualized in his humanity by the work of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴² This Coffey deduces from the biblical teaching that holds that our union with Christ is the Holy Spirit, which is the bond between us and the Father (see Romans 8, 14-16; Galatians 4, 6-7).¹⁴³ Thus, if the Holy Spirit, Coffey argues, enables the human response to the Father in love, then, however unique Jesus' love was, the love which Jesus returned in his humanity was the work of the Holy Spirit. Because of Jesus' union with the Father, the love he returned was the Holy Spirit.¹⁴⁴

The final act of obedience and response to the Father's love is seen in Jesus' death and the return of the Spirit in love. This return includes us, since the love of God and love of neighbour are united and are seen as perfectly expressed by Jesus himself.¹⁴⁵ Our connection with God is in the sharing of the same Spirit with which Christ was anointed from the moment of his conception and which led him to realize the love of God in his humanity.

¹⁴² *ibid.*, pp. 476-477

¹⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 475

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 476. Coffey discusses the problem of Jesus' personhood in *Grace*, pp. 91-112. Coffey is also at pains to point out the distinction between grace as it is bestowed on Jesus' humanity and that given to humans, see pp. 475-476.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 478, "...in the beatific vision of the Father, and also in the consequent love, are included, secondarily, all creatures, but especially the blessed and those who will respond with faith to their encounter with Jesus Christ. Knowing them with the same knowledge with which he knows the Father, Jesus will love them with the same love, which is the Holy Spirit." Coffey also refers to the work of Rahner on the unity of love of God and neighbour, see RAHNER, K., "Reflections on the Unity of the Love of Neighbour and the Love of God", *Theological Investigations*, vol. 6, London, 1969, pp. 231-249.

III) The Bestowal Model of the Trinity

Coffey claims that if Jesus is brought into being as the Son of God in his humanity by the radical bestowal of the love of the Father, the Holy Spirit, and if Jesus returns this same Spirit in his love for the Father, then this is a sacrament of the relationships within the immanent Trinity, where the Holy Spirit is the mutual love of the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is not the result of their love but the love itself.¹⁴⁶ This model of the Trinity Coffey calls the ‘bestowal’ model (later the ‘return’ model in *Deus Trinitas*) because the Holy Spirit is seen as the love with which the Father loves the Son as the object of his love, and the love with which the Son loves the Father as the object of his love in returning to the Father. Each bestows the Spirit on the other in love.¹⁴⁷

The model that Coffey outlines above may draw together the epistemological data, drawn from the Bible and the Christian experience of the Spirit, and the ontological idea of the Trinity.¹⁴⁸ This latter aspect, which according to Coffey, may come after the epistemological ‘moment,’ is necessary in order for us to grasp the meaning of experience.¹⁴⁹ However, Coffey also cautions against ‘exhausting’ the immanent Trinity by paying too much attention to the economic Trinity. The Trinity in itself is always beyond us.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 479-480

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 472

¹⁴⁸ It seems important to note that by ‘ontology’ in this context, Coffey indicates an *understanding* of the Trinity, a grasping of the data from Scriptures, tradition and theology. Cf. *Deus Trinitas*, pp. 16-26, where he refers to the theology of Bernard Lonergan on the process of coming to understanding.

¹⁴⁹ COFFEY, *Deus Trinitas*, pp. 24-26.

¹⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 28. Criticisms of Coffey’s theory have come from John Meyer and Paul Molnar. Meyer accuses Coffey of adoptionism and argues that Coffey focuses on the economic Trinity and the humanity of Jesus in such a way that the human qualities of Jesus are those which influence the immanent Trinity. See MEYER, J. R., “Coordinating the Immanent and Economic Trinity”, *Gregorianum* 86, 2 (2005), 235-253, especially pp. 245-249. Molnar claims that Coffey adopts a ‘degree christology’ which portrays Jesus as merely more graced than we are. He also argues that Coffey confuses nature and grace and does not clarify the relationship between the two. Molnar argues further that Coffey sets up an opposition between Christ’s divinity and his humanity. Ultimately, Molnar believes that Coffey relegates faith in the God who reveals himself

3.5 The Celebration of the Liturgy – the Union between God and Believers

3.5.1 The Integration of the Processional and Bestowal Models of the Trinity

It is important to emphasize that both Coffey and Kilmartin see the two models of the Trinity, the processional and the bestowal, as complementary. Taken together they believe that these models help to explain how real and effective relationships are established between the Triune God and the community of believers. Kilmartin states that, from the perspective of the processional model, at the heart of the relationship between God and humanity is the nature of Christ's sonship, and the 'similarity-in-distinction' of this sonship with that of human beings.¹⁵¹ From the perspective of the bestowal or return model, the central question is the correspondence between the sanctifying grace of the humanity of Jesus and that of the believer.¹⁵²

I) The Yield of the Processional Model

The processional model, according to Kilmartin, brings to the forefront the mediating role of Jesus Christ; he is *the* Son from all eternity and is always the mediator.¹⁵³ In the hypostatic union, we see the highest actualization of humanity, the union with the divine Word. As a human he lived by faith and the grace of his incarnation was fully realized in his death and resurrection.¹⁵⁴ He is only other

to a rationalistic explanation of how God can relate to us. See MOLNAR, P. D., "Deus Trinitas: Some Dogmatic Implications of David Coffey's Biblical Approach to the Trinity", *Irish Theological Quarterly* 67 (2002), pp. 33-54.

¹⁵¹ KILMARTIN, *Christian Liturgy*, p. 135.

¹⁵² *ibid.*, p. 158

¹⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 153

¹⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 154

than God in his humanity. Kilmartin ultimately bases his analysis on the dogma of Chalcedon, according to which Jesus is one divine person in two natures.¹⁵⁵

This model also brings to the fore the question of person in the Trinity. Kilmartin states that the idea that the persons of the Trinity are devoid of self-consciousness and proper will is not intelligible when one takes into account the traditional concept of person.¹⁵⁶ Kilmartin adopts the notion that person in the immanent Trinity may be defined as “a mode of existence that is communicable”, or “a mode of existence of a rational essence to the other and in the other.”¹⁵⁷ It is finally not the Trinity itself that is communicated but their relationality or *perichoresis*. This implies that, while the notions of efficient, formal, and personal causality are not applicable to the immanent Trinity, in the economic Trinity’s relationship with human beings one must speak of a personal causality in bringing human beings into union with God.¹⁵⁸ Kilmartin believes that the Father is pure communicator in the immanent Trinity and is not communicated in the economic Trinity. The Son and the Spirit represent the communication of God.¹⁵⁹

Kilmartin accepts Rahner’s axiom that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity. With this in mind, the foregoing reflections lead him to say that “the prayer of Jesus and the prayer of the Spirit in the just have a correspondence in the immanent Trinity.”¹⁶⁰ The prayer and attitude of Jesus expressed in his humanity is the historical expression of the divine Word’s eternal attitude in the immanent Trinity, and the prayer of the Spirit in the just corresponds to his role as the eternal bond of love between Father and Son. In this way the Spirit acts to

¹⁵⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 148-149. Here Kilmartin surveys the views of Rahner, Coffey and Aquinas. See also DS 300-302.

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 152

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 151-152

¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 139-143

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 152

bring us into union with the Father and the Son. From God's side, the work of grace precedes human conversion; from the human side we must convert in order to participate in the life of God.¹⁶¹

II) The Yield of the Bestowal Model

Kilmartin believes that though less developed, the bestowal model of the Trinity is a valid one and can be shown to correspond to the relationships within the Trinity as understood in Catholic theology.¹⁶²

He believes the habitual grace of Jesus in his humanity is not communicable but is particular to the Incarnate Word.¹⁶³ The question then is what is communicated to us in redemption? The answer, Kilmartin maintains, is the Holy Spirit, who is sent by the risen Lord in a theandric act. The Spirit flows from the glorified humanity of Jesus.¹⁶⁴ This sending of the Spirit upon us in love corresponds to the bestowal of the Spirit upon the Father in Jesus' return of the Father's love; "in other words, the sending of the Spirit by the risen Lord is a prolongation of the inner-Trinitarian answering love of the Son for the Father."¹⁶⁵

According to Kilmartin, the bestowal model also helps form the structure and meaning of the prayer of the church. The prayer of the church is confident because it is made through, with, and in Christ in the power of the Spirit.¹⁶⁶ It is mistaken, Kilmartin believes, therefore to relegate any formula of the church's prayer to the merely functional, as only signifying God's offer of grace. He believes that all sacraments and sacramental words signify both an offer of grace (*ex opere operato*) and also the acceptance of that grace. The liturgy is a

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*, pp. 152-153

¹⁶² *ibid.*, p. 158 ff.

¹⁶³ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 167

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 171

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 173-174

showing-forth of the union of the worshipping community with its High Priest in the same Spirit.¹⁶⁷ Thus the worship of believers is nothing other than participation in the divine life of the Trinity. The grace that believers share with Christ is nothing other than the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁸

3.5.2 The Mystery of the Liturgy – the Presence of Christ and the Spirit

An important concept for Kilmartin, which follows on from his explanation of the roles of the divine persons in the liturgy, is synergy.¹⁶⁹ Kilmartin believes that the action of the Trinity in history requires a response, an acceptance in faith. However, God always takes the initiative and inspires the human response by the action of the Spirit. When this action is joined to the action of the community (and the individual) there is a synergy, a joining of energies directed towards union with God.¹⁷⁰ This synergy is most fully revealed in Christ who is the sacrament of this divine-human love of God.¹⁷¹ For Kilmartin, therefore, human beings do not just participate in the life of God by the juridical application of the effects of Christ's passion but their participation in the life of God has an ontological grounding in the Spirit sent by Christ to conform them to his attitude of self-offering.¹⁷²

Revealed in Jesus, according to Kilmartin, is the upward movement of love from him to the Father as well as the downward movement that expresses God's

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.* Kilmartin states, p. 171, "As acts of Christ, word and sacrament correspond to the bestowal of the Spirit by the Son on the Father in the immanent Trinity; as acts of the Father, they correspond to the bestowal of the Spirit on the Son in the inner divine life. As acts of the Father, word and sacrament have the purpose of drawing people into union with the one Son, making them children of the Father in the beloved Son. As acts of the risen Lord, word and sacrament have the purpose of drawing believers into divine sonship so that they will love the Father with a love of sons and daughters in the Son."

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p. 171

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 182-183

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 184

¹⁷² *ibid.*

initiative.¹⁷³ In this way, the phrase *ex opere operato* not only indicates God's downward movement but the upward movement of Christ in the Spirit in which believers participate in the liturgy.¹⁷⁴ The presence of Christ in the liturgy is seen by Kilmartin in the context of the mutual presence of Christ to the community and vice-versa.¹⁷⁵ This is not to say that the initiative of the community is anything other than inspired and moulded by the inspiration of the Spirit of Christ.¹⁷⁶

While the culmination of salvation history is the Christ event, it is incorrect, Kilmartin believes, to historicize the presence of Christ's saving acts in the liturgy, and inadequate to simply state that Christ is never separate from his saving work.¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, in referring to the work of Schillebeeckx, Kilmartin believes that a satisfactory answer to the question of Christ's presence in the liturgy cannot fully be given by interpreting the history of salvation in existential terms alone, i.e. by simply paralleling human experience and the unfolding of the mystery of God, though this schema obviously had some influence on his thought.¹⁷⁸

Finally, Kilmartin believes that Christ is present in the liturgy as the one who is in the Father's presence, bringing the world into the realms of God. In other words, Christ is the one who is in the process of the single *transitus* to the Father.¹⁷⁹ Our participation in the liturgy is brought about by the Spirit of Christ

¹⁷³ *ibid.*, p. 185

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 186-190. Kilmartin here also makes the link between the heavenly liturgy and the earthly in that the former expresses the finality of the latter in glory.

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p. 327

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 342-344

¹⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p. 344

¹⁷⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 345-356. Cf. KILMARTIN, *Eucharist in the West*, p. 359, "The single *transitus* of Jesus is the only way to the Father, for there can be no other response acceptable to the Father. It is completed in Jesus Christ, who is now glorified. But it is not completed in the history of humanity."

who forms in us the attitude of Christ.¹⁸⁰ In short, we have the mind of Christ because the Spirit of Christ enables us to participate in the orientation of Jesus to the Father.¹⁸¹

3.5.3 The Liturgy and the Sacraments as celebrated

The liturgy as a whole, Kilmartin believes, is founded on the authority of Christ and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.¹⁸² Certain constitutive elements of the chief rites of the church are permanent and are handed down in all authentic liturgical traditions. These are related directly or indirectly to the events of Christ's life, death, and resurrection.¹⁸³ The sacraments of baptism and Eucharist hold a special place in this regard.¹⁸⁴

I) The Sacramental Nature of the Cosmos and the Chief Rites of the Church

For Kilmartin, the sacraments bring into focus the sacramentality of the whole of creation.¹⁸⁵ Kilmartin claims that the patristic witness saw the chief rites of the church as the highest moment of God's loving presence, while the scholastic theologians of the twelfth and thirteen centuries saw the material elements used in the sacraments as achieving their fullest meaning through the words and symbolic

¹⁸⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 336-338 (and indeed throughout the later parts of this work). Cf. HALL, pp. 129-139. See also KILMARTIN, *Eucharist in the West*, p. 357, "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 endeavour 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."

¹⁸¹ This is the thesis of Hall's whole work on the theology of Kilmartin and touches upon how anamnesis works in his theology. What is remembered in the liturgy in general and the Eucharist in particular is God with us, and us with God, see HALL, pp. 149-166.

¹⁸² KILMARTIN, *Christian Liturgy*, pp. 192-193.

¹⁸³ *ibid.*, p. 192

¹⁸⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 261-267

¹⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p. 267; pp. 204-205

gestures of the sacramental celebration.¹⁸⁶ Elaborating on these themes, Kilmartin explicitly develops a notion of the sacramental nature of the cosmos.¹⁸⁷ He writes,

In brief, the created reality of the world, despite being deformed because of the sinful tendencies of humankind, is capable of serving as medium of God's self-communication on the ground of the goodness of God. The sacraments are the most important way of mutual exchange between God and believers, a *sacrum commercium*.¹⁸⁸

This view rests on the belief that creation finds its high point in the creation of humanity, and its consummation in the Incarnate Word and the sending of the Spirit. By virtue of this revelation in history and creation, God is able to communicate with human beings and vice-versa.

Kilmartin believes that the reason why many people today have problems with the concept of sacrament in contemporary society is because of their lack of consciousness of a God who acts in history and creation.¹⁸⁹ The roots of this attitude, he believes, lie in three perspectives. Firstly, there is, he states, disaffection with the sacraments perceived as acts of a sinfully disposed church, and thus, he argues, there follows a retreat into deism, where spiritual attainment can only be gained in the subjective consciousness and not in human forms of symbolic communication. Secondly, he cites the rationalistic philosophy of post-reformation Europe, which saw a distancing between a scientific understanding of the world and a biblical perception of reality. Thirdly, he criticizes the Reformers'

¹⁸⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 204-211

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 206

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 206-210

insistence on the need to see the explicit institution of each of the sacraments in scripture, which he believes holds sway today in some protestant theology.¹⁹⁰

II) Sacraments as Privileged Moments of Encounter

Kilmartin believes that by using the analogy of human communication, it is possible to see how the sacramental symbols indicate change in the human person. The dynamic of giving and receiving in human life, necessarily visible and historical, achieves a new significance in the sacramental exchange of the symbols, which reveal a more specific intention of the giving of one to another.¹⁹¹

The mystery of the liturgy brings together the divine giving and the faith of the community. In the performance of the rites of the church, the symbols used signify the new act wrought both in the material elements and, as a consequence of this divine-human dialogue, in the participants.¹⁹² For Kilmartin, what is ultimately symbolized in the liturgy is the memory of the covenant established by Christ in the Spirit, a covenant expressed in the movement of the participants, in the power of the Spirit, towards the Father.¹⁹³

The liturgy is seen by Kilmartin as the active and visible participation in the divine salvific work of Christ and the Spirit. The focus of the celebration is the

¹⁹⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 209-210, "By their very nature sacramental celebrations witness to a particular view of the world, one opposed to what seems to be characteristic of the modern industrial world view...(where) the only hope that can be named is the capacity of human reason. Sacramental celebrations, however, announce that the present achievement in human development is not merely the result of human work. Rather it is ultimately grounded on what God has done and is doing now...The sacraments offer a new orientation for human existence which breaks through the seemingly fixed, but really relative, ordering of daily life and reveals it as multi-dimensional. The sacramental structure of all reality is thereby discovered through the sacramental celebrations themselves."

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*, pp. 210-211

¹⁹² *ibid.* Kilmartin points out the unique place of the Eucharist where, he says, the elements are changed at the ontological level and are brought into union with Christ. Cf. pp. 191-192, "The change of the bread and wine is unique. It does not terminate simply in a change of meaning, but in a perfect correspondence of being and meaning. The bread and wine become 'real symbols' of Christ's personal presence in the sense that there is a unity of being between the symbol and the reality signified." Cf. COFFEY, *Grace*, pp. 189-205. In one sense, Coffey states, the Eucharist is a difficult model for the explanation of the sacraments because it is unique.

¹⁹³ KILMARTIN, *Eucharist in the West*, pp. 357-360.

risen Jesus, who is the primordial sacrament for the liturgical celebration as the one in whom the Holy Spirit becomes fully 'incarnate' in his human love for the Father and for humanity.¹⁹⁴ The Holy Spirit is the principal agent who brings the believer into contact with Christ through the communication of the attitudes of Christ.¹⁹⁵ The church as sacrament of salvation is the continuation of the historical movement inaugurated by Christ, because the Holy Spirit is poured out upon it.¹⁹⁶

According to Kilmartin, the visibility of the church with its ritual and symbolism is necessary for this encounter to be fully appreciated because "there exists no inwardness of the human being that can bring itself to full expression independently of bodily activity."¹⁹⁷ This visible activity includes the mission of the apostles for they too have been sent on their mission by Christ.¹⁹⁸ Kilmartin believes that it is the liturgical encounter, in symbol and ritual, which best symbolizes the divine-human encounter in Christ and the Spirit in the movement towards the Father. In this context a proper discussion of the efficacy of the sacraments can take place.¹⁹⁹

This is shown, Kilmartin believes, in the celebration of the Eucharist and, in particular, the Eucharistic prayers. With specific reference to a systematic theology of Eucharistic sacrifice, Kilmartin states that the "shape of meaning" of the Eucharist is shown by the whole Eucharistic celebration and the constitutive elements of the celebration.²⁰⁰ This shape of meaning gives the Eucharist its theological significance as the "ritual representation of the covenant relation

¹⁹⁴ KILMARTIN, *Christian Liturgy*, p. 214. Note that Kilmartin (as with Coffey) does not talk of a hypostatic union or an incarnation of natures but as the Spirit 'incarnated' in Jesus' attitude, his love.

¹⁹⁵ KILMARTIN, *Eucharist in the West*, p. 360.

¹⁹⁶ KILMARTIN, *Christian Liturgy*, pp. 217-219.

¹⁹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 221

¹⁹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 222

¹⁹⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 366-368

²⁰⁰ KILMARTIN, *Eucharist in the West*, p. 339.

between God and his people.”²⁰¹ With reference to the theology of Cesare Giraudo and Hans Bernhard Meyer, Kilmartin highlights the Eucharistic memorial as the remembrance of God’s covenant in Christ and the Spirit.²⁰² The performance of the ritual of the Eucharist serves to engage the believer in this covenant.²⁰³

3.6 Conclusion

The goal of worship, according to Kilmartin, is the cooperation with God in his ultimate intentions, the sanctification of humanity. Sacraments provide a nexus where the various elements of the history of God with his people come together and reach their full meaning: the offer of God in history, the use of symbols and materials, the need of humanity to grow in personhood, and the sharing in divine life, which is a life of relationship. The purpose of liturgy is to realize this dialogue and deepen personal life.²⁰⁴

The fixed expressions of faith evident in the liturgy lead the believer to conclude that it is Christ himself in the Spirit who supports and leads this dialogue.²⁰⁵ Kilmartin sees the liturgy fundamentally as prayer, addressed to the Father, and of which Christ in the Spirit is the source at the heart of the church (and the individual believer). The liturgy is the confident prayer of the church, for

²⁰¹ *ibid.*

²⁰² *ibid.*, pp. 337-338

²⁰³ *ibid.*, pp. 360-364

²⁰⁴ KILMARTIN, "Theology of the Sacraments: Towards a New Understanding of the Chief Rites", pp. 140-141. Kilmartin believes that this schema represents an ancient tradition in the church from Ireneaus to Aquinas, according to which the purpose of worship was for the ultimate realization of human destiny with God and not just for the glory of God. The two ideas were seen as mutually inclusive.

²⁰⁵ KILMARTIN, *Christian Liturgy*, p. 47, "For the eyes of faith, Christ is the sender, receiver, and the medium of the dialogical event of the liturgy. This explains why the Church believes that Christ instituted the sacraments, empowers the Christian community for their celebration, and is the principal actor. As the unique Mediator between God and humanity (1 Tim 2:5; Heb 8:6), he acts in the liturgy through the expression of the faith of the Church of which he, in the Spirit, is the living source."

it is made with and through Christ, with and in the Spirit. Grace, life with God, is offered and accepted in the liturgy and the sacraments, according to a structure which is divine and human; in other words, dialogical. Thus, to use a key statement of Kilmartin's whole theological enterprise: "Sacraments are seen as privileged moments of the possibility and actual acceptance of this offer (of grace). They supply the special context in which God's self-communication can be more fully accepted."²⁰⁶

Kilmartin presents us with a theological synthesis that demonstrates how the sacraments can be conceived as a participation in the gift and return dynamic of Christian life, which flows from the divine initiative and enables human response according to structures that are understandable. He maintains that in the performance of the liturgical rite, which symbolizes the action of God in Christ and the Spirit with the believer, the 'gap' between God and humanity is bridged and we are brought into a saving relationship, as active subjects, with the God who reveals himself as Trinity.

One criticism that could be made of Kilmartin's system is that he identifies the revelation of the Trinity and participation in the life of God too closely with the structure of the human person, even though he is careful to remind his readers that God is gift.²⁰⁷ The mystery of God is inexhaustible, and a distance between God and humanity is part of that mystery.²⁰⁸ Furthermore, we believe that his ideas can be augmented by an examination of the role of language itself in the sacramental encounter and further reflection on the concept of the active subject. These are themes that are taken up in the next chapter.

²⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p. 10

²⁰⁷ cf. HALL, pp. 165-166. Hall notes that the parallels between Rahner's own theological system and that of Kilmartin leaves Kilmartin open to the same criticisms that might be levelled against Rahner's theology.

²⁰⁸ *ibid.*

Chapter Five - The Priority of the Giving God

1. Introduction

In this chapter we examine the contribution of three theologians who have attempted to face the challenges presented by postmodernism: Louis-Marie Chauvet, Kenan Osborne, and David Power. We do not attempt to offer a definition of postmodernism as such but understand it in relation to sacramental theology through the eyes of our authors. Certain traits of postmodern philosophy emerge from their understanding: a re-interpretation of the notion of being; the suspicion of any over-arching narrative used to explain existence; and the limited and historical nature of human perception, which, however, is to be respected as the only possible perspective.

We situate our authors in dialogue under three aspects. In this way we both focus our discussion and also trace the main features of their thought. The first examines the origins of their thinking both in their dissatisfaction with the language of Scholastic metaphysics to explain the sacramental encounter and also their belief in the possibilities offered by postmodern thought. We do not attempt a comprehensive analysis of Scholastic thought but accept our authors' analysis insofar as they express its limits. The second aspect concerns our authors' understanding of sacramental action and how this enables the communication of God to the believer. The third aspect deals with their understanding of the Trinity and its revelation in history.

2. Foundations

2.1 The Symbolic Understanding of Christian Life

2.1.1 The Weakness of the Metaphysical System

In his work on the symbolic nature of Christian life, Louis-Marie Chauvet rejects an exclusive application of a metaphysical system to the understanding of grace and the Christian sacraments.¹ Chauvet begins with an analysis of the theology of Aquinas and subsequent Scholastic theology. He argues that the foundational way of thinking for Scholastic theology largely rested on the idea of cause and effect in the sacraments but that the theology of Aquinas also included a perspective that could be considered to be more existential.²

Aquinas, Chauvet states, considers the sacraments in the third part of his *Summa Theologiae* and highlighted them as external acts of devotion, believing them to express the ethical dimension of the Christian life: the relationship with God. According to Chauvet, Aquinas believed that the sacraments were actions of the Christ who orientates humanity toward God.³ Chauvet believes that in his *Summa* Aquinas attempted to elaborate a theology of the sacraments which integrated sign and cause, according to which the sign would be understood as causing what it signified. By treating of the sign element in the sacraments, Chauvet believes that Aquinas included the faith of the individual as an important factor in the sacramental celebration.⁴

¹ CHAUVET, L.-M., *Symbol and Sacrament, a Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, MADIGAN, P., Collegeville, Minnesota, 1995.

² *ibid.*, pp. 9-21

³ *ibid.* Cf. POWER, *Sacrament: The Language of God's Giving*, pp. 52-53.

⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 11-20. Chauvet maintains that there is a detectable change in Aquinas' sacramental theology from his *Commentary on the Sentences* to the third part of his *Summa*. Chauvet states that in his work on the *Sentences* of Lombard Aquinas emphasized the causal aspect of the sacraments. According to this view they have the special character of signifying. Aquinas, Chauvet says, reverses this in his *Summa*, putting the signifying element of the sacraments first. According to this perspective they have the special characteristic of causing what they signify.

The achievement of Aquinas, Chauvet believes, was in his development of a theology that attempted to put the categories of sign and cause together. However, a problem emerged, Chauvet believes, in attempting to harmonize what he considers to be two different categories "...and doing so in such a way that the type of sign under examination would have these unique traits: it would indicate what it is causing and it would have no other way of causing except by mode of signification."⁵ Finally, Chauvet states, the answer to the question of how the sacraments cause salvation is only answered in Aquinas' system by causality and not sign.⁶

A metaphysical explanation of the sacramental encounter between God and humanity according to cause and effect leads, Chauvet believes, to a 'productionist' schema, where something is made or achieved. This in turn tends to view grace as a 'technical' attainment of the good which signals an end to the process of becoming.⁷ Yet, 'becoming', Chauvet argues, is a necessary part of the human experience, an experience which the idiom of metaphysical causality does not properly explain. Chauvet sees the metaphysical as that which seeks to establish a 'fixed point' from which everything can be deduced and to which everything can be related. This fixed point includes a confidence in the self, an anthropocentric platform from which everything can be judged and to which everything must explain itself. Yet such a mentality, he believes, actually sets up an opposition between the subject and the object in human knowing and relating.⁸

⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 17-18

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 21

⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 21-26

⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 27-29; 47-53. Chauvet considers the critique of metaphysics offered by Heidegger and analyses the Cartesian epistemological system that expresses confidence in the subject's knowing and acting.

2.1.2 The Mediating Role of Language

Chauvet states that a metaphysical system of the type he surveys considers language almost as a necessary evil, needed to express some hidden truth. He believes that this ‘attitude’ actually establishes a dichotomy between being and language at a fundamental level. However, it is language itself that places us and mediates us.⁹ The metaphysical system sees language as merely expressing something pre-existent, and this includes metaphysical thinking on God.¹⁰

Referring to Heidegger, who, Chauvet states, believed that without the word no thing is, Chauvet accepts the priority of language. It is not a necessary evil but that which brings us into being. Humans speak, Chauvet believes, only because they are first addressed.¹¹ It is this experience of being addressed that makes us acting subjects, bringing us out of narcissistic self-absorption.¹² It is the very nature of language to enable involvement, change and encounter.

In this encounter, the ‘openness’ of the human subject implies that the ‘you’ in any discourse, the ‘other’, has to be an independent ‘I’, another subject. Yet this other subject is recognizable and can share one’s horizons. Here Chauvet introduces a third term: the *something* of the discourse; subjects speak to each other about something, which itself can become another interrelated subject. It is this process of recognizing the value of the ‘other’ and the sharing of horizons in discourse that constitutes real relationships.¹³ This recognition of the ‘distance’ between subjects, their otherness, is the *embracing* of an absence, an acceptance

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 36, “...in short...humans never utter their judgements from a distant height and with a sovereign neutrality, but rather start with a concrete language in which a universe is already structured into a ‘world’, that is from a place that is socially arranged and culturally organized.”

¹⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 37-45

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 57, “Humans do not possess language; rather, they are possessed by it. *They speak only because they are always-already spoken*; and humans are human only ‘to the extent that they are those who speak.’” (Here he quotes Heidegger). Cf. pp. 64-70.

¹² *ibid.*, pp. 55-58

¹³ *ibid.*, pp. 82-83

that we cannot possess the other. For Chauvet this means that we need to pour ourselves into this absence; there is need of a kenotic movement, of a pouring out of oneself.¹⁴ However, it is this very experience of the distance from, or the ‘absence’ of, another that calls the person to become more, to change and grow.¹⁵ Thus, the language event, whereby subjects speak to each other, both includes and challenges the human person.

The recognition of the mediating role of language (whether the language is in words, gestures or signs) opens us up, according to Chauvet, to the symbolic.¹⁶ By the symbolic, Chauvet intends a real participation in the mystery of the encounter with the other, an exchange at the deepest level, which, he believes, is best understood from an analysis of the function of language. For Chauvet, the symbolic does not mean the achievement of some status or the communication of an already given self, the embodying (‘enfleshing’) of some pre-existent state. The symbolic refers to the exchange that takes place between subjects making them subjects. The symbolic mediates (brings into being) this relationship.¹⁷ Symbolism also involves a process which places the person within the cultural context that precedes him or her, and enables the person to participate with and within that cultural world.¹⁸

¹⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 80-82

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 99, “Finally, the subject exists only in a permanent state of becoming, in a *never-finished* process where it has to learn, at its own expense, to be bereaved of its umbilical attachment to the Same (*sic*), to renounce to win back its lost paradise, its own origin, and the ultimate foundation which would explain its existence. Its task is to consent to be in truth by accepting the difference, the lack-in-being, *not as an inevitable evil but as the very place where it is lived.*” This nostalgia or hankering after ‘the same’ is the result, Chauvet says, of the metaphysical system and is contrasted by Chauvet, throughout these pages, with the possibilities and openness which are offered by engagement with the other in language.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 84-109

¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp 99-109

¹⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 118-121; p. 120, “(the symbol) is the mediator of our identities as subjects within this cultural world it brings with itself, whose unconscious precipitate it is.” According to Chauvet, the symbol has the following traits : a) Its primary function is to join the persons who produce or receive it with their cultural world and so identify them as subjects in relation with other subjects, who are not possessions of the subject; b) It accomplishes the primordial function of

Chauvet maintains that sign and symbol differ according to principle. The symbol is not merely a more ornate or complicated sign that actually obscures the 'kernel' of the sign.¹⁹ The symbolic touches the most real part of us and of the world. The sign is a part of this dynamic and is subordinate to the process.²⁰ The symbol evokes meaning for us and "unfolds the primary dimension of language, its essential 'vocation'."²¹

The act of symbolizing is a performative and declarative act, Chauvet maintains. There is always a movement, an act, which takes us into the new, and there is always a declaration made about something.²² More specifically, Chauvet identifies three stages in the acts of symbolizing, stages that are intricately bound up with the nature of language. The first stage is the locutionary, the act of saying something. The second is the illocutionary, which is the act of symbolizing itself, connoting the change in relationship that is brought about by the act of symbolizing. The third stage is the perlocutionary, which is the consequence of this change of relationship, the openness to new possibilities.²³ Ritual, Chauvet argues, is a privileged place for the act of symbolizing.²⁴

language of which it is the interior witness; it is not the giving of information about the real but of the real; it summons and challenges, and allows communication between subjects. See p. 121, "It is the *symbolic that, in language, makes the real speak*: speaking for human beings because speaking about human beings, and even speaking 'human beings'."

¹⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 121-128; p. 121, "The difference between sign and symbol thus appears as *homologous* to the difference which exists between the principle of the value of something as an object, which governs the *market-place*, and the principle 'beyond value' of the communication between subjects, which controls *symbolic exchange*."

²⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 121-124

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 123

²² *ibid.*, pp. 130-132

²³ *ibid.*, pp. 132-135

²⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 135-140

2.2 The Particularity of the Human Encounter

2.2.1 The Generic Statement and the Sacramental Encounter

Kenan Osborne begins his book on the sacraments in general by reviewing the work already done in the twentieth century by theologians such as Rahner, Schillebeeckx, Kilmartin, and Chauvet.²⁵ The theology of Kilmartin and Chauvet and the teaching of the Catholic Church provide together form a starting point for Osborne's own approach on the possibilities of creation being a place of sacramental encounter.²⁶ He believes that while both Kilmartin and the 'Catechism of the Catholic Church' consider creation as a place of encounter, neither Kilmartin nor the teaching of the Catholic Church develop this theme fully or with reference to the new ways of understanding according to postmodern philosophy.²⁷

Osborne focuses on the magisterial statements made by the Catholic Church to illustrate his point concerning the understanding of the church as regards the new ways of thinking. He criticizes what he calls the "hermeneutical ease" with which the Catholic Church explains the term sacrament. There is, he says, a presumption on the part of the magisterium of the church that the doctrinal definitions they offer are universally understood or self-evident. He takes as an example of this the 'Catechism of the Catholic Church' when it considers the human response in the liturgy towards the divine initiative. Osborne states that, according to the Catechism, this response is made by the church or Christ with the church, the *totus Christus*. Osborne asks the question as to what entity these texts of the Catechism are referring: the whole church, the local church, the church now, or in

²⁵ OSBORNE, K. B., *Christian Sacraments in a Postmodern World*, New York, 1999, pp. 41-53.

²⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 50-53. Osborne states that both Kilmartin and Chauvet consider creation to be "charged with sacramentality" and that according to them (particularly Kilmartin) creation is seen as achieving its fullest meaning in the sacramental event.

²⁷ *ibid.*

the past?²⁸ He also asks to what the term sacrament really refers in these teachings: is it a general action present at all times and places?²⁹ According to Osborne, we cannot talk of the sacraments, baptism, Eucharist and the others, in some kind of general or essentialist way. We can only ever speak of *this* or *that* celebration in a particular time and place because the human response to God's initiative, precisely because it is human, is made in the specific moment by individuals in specific ways.³⁰

This is related to Osborne's view of the 'role' of creation in the sacramental act. Creation, he maintains, is a possible place of the encounter with God but creation is not the sacrament. God is not present in creation in some constantly immanent way but as an offer made in time and space. The constitution of the sacrament demands a human response which can only take place in a concrete moment.³¹

2.2.2 The Structure of the Human Person

Osborne comes to his conclusions about the sacramental encounter from his analysis of modern philosophical thought, particularly that of Heidegger, Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, as well as his review of recent theological work. It lies

²⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 56-64. Cf. CATHOLIC CHURCH, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraphs 1066-1209.

²⁹ OSBORNE, *Christian sacraments*, pp. 54-58.

³⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 61-62. By the term 'essentialist', Osborne is referring, he says, to the legacy of neo-scholastic theology, which sought to define the essence of a sacrament, i.e. what is unchanged in and common to all sacraments, the kernel. He writes on p. 58, "To use a Scotistic term, there is an *Haecceitas* – a 'thisness' – about each sacramental celebration. There is, then, a fundamental sacramental *Haecceitas* that cannot, with any hermeneutical ease, be relegated to non-importance by an overarching generic term such as 'baptism' or 'Eucharist.'" As we shall see, Osborne is not denying the possibility of collective human responses to divine initiative, simply that the nature of this response has to be cast in modern terms. He notes, with some criticism, the advances that were made in the theology of Rahner and Schillebeeckx who underlined the sacraments as actions and thus brought an existential understanding into sacramental theology.

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 75, "Sacramental *Haecceitas* occurs when a human person or human persons begin to react to the blessing *qua* blessing of God in the tree, in the cloud, in the river. It is this action/reaction on the part of the existential person or existential persons that creates the possibility of the sacramentality of the world. There is not an objective world, unaffected by subjectivity, which one can call a sacrament. Only divine action and human reaction in a concrete situation form the basis for possible sacramentality."

outwith the scope of this thesis to establish whether Osborne's reading of modern philosophy is a well-founded one, we simply indicate that Osborne himself states that he relies on their thinking.³²

His belief is that magisterial statements on the sacraments are made from within a philosophical matrix that is metaphysical, which, he believes, is seen most clearly in the philosophy of Descartes.³³ The result of this way of thinking, he argues, has led to the subject of the act of knowing and the object of that knowing being considered as separate essences or entities ultimately unrelated to each other and removed from the historical context. In a similar conclusion to that of Chauvet, Osborne contends that in this understanding of human action and knowing, the concern has been to find what he calls the 'Archimedean point' from which everything can be understood and defined.³⁴ This in turn has led to the fascination with recurring patterns in human events and, in sacramental theology, with discerning the stable and fixed point, or better, the generic or essentialist nature of sacramental celebrations.³⁵ What is at stake here, Osborne claims, is not just a particular theory of knowing but the conditions that make knowledge and the understanding of the personal encounter possible, the onto-epistemological.³⁶

³² The references throughout Osborne's work to the above mentioned philosophers are extensive, there being no less than fifty-two references to Heidegger alone. Osborne also notes the influence of Heidegger on the theology of Chauvet, Power, and Kilmartin, see OSBORNE, p. 37.

³³ OSBORNE, pp. 54-68

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 57

³⁵ *ibid.*, pp59-60. Here Osborne states that even those who do not at first think of sacraments in neo-scholastic terms still think in terms of the Cartesian subject/object split and look for recurring patterns and 'essences'.

³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 65, "My focus here is a hermeneutical one, which centres on the ease with which one employs the term 'sacrament' and thereby presupposes a self-evident meaning. Nor is the hermeneutical issue I focus on simply an epistemological issue, since the term 'sacrament' involves both an intellectual recognition of the symbolic dynamism of an action, the epistemological dimension, and also the reality or 'being' to which the symbol points, the ontological dimension."

The thought pattern involving the subject/object split is, Osborne maintains, a “dying episteme” and cannot serve theology as such.³⁷

According to Osborne, the phenomenology of Husserl and the existentialist philosophy of Heidegger sought to overcome the perceived split between the subject and object in human knowing and encounter. These thinkers established a new onto-epistemological framework, one which would emphasize the place of the subject within the horizon of personal and collective history, and which would take into account human perception, experience, and language.³⁸ The philosophical system they helped to found leads us, Osborne believes, to admit of the limitedness of the self and of the human horizon. However he also says that it is precisely this limitedness that makes the possibility of transformation in the sacramental encounter intelligible to the modern mind. By realizing our own limitedness we do not claim that our perception is of universal value and application. It is this limitedness that requires that we respect the ‘other’ in any meeting as another valid subject with something to say.³⁹ The relationship

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 57. Osborne sees it as a matter of urgency that the church takes seriously the difference in understanding that various cultures exhibit. The conclusion that he reaches is that the church will not be able to communicate with peoples throughout the world unless it does so.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 95, “In the thinking of several of these twentieth-century philosophers, ultimate questions yield to more basic existential questions. Philosophically, then, the human person is not only limited within his or her own perspective horizon, but the structure of a human person is also limited in a much more inward constitutive way, the return to the subjective is not merely epistemological but is onto-epistemological as well.”

³⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 48-68. On pp. 67-68, Osborne presents the basic argument or thesis for his whole work. He states that the world is a possible place of sacramentality only if we consider it from the point of view of human perception and experience, and consider the human person from his or her limitedness, historicity, and relatedness to others and the world. Only by asking questions about this and the fundamental structure of the human person, i.e. what makes a human a person, can any explanation of the sacraments have intelligibility, since they necessarily involve the human person. In fact, Osborne claims, it is precisely by taking into account our limitedness and moments of ‘worldness’, in which all human experiences take place, that we can speak meaningfully of a person, church, or ritual. Thus an understanding of the structure of the human person understood in today’s philosophical matrix holds the key for an understanding of the sacramental encounter. In modern philosophical thought, Osborne claims, the subject, understood as a generic entity with qualities common to all subjects, is no longer considered the arbiter of all knowledge. Cf. pp. 93-96.

between subjects emerges, once more, as the important starting point for understanding.

2.2.3 The Relational Structure of Human Existence

Again referring to the philosophy of Heidegger and also that of Merleau-Ponty, Osborne explains the relational structure of human existence in terms of shared horizons and intentionality. By this he intends the following: the person can only perceive the world in his or her own particular way and try to share this perspective with another, not on the basis of a common or generic objective understanding but on the basis of mutual respect. There can only be an *attempt* at communicating personal perspective in the hope of what he calls a ‘fusion of subjectivities’.⁴⁰ However, communication is indeed necessary because it is only in relationship with the other that the person can appreciate his or her own subjectivity. In the context of dialogue, Osborne uses the term ‘other’ rather than ‘others’, since the ‘other’ implies a subject, while the term ‘others’ is again, he believes, a common or generic term.⁴¹

Osborne maintains that it is in this response/reaction to the ‘other’ that the person discovers the presence of something which is beyond their grasp, something hidden. Referring to Paul Ricoeur’s analysis of the symbolic and of consciousness, Osborne states that the end result of encounter is not the ‘coming-to-self’ in consciousness or self-awareness, but instead the encounter invites the subject to embark upon a journey of the spirit which will continue.⁴²

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 70-80.

⁴¹ Cf. CHAUVET, *Symbol and Sacrament, a Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, pp. 92 ff.

⁴² OSBORNE, pp. 82-83

2.2.4 The Dialogue between Text and Reader

The very conditions that govern human life and that make understanding possible are limited, Osborne believes, but that does not mean that each individual is closed off within himself or herself. He states that one has to take into account both the notion of a fusion of subjective horizons and the fact that in dialogue we confront a past, an inherited tradition, to which we also relate. Yes, we are temporal and relational, however, “(i)ndividuality and subjectivity are not private dimensions of human life. Temporality precludes this. There is no present time without a past (nor is there a present time without a future).”⁴³

While Osborne maintains that there is an inherent difficulty in this present age with any claim that one particular horizon has universal significance, he also believes that the life of any human person involves a process of dialogue between, on the one hand, one’s own particular and individualized horizon and, on the other, those horizons that surpass any individual, and which may have greater significance.⁴⁴ We might be tempted to state that there are, after all, in this schema some common or generic factors in human relationships, universals almost. However, Osborne continues to treat relationships within the context of the historical and human, even if the human dimension necessarily includes an element which is beyond the individual. Other opinions or traditions still have to be understood within the perspective of history.

This past, with which one is confronted, is considered by Osborne when he turns to his treatment of how modern philosophy has considered language as

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 96

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 97, quoting Paul Ricoeur, Osborne writes, “We exist neither in closed horizons, nor within a horizon that is unique. No horizon is closed, since it is possible to place oneself in another point of view and in another culture...But no horizon is unique, since the tension between the other and oneself is unsurpassable.” The quote is from Ricoeur’s, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*.

crucial to the understanding of the human person. Osborne focuses on the dialogue which one has with a text, and the conversation that takes place between the subject and the received text, and between subjects *about* a received text. This ongoing dialogue opens the subject to new horizons.⁴⁵ We are mediated by language, Osborne states, by our own speaking and that of the other found in the text and in the other subject in this dialogue. The symbolic meaning that words and statements have for the listener, and for all those who are engaged in discourse, has a limited quality but opens up new possibilities. In other words, in discourse the person is always stating something new about themselves. Osborne believes that the real 'I', who the person really is, is constantly being sought in this process. There is, according to this understanding of human engagement, no *apriori* self or hidden meaning in a text, there is only the dialogue that is itself a launch-pad to new criticism and a new sharing of horizons.⁴⁶

The conclusion of the dialogical process is neither absolute nor predictable, Osborne states. What is important is the conversation involving the subjectivities of the person, the text, and the other(s) involved. This necessarily involves the community, which itself comes about through shared horizons and which produces and hands on symbols which are themselves the result of these shared insights and can help to interpret meaning. However, even symbols that are considered sacred by the community are themselves starting points for new

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 98-100. We use the singular 'dialogue' rather than the plural because we believe that Osborne considers that the elements of this discourse are parts of the one process of the subject's growth. To use 'dialogues' would again introduce the generic.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 125-133. In these pages, Osborne discusses the meaning of symbols and semiotic codes in language.

dialogue and are open to new interpretations.⁴⁷ In this process, Osborne claims, the subjective element thus considered plays a transformative role.⁴⁸

2.2.5 A Basic Statement

On the basis of his analysis of the onto-epistemological implications of postmodern philosophy, and given his ideas on how encounter takes place according to human experience, Osborne presents his basic argument which he elaborates throughout his work on the sacraments. He believes that the world that we experience through human perception, in our own particular way, is a possible place of sacramental encounter.⁴⁹ However, this conclusion depends upon an analysis of our relationship with those around us and with creation. It also must include today a critique of the human person from the point of view of postmodern philosophy, which indicates the limited nature of the human.⁵⁰

He goes on to say that it is precisely in concrete human existence, in the *Haecceitas* of the sacramental moment, that we can speak meaningfully of the experience of sacramentality.⁵¹ We are not, Osborne believes, totally 'theonomous', with immediate access to the divine at all times. It is precisely in the context of limited 'worldness' that we can understand the sacramental encounter.⁵²

For Osborne, this underlines one important factor: the primacy of God's action in the sacraments. In fact, he believes that this is integral to basic church

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 132. Here again Osborne refers to the ideas of Paul Ricouer.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 131. Throughout, Osborne is, therefore, against a definition of 'subjective' as implying a closed opinion, which would claim in itself universal significance.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 67

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁵¹ *ibid.*, pp. 67-68

⁵² *ibid.* Here Osborne refers to the work of Paul Tillich.

teaching.⁵³ It is the transcendence and initiative of God that is emphasized in the sacramental encounter.

2.2.6 Culture and Religious Worship

The relationship between cultural understandings and the signs and symbols used in the sacraments is important for all of our authors. This is because the explanation of the sacramental encounter is dependent on human comprehension, which is itself formed by particular cultures and social contexts. As we have seen, Osborne believes that the magisterial statements of the Catholic Church have less relevance for the people of today because they emerge from a way of thinking and speaking that does not connect with modern understanding. What impact do the theories of Osborne have on the Catholic Church's understanding of culture and religious worship?

I) The Understanding of Culture in the Second Vatican Council: *Gaudium et Spes*

Norman Tanner states that, having considered the dignity of the human person in its first chapter, the Second Vatican Council's 'Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World', *Gaudium et Spes*, continues in its second chapter (paragraphs 23-32) to widen the discussion to consider the whole human community. Tanner believes that the Catholic Church had already received extensive social teaching from the time of Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* (1891),

⁵³ *ibid.*, pp. 68-74. Osborne analyses the teaching of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on the celebration of the liturgy (see paragraphs 1077-1109 of the *Catechism*). He maintains that this teaching affirms that it is the action of God that is established as the foundation for all sacramentality, see p. 69. Although Osborne includes the role of Christ and the Spirit in his analysis, he seems to come to the conclusion that it is God acting as one in his relations towards human beings that remains the focus of this teaching.

and *Gaudium et Spes* was seen in the light of this.⁵⁴ However, *Gaudium et Spes*, he argues, analyses the broader aspects of human life.⁵⁵ He states that this chapter of *Gaudium et Spes* discusses three main issues which confront the Christian in dealing with the modern world. The first is the growth in the means of communication and the different modes of contact between peoples. Thus, as Tanner points out, there is an early recognition of the phenomenon of globalization.⁵⁶ The second is the variety of circumstances and situations in which people live, and to this the Christian has to respond with love. The third point is the relationship between culture and the church. It is this last point that concerns us.⁵⁷

We believe that there seems to be, at first glance, an inherent contradiction in the Catholic Church's attitude to culture as expressed in *Gaudium et Spes*. On the one hand, the Catholic Church affirms the autonomy of human culture and of the sciences in particular. Human culture has to be respected in general, and individual cultures are seen as legitimate expressions of and guides to the finding of human identity.⁵⁸ There is also the recognition that the Catholic Church exists and finds its expression in local cultures; it is not immune or distant from society. In fact, engagement with human activity is necessary and beneficial. When Christians engage in cultural activity, the document states, they contribute greatly to the growth of human understanding.⁵⁹ On the other hand, the document also teaches that the Catholic Church is not subordinate to any one culture and its

⁵⁴ TANNER, N. P., *The Church and the World: Gaudium Et Spes, Inter Mirifica*, New York, 2005, p. 47.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 47-48

⁵⁸ See GS 23-25

⁵⁹ See GS 75

beliefs are relevant to all and any cultures; religious belief is above and superior to any culture.⁶⁰

In fact, as the Catholic Church's teaching unfolds in the first chapter of the 'Pastoral Constitution', and indeed throughout the document, there is a clear indication that dialogue between the Catholic Church and culture has to take place at a more fundamental level, on the basis of human hopes and aspirations, and the revelation of Christ as the fulfilment of humanity's deepest desires.⁶¹ The document reveals an anthropological and christological basis for this dialogue rather than an ecclesiological one. The Catholic Church believes that Christ is the perfect human and, as such, he is the destiny towards which all humanity tends (GS 22).

However, we highlight two possible difficulties with this dialogue. The first is what the Catholic Church understands by culture, and thus what understanding it has of the hopes and aspirations of humanity. The second concerns the christological basis for a dialogue with the world; the universal relevance of Christ. We shall touch on this latter problem when we look at how our authors understand the Christ event. Here we stay with the Catholic Church's understanding of culture.

Tanner states that, while the concept of culture was seen as central to the Council's deliberations, and while it is integral to the theology of the incarnation, "(A)t the start of Vatican II there was no developed theology of it that was in any way comparable to teaching on, for example, marriage and the family or the social teaching of the Church."⁶² Thus, Tanner says, "...the chapter is somewhat

⁶⁰ See GS 58

⁶¹ GS 9-10; 21-22

⁶² TANNER, pp. 52-53

tentative.”⁶³ Tanner states that the Council opted for a broad definition of culture to refer to, “...everything by which we perfect and develop our many spiritual and physical endowments...”⁶⁴, and it went on to list all the general ways in which we make our life more human in all its aspects. Is this general definition sufficient?

II) Osborne’s Analysis of Culture and Religion

a) The Dialogue between Cultures

In his recent work on orders and ministry in the Catholic Church, Kenan Osborne underlines some important issues for the dialogue between church and culture.⁶⁵ He says that two terms are of significance: acculturation and inculturation. Acculturation is seen as a process whereby one culture interacts with the other and adopts traits from the other, modifying their own behaviour as a result. Recent authors, according to Osborne, have emphasized the point of interchange, or interstice, between two cultures as the place for fruitful discussion. Inculturation is a term that seems to be used almost exclusively in theological circles and refers to the bringing into one culture of a religious message that previously has not been present, and the adopting of this message by that culture.⁶⁶ He states that there were thinkers at the Second Vatican Council who seemed to be open to an exchange between cultures regarding the Christian message, rather than insisting upon the inculturation of a message which, as it were, was already culturally formed. However, he maintains that this would have had implications for church law and discipline.⁶⁷

⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 53

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

⁶⁵ OSBORNE, *Orders and Ministry: Leadership in the World Church*, pp. 11-38.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 23, “Inculturation has become a major part of Christian evangelization, which means an infusion of gospel values into a non-Christian culture or into a culture that once was Christian but is no longer predominantly Christian (for example, much of Western Europe), or into a new-age culture. The word ‘inculturation’ does not imply any reciprocity at all.”

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 24

Osborne claims that the idea of inculturation needs to take into account one important factor: that cultures are always changing. Even the forces of globalization which have such an impact upon cultures, the mass media and economics, change. This can result in a struggle over the values that one culture tries to impose upon another in such a climate. The question for Osborne is, therefore, how cultures decide on which particular values are important in this constantly changing scene.⁶⁸

b) Culture, Identity and Symbolic Action

The other important issue, Osborne believes, is bound up with self-identity. Cultures are necessarily bound up with self-identity. Religion can be an expression of this identity, or can hinder the very search for identity.⁶⁹ In the debate over which values should be preserved, there is always the question as to whether elements that were imposed upon cultures should be preserved or modified. As elements of a culture previously submerged resurface, there will be a debate over whether these elements pertain to true religious expression, or are heretical or pagan (here, for example, Osborne mentions the use of particular symbols in churches in Africa and the place of ancestor worship).⁷⁰

Of great importance for Osborne is the issue of imagination. Osborne argues that if a culture does not imagine a future for itself then atrophy settles in and the vitality of religious expression suffers as a result. 'Imaginative expression' has particular relevance for the liturgy. If communities wish to express religious

⁶⁸ *ibid.*

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 26. Here Osborne refers to the work of Paul Tillich.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 25-26

sentiment using symbols meaningful to them, then one cannot first presume a universal understanding of symbolic action.⁷¹

As further proof of this phenomenon of change in the meaning of symbols and actions, Osborne outlines some of the historical developments that took place over the centuries as the church moved from a Semitic base into a Hellenized West, and then how it was influenced by Germanic influences, the rediscovery of the works of Aristotle, the renaissance, and scientific progress. Throughout these changes, elements of various cultures have left their mark on the psyche and the practice of the faith, from theological statements to liturgical practice and the importance of church law.⁷²

III) Conclusions for the dialogue between Culture and Religion

In considering the interaction of church and culture Osborne believes that elements of past cultural heritage have resurfaced and have been brought along, even as other cultural expressions came to dominate. We read his analysis both as a caution and a challenge. The question is: can we simply go back to one cultural expression in the hope of finding some kernel long since lost which is to be re-imposed in some kind of 'Renaissance' of religion? When we speak of culture and religion Osborne seems to suggest that there may be elements of the Catholic faith that appear to be universal in application but have, in fact, emerged from a particular cultural process. Osborne believes that this is especially true of the language that the Catholic Church uses in its dogmatic definitions.

Osborne's treatment of the issue of culture urges caution on making some basic connections between culture and religious expression. The view that there is

⁷¹ *ibid.*, pp. 26-27

⁷² *ibid.*, pp. 29-38

somehow an inherent (though hidden) truth that needs to be expressed, and in some way is present in all human symbolic exchange, needs to be qualified, Osborne believes. Any 'truth' may be itself a production of a particular world view.

2.3 Diversity and Wholeness in Sacramental Celebrations

2.3.1 Diversity in Sacramental Celebration

In his theology of the sacraments, David Power also refers to postmodern ideas on knowledge, understanding, and human encounter. However, he puts forward two ideas in connection with the themes of diversity and historicity. The first is the diversity already present in liturgical celebrations. This seems to suggest that, while Osborne calls for the differences in cultural and symbolic expression to be taken into account, such diversity is already evident as a phenomenon of actual worship. This leads Power to suggest some hermeneutical keys for interpreting the meaning of the liturgy as it is celebrated.

The second point is Power's insistence on the need to critique sacramental celebrations from this apparent 'brokenness' present in the liturgical tradition. The language of the cross, Power believes, is the key for interpreting the liturgical tradition. However, this leads him to make a more positive statement about the inclusion of different perspectives in any judgement about the meaning of the sacramental encounter. According to Power, if the experience of pain, suffering, and isolation, experienced by diverse groups both within and outwith the church, are not taken into consideration then the full significance of the sacraments as gifts of God, given to and perceived in a broken world, does not show forth in the church. He argues that change in liturgical tradition has come about in the past by addressing such issues.

Both in his work on the Eucharist from the early 1990s, and in his later work on the sacraments in general, David Power recognizes distinct practices that exist today in the celebration of the sacraments.⁷³ For some, Power acknowledges, this disparate scene represents a loss of a sense of wholeness which, again for some, is equated with a loss of a sense of the holy.⁷⁴ However, he questions whether there is a value in 'recovering' some kind of substantial unity or over-arching system in the celebration of the rites, given both the postmodern critique of culture and religion and also his own analysis of the founding event of Christianity: Christ's passion, death and resurrection, shown forth in the church and its rites.⁷⁵ Power draws a parallel between the development of the church's understanding of its rites and their meaning and the critique of postmodern philosophy on the idea of universal forms and expressions of meaning.

Power accepts a distinction between different forms of postmodern critique, between those which would suspect everything, including and especially the subject's ability to know anything, and those that would be open to past insights from narrative forms and institutions. This latter, perhaps more 'open' approach

⁷³ POWER, *The Eucharistic Mystery, Revitalizing the Tradition*, pp. 1-13; POWER, *Sacrament: The Language of God's Giving*, pp. 21-50.

⁷⁴ POWER, *Sacrament: The Language of God's Giving*, pp 21-33.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 44-46. Here Power examines in particular the theology of Hans Urs Von Balthasar who, he claims, attempts to construct in his theology just such a unitary system for the interpretation of rites. In a similar way to the critique Osborne makes of the magisterial statements of the church, Power criticizes Von Balthasar's idea of the creation of humanity, which, according to Power, sees the human being open to the divine and coming to subjectivity in terms of self-possession, as though by expression of a previously given dynamic. Significantly, though, he states that Balthasar links this with an understanding of the foundational event of the passion and death of Christ. Comparing Von Balthasar's attempts at retrieving an aesthetic in theology in general and sacramental theology in particular with some protestant theologies, Power claims that the Christ event, normative for the community and its interpretation of its existence, is not, he believes, present in any ordered or holistic form but exists from the beginning as a fragmented experience. When one considers the form of the church and its traditions, one cannot point to a whole form and shape of the church and the liturgy from the beginning but to difference and development. Cf. TRACY, D., "Trinitarian Speculation and the Forms of Divine Disclosure", *The Trinity*, ed. DAVIS, S. T., Oxford, 1999, pp. 273-293.

does, he states, still maintain a healthy suspicion of excessive rationality and rejects any lapse into a pre-modern understanding of human life.⁷⁶

He also accepts certain ‘givens’ in his theology from his position as a believer. He affirms the validity of religious expression, the ability of the sacrament to mediate divine presence and human transformation, and believes that the Christian tradition of sacrament has always allowed for cultural adaptation.⁷⁷

One of the interpretive keys for Power is that the sacramental celebration must be accountable to the gospel imperative to attend to those who suffer or who are marginalized.⁷⁸ Thus the type of hermeneutical suspicion he adopts is one that calls into question any form of sacramental rite or behaviour that emerges from a wish to control, subjugate, or mask the truth of God’s fundamental call to conversion and communion. All forms and structures of the church, he believes, have to be subject to this critique.⁷⁹ However, Power’s critique exhibits more than a desire to deconstruct bogus claims or criticize the hermeneutical ease with which statements are made. Rather, for Power, it is a method which is both dynamic and open. In short, it is heuristic; it is the very process, by which we appropriate past traditions and texts, and by which we employ present insights, that has to be scrutinized.⁸⁰

Power argues that church tradition does not consist of some harmonious form or clear linear development of understanding of God’s action and human response

⁷⁶ POWER, pp. 14-17. Here, Power draws on the ideas of Charles Jencks who distinguishes between postmodern and post-modern (with a hyphen) approaches. This latter attitude Power believes to be open to any and all insights, open to what he calls a “...kaleidoscope of sensibilities”, p. 14. While Power claims not to take sides in any debate on distinctions between postmodern theories, one gets the distinct impression that it is with this latter theory, the ‘post-modern’, that Power sympathizes. While we take this into account, for the sake of clarity we continue to use the term postmodern (without the hyphen) to mean both the systems to which Power refers.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 15-17

⁷⁸ *ibid.*

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 59-61 and following.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 17-18

but rather exhibits the characteristics of a pluriform memory. There have been in the church's history, Power maintains, rediscoveries of past highlights and cultural adaptation; of processes which have placed more and less emphasis upon complicated or 'gross' symbolism; of oral and written traditions and their impact upon the performance of liturgy through the ages. From the kaleidoscope offered by a proper historical analysis, we are challenged to dialogue with the texts that are offered (by texts, Power intends not only written texts but also the whole gamut of received symbols, words and gestures), and to seek a unity-in-diversity. Fidelity to the gospel is the indispensable touchstone.⁸¹

2.3.2 Sacrament as Language Event

Power states that David Tracy has employed the term 'event' in his theology. He claims that Tracy does so in order to understand the divine self-manifestation of God in his Word, Jesus Christ, as a happening, an event, of language.⁸² In putting forward this idea of 'event' as a paradigm for the interpretation of revelation, Power believes that Tracy is steering between a propositional rendering of truth, on the one hand, and, on the other, a 'free-floating' reading of texts that has no reference point.⁸³

Power qualifies Tracy's idea of event in two ways. Firstly, rather than seeing event as divine self-manifestation, Power sees event in terms of self-gift. Secondly, he states that the primary reference for Tracy is the Word of God;

⁸¹ *ibid.*, pp. 39-43

⁸² *ibid.*, pp.47-48

⁸³ *ibid.*, p 47, "Tracy is here addressing the plurality and ambiguity of interpretation which is current in the face of religious texts and of the Christian scriptures in particular. He recognizes that it is impossible to rely on a propositional rendering of their truth. At the same time, he refuses to go with free-floating readings that have no point of reference in the persuasion that texts say something to somebody. The historical event of Jesus Christ is a reality, however difficult it may be to historically reconstruct both his words and his deeds. Hence Tracy chooses to take event as the controlling point of reference and to link this with a grasp of the role of language in shaping reality and in handing on what has been revealed."

Power calls attention to the presence of the Spirit as the inner vitality *of* and *to* both word and sacrament.⁸⁴

2.3.3 Hermeneutical Keys

In interpreting the celebration of the sacraments, Power offers ten ‘working rules’, which we shall summarize briefly. Sacraments, first and foremost, according to Power, are memorials of the Christ event in which both Christ and the community are present to each other in a re-eventing within the body of Christ. Also, the sacramental action as an event of grace is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit.⁸⁵

For Power, sacraments are *actual* celebrations (thus the need for a heuristic approach), and they bring together rite and word into a speech situation which is appropriated by the community. This celebrating of the presence of Christ and the Spirit are events (or re-events) which in turn are open to new possibilities and horizons. Power believes that the very process of interpretation is anticipatory and is not so much about the explanation of ideas but is concerned with the enabling of the community and the individual to be open to what is actually going on. Interpretation of sacramental action has to include the perspectives of the persons involved. It also has to take into account the diversity within the New Testament. Furthermore, attention has to be paid to the cultural situation of societies.⁸⁶

Power elaborates on his portrayal of sacraments as language events. He underlines the necessarily historical nature of the sacraments. The limited and historical nature of the rites themselves point to their being intrinsically open to new ‘eventing’. He states that the Christ event is one that never comes

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, p. 48

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 48-50

⁸⁶ *ibid.*

unmediated but always through historically defined symbols. This implies that attempts to, as it were, ‘pin down’ the presence of Christ are invalid. It is Christ’s ‘absence’ as much as his presence that needs to be underlined.⁸⁷

2.3.4 The Place of the ‘Ordinary’ in Liturgical Rites

To consider language as the major factor in sacramental theology is, for Power, to consider all aspects of the actual celebration: the codes, the interweaving of the various elements, and the meanings that result.⁸⁸ Examining the sacramental celebration from the point of view of a language event also introduces the notion of the everyday, the relevance of the ordinary, which itself, Power claims, is also open to the poetic and uncontrollable.⁸⁹ In a similar way to Chauvet and Osborne, he states that nothing is brought to us without language, including being. It is in this engagement, in and with language, in the interplay between thought, reality and imagination, and being open to the everyday (which includes the poetic and the tragic), that significance and relationship is established and further meaning sought. The very revelation of the divine that the sacramental encounter signifies necessarily includes these elements, if the revelation of God is to be understood.⁹⁰ Furthermore, Power states, the language event remains related to history and reality despite (and perhaps because of) the disruptive experience of the tragic. It is in the connection with this that Power highlights the language event of the cross.⁹¹

⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p. 58

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 59-60

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. 60

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 64, “It is quite true that language should not be taken as an abstract and ontologized reality in itself, because it is spoken by somebody about something...Yet even in such situations it holds what is unspoken, what is the unsaid of the discourse...so that hermeneutics can be called the quest for the unspoken of human discourse.” He goes on, p. 65, “The deity, no less than the humanity, cannot find words adequate to the gift offered, and yet it keeps on offering the gift...”

⁹¹ *ibid.*, pp. 66-67

In the remembering of events and traditions, Power refers to Paul Ricoeur's three levels, or moments, of mimesis.⁹² The first stage is when remembered events are related to the world in which people live and to which they give shape or meaning through their cultural heritage. The second stage occurs when the remembered events are formed into narrative. The third stage is in the relating of these first two. In this last act, the community, Power believes, is open to new possibilities. The role of silence is also highlighted by Power; all language leads to silence and starts from silence.⁹³ Referring again to Ricoeur, Power also underlines the possibilities for the ethical and the poetic in language: language discloses an ideal way of acting and opens up the future for ethical behaviour in the future.⁹⁴

2.4 Summary

All three of our authors consider the idea of participation in the language event to be crucial to a modern theology of sacrament. The language event takes into account the action of the subject in his or her historicity and limitedness. Chauvet emphasizes the move from a metaphysical understanding towards a symbolic understanding of the language event which allows for the communication between subjects and the participation of the individual in a reality that exceeds them.

⁹² *ibid.*, pp. 69-70. Power talks of mimesis as well as anamnesis for two reasons. Firstly, it highlights the acting out or representing of memories, thus highlighting the participatory in the ritual remembering. Secondly, it underlines the assimilation of the event by those who participate. In other words, it is more personal than acting and more active than purely remembering. Cf. FORD, D., *Self and Salvation: Being Transformed*, Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine 1, Cambridge, New York, 1999, pp. 140-146. Ford sees 'acting' as a participation in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is as an activity that organizes, challenges us, and changes us. Ford believes that this 'acting' is not a matter of repetition or mimicking but of 'saying again' in an ever new situation, a "*habitus*" which cultivates response not preoccupation with self, see p. 165.

⁹³ POWER, pp.69-70. Cf. CHAUVET, *Symbol and Sacrament, a Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, pp. 200-227.

⁹⁴ Again compare CHAUVET, pp. 228-265; 263-265. On Chauvet and Ricoeur and the action of mimesis, see CHAUVET, pp. 67-69.

Though Osborne understands the language event in a similar way, he is more cautious about the implications for symbolic meaning that the new postmodern view of the individual implies. He highlights the different cultural understandings that form the context for the interpretation of any encounter. Power sees this difference as being already present in the diversity of liturgical celebration and as signifying the brokenness of the world which is in need of the transformative power of God. Already in his theology we can see the suggestion that human limitedness is related to brokenness and sin and is open to the power of the cross, which itself is signified in the sacramental language event.

Chauvet stresses the corporality of the human being as finding a natural 'home' in ritual. Osborne critiques ritual from the point of view of the historical and the particular. Power points to the varying traditions in the history of the church as witness to the church's ability to adapt its rites throughout the ages and he is open to certain givens in the church. Osborne is more radical in his assessment of the church and ritual as *possible* places of sacramental encounter.

3. Understanding Sacramental Action

3.1 The Language of Christianity and the Symbolic

3.1.1 The Language of Christianity and the Symbolic

Chauvet maintains that God is the one who addresses us in language, and that our response too is in language; the encounter between God and ourselves is understood as a language event.⁹⁵ As with Power, Chauvet believes that the language of Christianity is fundamentally a language of the cross, the language of love, of outpouring, of kenosis. This is a language which simultaneously involves us and emphasizes the otherness of God. God cannot be reduced to, on the one

⁹⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 46-62. Chauvet refers to the work of Stanislas Breton.

hand, coherent systems and causes (metaphysics), or, on the other, to the one of whom favour is demanded (Jewish biblical mentality). One can only respond to the language event of the cross by living in response to the love shown.⁹⁶ In other words, what is required by such a language event is the mutation of attitude.⁹⁷

This is shown, Chauvet believes, in the ecclesial context of the proclamation of the word and the sacramental action. The agent of the act of symbolization in word and sacrament is God who, through this action (best understood as a symbolic action in ritual and language), places the person in a new relationship. Grace, the free gift of God, also reveals the otherness of the God who is not at our disposal but who comes in freedom and acts in our language and history to establish us in a filial relationship with him and in a brotherly and sisterly alliance with others. In short, the very acting of God in word and sacrament places us, mediates us into his body, which is the church. The free gift of God in the church precedes us and is not dependent on us but allows us to encounter him and our brothers and sisters bodily in the church. The action of God in the church and towards the individual is mutually inclusive.⁹⁸ To respond to God's action in the church involves a 'letting go' of a false and immediate sense of self and a

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 69-72; 82-83

⁹⁷ *ibid.*

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 135-145. In these pages Chauvet moves from a consideration of ritual in the general human and religious sense to consider the rituals of Christianity. The sacramental action not only is the symbolic action of God and the individual but the church, which is the body of Christ. The 'body' for Chauvet in this context represents a necessary part of the mediation of symbol, which is corporeal and 'linguistic', and itself is a sign of 'otherness' that summons and challenges. He writes on p. 154, "One stumbles, then, on the sacrament, as one stumbles on the body, as one stumbles on the institution, as one stumbles on the Scriptures - if at least one respects it in its historical and empirical materiality. One stumbles against these because one harbours a nostalgia for an ideal and immediate presence to oneself, to others, and to God. Now, in forcing us back to our corporality, the sacraments shatter such dreams." Thus the bodily is a necessary part of the symbolic action if it is to be a human event.

submission to the process of being placed by the symbolic action in the community of the church.⁹⁹

3.1.2 The Church and the Symbolizing Activity of Scripture and Sacrament

Chauvet explains Christian identity as symbolized in scripture, in sacrament, and in ethical behaviour.¹⁰⁰ His argument is that this involves necessarily the church, the body of Christ, both in what is the said and in the unsaid of God's action.¹⁰¹

The proclamation of belief in the scriptures, particularly in the resurrection narratives, shows that the disciples had to consent to a different way of relating to Jesus after his resurrection. They had to let go of what Chauvet calls the tendency to the "necrotic", looking for the dead Jesus while he was present and alive.¹⁰² This experience led in turn to mission, being sent out. If there is no faith shared, Chauvet argues, there is no faith in the first place.¹⁰³

We can see how, for Chauvet, this process of coming to faith is evident in the scriptures. It is this acceptance on the part of the church of the New Testament to a new outlook and a mission that is as much part of the story of the resurrection as is the account itself of the risen Christ. The story of the believers, the 'others' who are addressed, is part of what is proclaimed and received in the church. In other words, in the gathering of the assembly, the word is proclaimed and the presence of the risen Christ accepted *along with* the mediating role of the church in sacrament, in its ritual and symbols.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 185-187

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 159-265

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*

¹⁰² *ibid.*, pp 161-178

¹⁰³ *ibid.*

This presence of Christ is acknowledged too as an ‘absence’. In other words, one has to continue in the vein of the first disciples and let go of ‘possessive’ tendencies. The passion and resurrection narratives, as stories of encounter, are seen as a founding event for the revelation of grace in the community. The Eucharist is seen by Chauvet as the “precipitate of the scriptures”, symbolizing at once the Christ event and the coming to belief in Christ.¹⁰⁴

Furthermore, Chauvet sees the church as necessary for our corporality, our need for the revelation of grace to be symbolized in the event of language and symbol. There can be no ‘immediate’ access to God in Christ according to some false sense of interiority.¹⁰⁵ However, the church itself is not an ‘absolute’ but represents a community that opens up to the God who is never owned even in the body which is the church.¹⁰⁶

3.1.3 The Ethical Response

Chauvet believes that the response, or ‘return’, that one makes as an individual in and as part of the community is in ethical behaviour. This is considered by Chauvet not just in terms of being a ‘better human being’ but in openness to the new life and possibilities that are offered. This new life is lived, as it were, outside the ritual because of what has been celebrated. Through the action of the Spirit, the community becomes the place where Christ lives and the ethical response

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 220-227

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 185-189; p. 186, “For is not the resentment which one feels toward a Church tolerated as a necessary evil...a symptom of this ‘gnostic’ desire for the immediate contact with Jesus Christ...of an ultra-metaphysical way of thinking that, counter to what we called consent to the corporality of our condition, is constantly reinforced by the preference granted *apriori* interiority and transparency. It is precisely as a consequence of our symbolic journey of respect for the presence-of-the-absence that we understand the *credo ecclesiam* here that is the institutional mediation of the church as a gift of grace.”

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 186-187, “In its relation with its crucified God, can the church ever be anything more than a sort of ‘transitional space?’”

made.¹⁰⁷ Chauvet states that this ethical response is made within the dynamic of gift and return for gift. In short, there is a recognition that gift obligates a response in ethical living.¹⁰⁸

This gift and return is symbolized for Chauvet in the structure of the Eucharistic prayer, revealing what he calls the Eucharistic process.¹⁰⁹ He outlines the workings of the symbolic exchange by coordinating the elements of gift, its reception, and its return-in-gift. The gift of God is given in scripture and the historical and glorious body of Christ, both of which indicate the giving grace from the gifting God. This is recounted as a past that is radically other and is irreversible (in other words, not our past, not of our invention). The reception of this gift of God takes place in sacrament, in the sacramental body of Christ under the mode of oblation or thanksgiving. This is a recognizing of the gift in the present. The gift given in return is in our ethical behaviour (agape), within the ecclesial body of Christ as orientated toward the kingdom of God. When one lives this grace between brothers and sisters, one is opened to that which is not yet accomplished in us.¹¹⁰

With this proposed schema in mind, Chauvet critiques the idea of sacrifice as a summary of Christian living. The term ‘sacrifice’ has been used ubiquitously, he says, to describe the action of Christ, the Eucharistic activity of the church, the hierarchical priesthood, and the response of the Christian to suffering in ethical life.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 262-289; p. 264, “For us, this is the theological import of an ethics lived as the prime place of a liturgy pleasing to God. The body is henceforth, through the Spirit, the living letter where the risen Christ eschatologically takes on flesh and manifests itself to all the people.”

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*, p. 267, “Every gift obligates. This is true of any present: as soon as the offered object – anything whose commercial or utilitarian value does not constitute its essence as a gift – is received as a present, it obligates the recipient to the return-gift of an expression of gratitude.”

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 266-289

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 277-281

¹¹¹ *ibid.*, pp. 290-291

He states that the presence of Christ in the sacraments was understood by the Fathers of the church in a symbolic and relational way. However, this presence of Christ, according to a metaphysical understanding, came to be supposed almost as a possession of the church and indeed of the sacraments.¹¹² Chauvet points out that the life and death of Jesus was lived existentially and not ritually. It is in the establishing of a 'newness' of being with God that Christ's sacrifice has to be understood. This, according to Chauvet, was in opposition to the understanding of the Jewish ritual of the time, according to which the mystery is somehow 'trapped' (my term). Seeing the Christ event in this way counters an attitude where the presence of Christ is seen as a 'possession' or 'content' of the sacrament.¹¹³ In other words, the presence of Christ is conceived as dynamic and personal. The Christ who is present is the Christ who is in a loving relationship with his Father and humanity. This Christ encounters us as 'other'; he cannot be 'claimed'. It is a presence that demands a change in attitude.

In the face of what has been said, the temptation, Chauvet states, is perhaps to abandon the language of sacrifice, especially when it is seen as something necessarily and completely 'contained' in the sacrament. In other words, we could abandon the word sacrifice because it is too bound up with an attitude that sees expiation as accomplished in the ritual itself.¹¹⁴

However, Chauvet argues that we need to retain the notion of sacrifice but in a way that shows the actions of God in Christ which, on the one hand, brings us together as brothers and sisters, and, on the other, call us to ethical behaviour. We

¹¹² *ibid.*, pp. 291-297

¹¹³ *ibid.*, p. 299

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 303-306. Cf. KILMARTIN, *Eucharist in the West*, pp. 223-231. Here Kilmartin deals with the theology of the mass stipend given to ordained priests by donors for a particular intention. Kilmartin links the idea of the ordained priest having the authority to distribute 'fruits of the mass' with the understanding of the sacrifice of the mass as wholly contained within the rite.

also have to be aware that the sacrificial action of Christ and the church precedes us as individuals, and that this too is celebrated by the ritual itself. The ritual celebration demands an ethical response, therefore, as a *necessary* component of the symbolizing activity of Christian living.¹¹⁵

3.1.4 The Sacraments as Instituting Ritual

1) The 'Symbolic Rupture'

In defining what is particular to the sacraments within the symbolic activity of the church, Chauvet elaborates two themes. The first is the relationship between the sacramental ritual and ordinary (or 'profane') life. Here he explains further the idea of the 'placing' of the person in the corporality of the church. The second and related theme concerns the sacraments as instituted and instituting.¹¹⁶

Chauvet speaks of the "symbolic rupture" in ritual as the most obvious element in the sacrament.¹¹⁷ Ritual practices differ from normal everyday activity. The space created by the church's action constitutes a break with the routine. Chauvet believes that we can bring the 'ordinary' into the sacramental celebration in a number of ways. Human motivations for celebrating the sacraments, be they social or psychological, may play as much a part in people's attendance at church as the 'official' understanding of what is celebrated. In other words, people bring elements from their daily lives, their own attitudes and concerns, into the ritual celebrated and may desire that these be fulfilled in the sacraments and liturgy. If these perceived subjective and cultural needs are not met, then the ritual may lose significance for the individual or community.¹¹⁸ On the other hand, ritual

¹¹⁵ CHAUVET, pp. 307-316

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 321-446

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 330-331

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 365-369. Chauvet gives the example of the request for sacraments from people who may not actually believe in God but ask for the baptism of their child, a request made perhaps

practices themselves might be out of touch with the evolving culture and become frozen in some kind of assumed theological meaning.¹¹⁹

According to Chauvet, the distance between the two, ritual practice and human motivation, the distance of assumed meaning and actual meaning (in short, the ‘difference’ of the rite and the ‘profane’ of the ordinary), is a fruitful area for pastoral concern. However, it is precisely in the idea of *difference* that, Chauvet argues, one finds the meaning of ritual.

The break between the ordinary and the sacred is required, Chauvet says, for the person to have ‘space’ for the acceptance of God’s otherness.¹²⁰ This otherness is signified by ritual symbolism. The very nature of symbolism, he maintains, is that we do not control it but have to “let go” of ourselves and allow the *experience* of the symbol to “master us”.¹²¹ Ritual, Chauvet states, exists in a regime that is

from deeper fears or anxieties connected with the birth of a child or from a desire for a rite of passage. Chauvet talks of the hidden desires that may lie behind the request for sacraments and which have to be taken into account. He points out that the understanding of the sacraments has grown as much out of cultural expectations and connections as from any desire for conversion. He states that all beliefs are ultimately human beliefs and therefore these hidden desires must be taken into consideration and those involved invited into the process of conversion not alienation. Cf. POWER, D., *Unsearchable Riches: The Symbolic Nature of the Liturgy*, New York, 1984, pp. 35-57. In these pages, Power briefly traces the processes that occurred in the West from New Testament through to medieval times. He notes, for example, the tendency of the New Testament communities to ‘de-sacralize’ persons or times and places, and the later patristic tendency to re-sacralize particular practices in the face of popular demand for festivals and celebrations. In the medieval period, the focus on hierarchy developed, as did the distance between liturgy and piety. Power believes that this understanding of symbolism and what he calls a ‘naïve’ idea of reality still exists in the church.

¹¹⁹ CHAUVET, pp. 332-336

¹²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 338, “A space is thus created, a space for breathing, for freedom, for gratuitousness where God may come. Without such a break, the odds are great that the celebration of Jesus Christ will function in fact (and doubtless in all good faith) as an excuse for smug self-celebration. The symbolic rupture allows us the intense experience of the *letting go* of our theological knowledge, our ethical ‘good works,’ our personal ‘experiences’ of God – in short, the multiple psychological and ideological ruses we unconsciously deploy to subject the gospel to our own agenda – without which there is no possibility of a true welcome for the gratuitousness of God.”

¹²¹ *ibid.*, “In this ritual rupture we do not find a *treatise* on the otherness and graciousness of God, but an *intense experience* of this otherness and graciousness.”

digital, it positions the person. The idea of analogy implies degree in relationship, a 'more or less'. The digital indicates that there is a new relationship.¹²²

Chauvet relates this idea of the acceptance of God's otherness in ritual to a theology of creation.¹²³ Creation can only be received as a gift. We are charged, he argues, with the acceptance of God's work in creation and the acceptance of our role in bringing creation into accordance with its creator's wishes. Every element in creation deserves respect. Thus, even the elements used in the sacraments, earthly and bodily, already come to us as gift and not at our disposal. Chauvet adopts an approach to creation that is biblical, that believes in a God who creates with his word. Thus, he works an understanding of the creative order into his scheme, according to which we are addressed and to which we respond to the other. Creation itself echoes the otherness of its creator, and we can only respond to this gratuitousness in ethical worship and respect.¹²⁴

II) The Sacraments as Instituted and Instituting

Chauvet believes that the sacraments are the most institutional part of the church's life since they place a person in the church. The church is never so much the church as in the sacraments. Yet the substance or reality that is signified in the sacraments is not controlled by the church.¹²⁵ Not only do the sacraments point to the confession of a faith dependent on Christ but they also indicate that the

¹²² *ibid.*, pp. 347-348

¹²³ *ibid.*, pp. 358-359; 548-549

¹²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 549

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 378, "Among the diverse ecclesial mediations, the sacraments occupy an eminently *intuitional* position. They are the Church's indispensable ways of integrating subjects because as an institution it is wholly involved in them. This is why it strictly manages the sacraments, so strictly that it claims all power over them, 'save their substance' according to the formula of the Council of Trent... Nothing, in sum, is more regulated by the Church than what it recognizes as escaping its dominion."

believer has not invented the *act of expressing* this faith. The sacraments *precede* the believer's action.¹²⁶

Using the Eucharist as the model for understanding the sacraments as a whole, Chauvet underlines the institution of the sacraments by the 'other', Christ.¹²⁷ One prevailing characteristic, which points up the sacraments' institution by Christ is the 'otherness' or 'absence' of Christ, which is signified by the sacraments as much as is his presence. However, presence and absence are not two totally different realities, according to Chauvet, but are brought together in the symbolic order.¹²⁸ Christ's presence is a presence to the church in order to continue the transformation of his church.¹²⁹ This is underlined, Chauvet argues, by the very word 'transubstantiation', which, while stressing the change in the elements of bread and wine, points equally to the 'beyond' quality of Christ's presence.¹³⁰

Chauvet believes that by looking at the whole of the rite of the celebration of the Eucharist the true nature of the elements, the rite and the word of God, is highlighted as 'given'.¹³¹ As an example, Chauvet points to the 'inescapable' meaning of bread. One cannot escape, Chauvet argues, the meaning bound up with this element, both as a cultural and a religious sign of food. Bread is never more designated as food than it is in the Eucharist. This given meaning also highlights the presence of Christ because it draws us into the signifying language of the element. This 'focuses' us and prevents us from too subjectivist an understanding because the element comes laden with meaning already given. This meaning as given includes us in the event of the Eucharist, highlighting the social

¹²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 381

¹²⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 382-408

¹²⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 403-404

¹²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 389

¹³⁰ *ibid.*

¹³¹ *ibid.*, pp. 389-408

and biological significance of this basic element, but it also determines us because of its received meaning.¹³² The bread is broken in the Eucharist for us and beyond us. It is always for us and yet points to something more: the being for others in charity and the ethical journey that we must make. Thus, the presence of Christ is never closed or 'final'; it is a continual coming-to-us, for us, and pointing us beyond to the other.¹³³

The other characteristic of the sacraments, according to Chauvet, is that they forge the identity of the church of Christ and individuals within that church; they are 'instituting'.¹³⁴ In considering the instituting nature of the sacraments, Chauvet attempts to find a path beyond what he calls an objectivist impasse and a subjective impasse.¹³⁵ He characterizes the objectivist impasse as a view of the sacraments according to which they are instruments or passages through which one can come to the Kingdom of God by the increasing or decreasing of the state of grace.¹³⁶ The emphasis here is on the metaphysical productionist schema which he has judged as an inadequate treatment of the sacraments since it leaves no room for the acting subject.

According to Chauvet, the roots of the subjectivist impasse lie in the attempts of the Second Vatican Council to admit of the action of God outside the church and to portray the sacraments, in part, as a more concentrated focus of this activity.¹³⁷ However, this can lead, Chauvet argues, to the sacraments being considered as mere signs of a grace that is already *there*, immanent in the world and taken for granted. This perspective also leaves the sacraments open to being interpreted as

¹³² *ibid.*, pp.396-398

¹³³ *ibid.*, pp. 404-408

¹³⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 409-446

¹³⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 410-420

¹³⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 410-412

¹³⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 412-414

an affirmation of the hidden desires of the subject rather than as a challenge to them.¹³⁸

Finding a third way, Chauvet believes, entails an engagement with the sacramental life of the church according to the schema that he suggests. In other words, we need to take into account the symbolic structure inherent in Christian life and the sacraments.¹³⁹

Chauvet believes that there are three stages, or levels, to the instituting function of the sacraments.¹⁴⁰ The first is the focus on the symbolic structure of the sacraments which allows the subjects of sacramental action, God, the church, and the individual, to 'come forward' and address each other. The second is the recognition that grace, the gift of God, is of a different order than the epistemological. In other words, grace cannot be fully comprehended but has to be accepted as uncontrollable. Thirdly, theological reflection must coordinate the elements of the sacraments. These elements are: the sacraments as the remembering event of God's gift, the response of faith in the past and present, and the ethical demands of the symbolic engagement. He defines these stages more specifically as the locutionary (the gift given, which addresses us), the illocutionary (where subjects engage in symbolic discourse), and the perlocutionary (the opening up to new possibilities in ethical living).¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 419-420. Here Chauvet also examines what he calls a protestant view of the sacraments which, he claims, shows a similar approach. We note that he is drawing comparisons between the different approaches and not making definitive statements on the correspondence between post-Vatican 2 sacramental theologies and that of protestant thinkers.

¹³⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 425-444

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 444-446

¹⁴¹ *ibid.* Chauvet acknowledges the contribution that the Second Vatican Council made to the rediscovery of the 'anamnetic' nature of the liturgy which underlines the remembrance and representation of the covenant offer and response symbolized in the liturgy, see pp. 413-418.

3.2 The Possibilities for a Postmodern Sacramental Theology

3.2.1 Sacramental Theology in the Light of Postmodern Philosophy

Osborne maintains that, today, the whole question of *understanding* is only possible by taking into account the postmodern return to subjectivity. As we have seen, he believes that the magisterial statements on the sacraments are often unintelligible to the modern mind because of this epistemological and onto-epistemological shift.¹⁴²

In order to explain the sacramental encounter in the light of postmodern philosophy, Osborne suggests the adoption of five theological premises. The first is that every sacrament is an event in which primarily God discloses himself and in which, secondarily though necessarily, humans respond.¹⁴³

The second premise, according to Osborne, touches on the relationship between God's presence in creation and God's presence in the sacramental event. The action of God and the human response must be described in interpersonal terms.¹⁴⁴ In understanding the encounter between our finiteness and God's transcendence, a transcendence which, Osborne argues, *in some way* is considered the ground of all being, he states that the presence of God in creation and the presence of God in the sacrament must be understood as different presences.

Again referring to the philosophy of Heidegger, he suggests that in the sacramental encounter, both the 'I' of God's initiative and the 'I' of the human response are transformed, they do not simply reproduce the same 'I'.¹⁴⁵ Osborne

¹⁴² OSBORNE, *Sacraments*, pp. 137 ff.

¹⁴³ *ibid.*, pp. 139-140. Here Osborne refers to the philosophy of Heidegger and uses the word *ereignis* to identify this 'event'. He also takes into account the theology of David Tracy, see pp. 120-121; 215; 227.

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 140-145

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 145, "In a sacramental *ereignis*, the creating God and the self-revealing, sacramental God are identical but distinct; and the created 'I' and the 'I' in the sacramental encounter are

seems to be saying here that, from the divine perspective, God reveals, as it were, a different aspect of himself, the interrelational or personal God. It is the same God who creates and redeems, but he is perceived differently and offers himself in a new way in the sacramental encounter. From the human side, this idea of the distinct self or 'I' implies conversion.

In his third premise, Osborne deals with the idea of what he calls the 'pan-cosmic' possibility of sacramentality.¹⁴⁶ He states that Scholastic theology believes the presence of God (often referred to as the *vestigia Trinitatis*) is self-evident; he is there for all to see. The question Osborne asks, in response to this approach, is to whom is God revealing himself?¹⁴⁷ Osborne argues that the language event of sacramental encounter is in fact part of the creative process itself, part of a world shared with other subjects in which God reveals himself.¹⁴⁸ In other words, it is relationship as experienced in the world that defines the sacramentality of the cosmos.

Osborne's fourth premise depends upon the idea of the primacy of human perception. The only perception we have, Osborne states is human.¹⁴⁹ By positing our consciousness as a problem we *may* move toward an idea of the transcendental. However, we cannot do this on the basis of believing this consciousness to be somehow universal or that it exists as part of a shared nature.

identical but distinct." Osborne says that he borrows the term *ereignis*, event, from Heidegger and applies it to the sacramental encounter between God and the human person.

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 145-147

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 146

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 147, "It is precisely in the event of sacramentality that we find this kind of sharing a world that, until that time, was only one's own. It is, of course, God who reveals God's self in the world to us, but in our recognition of God's self-revelation and self-reflection we share in language, including sacramental and symbolic language, the world we find in this moment of *Haecceitas*."

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 147-160

We perceive only through and in our own horizons. This means that each and every human response in the sacramental encounter is concrete and unique.¹⁵⁰

Does this imply, therefore, that there cannot be any collective sacramental worship or normative sacramental event? Osborne answers this question by turning to the question of the 'other' in our experiences and judgements. When we are in doubt, Osborne states, we turn to others, we share our experiences and opinions. In this process there is, he believes, always the danger of reducing the 'other' to me, or, to use a term he borrows from the philosophers Levinas and Gasché on this matter, of 'domesticating' the other.¹⁵¹ By 'others' in this context, Osborne intends not just 'everyone else' but those among whom 'I am'.¹⁵² In the Christian context this underlines the importance of liturgical history, of relating to the witness of received texts and the experiences of tradition. However, here again he sees the danger of speaking with hermeneutical ease, looking for generic concepts. In postmodern philosophy, Osborne repeats, the 'other' and the 'I' are not to be understood in an absolute way. Human understanding cannot be swallowed up in some generalized or universal sense or according to some grand scheme.¹⁵³

In terms of there being any normative factor in the disclosure made in the sacramental event, Osborne focuses on the ineffability of God. He writes,

Not only does the existentiality, the temporality, the historicity, and the finiteness of the human response in the sacramental event preclude any unsurpassability, but the ineffability of the revealing God in the same sacramental event challenges any claim of a person or persons, or of a thing, to unsurpassability. God is simply greater than any particular event.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 149

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 153

¹⁵² *ibid.*, p. 154

¹⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 155

¹⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 157

In other words, the only ‘norm’ in the sacramental event is the transcendence of God, not any repeatable pattern to which we can point as an ‘always happening’ or generic sacramental element.

Osborne believes that the true focus of church teaching is in fact upon the primordially of God’s action.¹⁵⁵ Osborne further maintains that on the subject of our knowledge of God the ‘Catechism of the Catholic Church’ is equally clear on our partial and limited grasp of the nature of this free and absolute God.¹⁵⁶ What Osborne stresses, then, is the difference between the limited human perspective and that of the transcendent God, and this is in line, he claims, with the official teaching of the Catholic Church.

Osborne’s fifth premise concerns the rituals of the church as celebrations of what he continues to call sacramental *Haecceitas*. Stressing again the primacy of God’s action in the sacraments, Osborne refers to the theology of Chauvet who, as we have seen, coordinates the sacramentality of scripture and the Eucharist in the community gathered, as the word is proclaimed and sacramentalized in the ritual meal.¹⁵⁷ Osborne maintains, with Chauvet, that what is sacramentalized in the Eucharist is the paschal mystery of Christ, which includes the sending of the Spirit. Something new happens each and every time the death of Jesus is proclaimed and ritualized in the assembly.

¹⁵⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 69-74. Osborne again refers to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraphs 1077-1108. He writes on p. 73, “The implications of this basic theological position (of the *Catechism*) – that primordially sacramentality is God’s own action – are profound. God, who is absolutely free, cannot be bound by any human, ecclesial, or ecclesiastical regulations. No creature restricts the actions of an absolutely free God. Nor can an absolutely free God be bound by any human, created, or finite conditions.”

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 157, “God is so great, so inexpressible, so incomprehensible, so invisible, so ungraspable, that any disclosure of God is but a small window onto this inexpressibility, incomprehensibility, invisibility, and ungraspability of God.” He refers to paragraphs 40-43 of the *Catechism*.

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 160-165

This newness disrupts, breaks into, our lives forcing us to accept our responsibility for justice, even when this justice is absent.¹⁵⁸ For Osborne too, the ethical dimension remains central to the sacramental event, though he makes it explicit that this needs to be worked out in the pursuit of justice.¹⁵⁹

3.2.2 Post-Modern Onto-Epistemology and Solemn Church Teachings

I) The Primacy of God's Action

Towards the end of his work on the sacraments, Osborne returns to the nature of the magisterial statements of the Roman Catholic Church on Christ, the church, and the sacraments. In doing so he summarizes the two main points that he has made throughout his work: the priority of the action of God and the limited nature of the human response that itself realizes the transcendence of God.¹⁶⁰

In considering the teaching of the church on the sacraments, he points out first of all that we have to take into consideration the historical situation surrounding the various magisterial statements and the intentions of particular church teaching on the sacraments. This is especially true, he says, when examining the teaching of the Council of Trent, which has proven so influential in defining the sacraments.¹⁶¹

He considers what he calls five of the most solemnly defined truths traditionally presented by theologians over the years: that the sacraments have been instituted

¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 164-165. Osborne maintains that theologians have not properly taken into account the seventh chapter of Chauvet's work, *Symbol and Sacrament*, which discusses the ethical dimension of symbolic Christian living.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. CHAUVET, pp. 179-180. Chauvet puts the emphasis on the very act of living ethically with no specific object, though the implication of his treatment of bread in the Eucharist implies a basic commitment to sharing goods with others.

¹⁶⁰ OSBORNE, *Sacraments*, pp. 166-192.

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*, pp. 166-169. In these pages, Osborne points to the context in which the statements of the Council of Trent were made: the polemical atmosphere and the desire, on the part of the Catholic Church, to safeguard its understanding of the seven sacraments in the face of the objections of the Reformers. His point here is that we cannot make the statements of the church in any specific time say more than they want to say. He believes that the language used in Trent's definitions was according to a certain world-view that has today become less relevant.

by Christ, that they are signs that confer grace, that they are seven, that the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and holy orders confer a character, and that the personal holiness of the minister does not influence the conferral of grace by the sacraments.¹⁶²

The real intention behind these teachings, Osborne maintains, is to safeguard the action of God in the sacraments. By teaching that the sacraments were instituted by Christ, the Catholic Church actually intended, Osborne believes, to underline the *action of God* in Christ. The same intention, he argues, is behind the teaching that the personal holiness of the minister does not affect the valid conferral of grace.

The importance of the actual statements on sacramental character or on the number of sacraments is relative, he argues. He maintains that the idea of character has never been fully explained in church teaching.¹⁶³ The numbering of the sacraments at seven, Osborne says, is something that has not always been believed everywhere.¹⁶⁴

II) The Limited Nature of the Human Response

Osborne summarizes his second main point, the limited nature of the self, in outlining four factors that emerge from postmodern thought: the return to subjectivity, individuality or *Haecceitas*, temporality, and language.¹⁶⁵ The first two points have been presented in terms throughout our thesis.

¹⁶² *ibid.*, pp. 169-177

¹⁶³ Osborne's view is that the church's teaching on the sacraments, that they confer the grace they signify, intertwines three religious truths: that it is God who acts through the sacrament to confer grace, that Christians can set up obstacles to this grace, and that the sacraments really do communicate the grace of which they speak, see pp. 170-172. The issue of the character, conferred by baptism, confirmation, and holy orders, refers, Osborne maintains, to a belief in the irrepeatability of these sacraments, see pp. 174-175.

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 172-174

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 182-192

On the subject of temporality, Osborne argues that, from the time of Heidegger, temporality has not only been introduced into the concept of being but is seen as the foundation of all that is. Being, as such, is older than any span of time that we use to measure, Osborne believes, but being is not older than time itself; it comes to be precisely in time.¹⁶⁶ Osborne states that this aspect of temporality governs all language about and statements made on God and his action in the world. This means that when speaking of God and his action, the church must realize that it is human language that it uses, with all that this implies. It is in human language that God reveals himself. Only by taking into account the issues that postmodern philosophy raises about understanding can we explain the understanding of God's action and our response.¹⁶⁷

3.3 Sacrament as the Language of God's Giving

3.3.1 The Power of Sacramental Language

The force of sacramental language, for Power as for Chauvet, is the language of the cross, and it is the speaking of this language in ritual that gives the risen Christ the power to change lives; not causality or forensic application but the speaking of the sacramental language, the ritual action.¹⁶⁸ Here, the structure of the blessing prayer of sacramental rites holds the hermeneutical key for Power. He portrays this structure as a threefold invocation of God which corresponds to God as loving creator, as the God of covenant who addresses humanity, and as the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is made known to us in the outpouring of Christ in

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 189-191

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 191-192; p. 190, "The challenge that postmodern writers bring to the solemn statements of the church is two-fold. Hermeneutically, on what basis can a statement be made about the absolute non-finiteness (the epistemological or hermeneutical question)? And on what basis is a human being able to move beyond his or her own finiteness and finite transcendence (the onto-hermeneutical question)? The focus of the challenge is not on what is said in such church statements, but rather on the more basic question, what is understanding?"

¹⁶⁸ POWER, *Sacraments, Language of God's Giving*, p. 75.

his death on the cross and his being raised from the dead in the power of the Spirit in order to overcome evil.¹⁶⁹ These themes are taken up in the sacramental action of the church, which uses symbols and materials that are not abstract but recall the earthly being taken up into the divine realm. This action signifies our conversion and our immersion into the mystery of creation, covenant, and new life.

3.3.2 The Sacraments and Conversion

The theme of conversion, Power states, is very often considered within the framework of a theology of grace.¹⁷⁰ Power's concerns are with how conversion is seen as the purpose of the sacramental celebrations themselves and he critiques them from the point of how effective they are and have been in this regard. In critiquing sacramental rites, it is not just a matter of abandoning past forms without reflection, but viewing them according to their historical circumstances and the frameworks of thought that gave birth to them.¹⁷¹ Fidelity to the gospel is the most important hermeneutical key for discerning conversion, but conversion to the pasch of Christ in a person's life is one that is expressed in form as well as in spirit.¹⁷² A central theme of Power's presentation is the way in which the rites give space to the marginalized and the oppressed.

Power raises four particular issues surrounding the interpretation of the sacramental rites that can lead, he believes, to a misunderstanding and the masking of real conversion. The first is that of the perception of the body.¹⁷³ He refers to the work of Julia Kristeva when he considers how negatively the body has been seen in traditional theology. When certain desires and human

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 77

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 240-242

¹⁷¹ *ibid.*, pp. 242-247

¹⁷² *ibid.*, p. 241

¹⁷³ *ibid.*, pp. 247-253

expressions are deemed to be unclean or threatening to the world of order and power, they are suppressed, leading to a split self.¹⁷⁴ Self-renunciation can be a negative experience. Healthy images of the body are promoted by an emphasis upon the true graced self, which helps in an integrated interiorization of bodily desires. The notion of the ‘bodily’ is vital for the understanding of sacraments as they involve the acts of touching, eating, and use of earthly materials. When the body is abject, subjugated, there is a danger that we suppress the bodily actions of the sacraments.¹⁷⁵

The second issue he raises is related to the first and concerns the complementarity between masculine and feminine images of God.¹⁷⁶ The nurturing side of God is present in the scriptures, and the motherhood of God is an image that is ripe for exploration and could help in the discarding of stereotypical images of the female.

According to Power, hierarchy and power is another issue that affects our interpretations of rites and sacraments.¹⁷⁷ Official ministry is for the service and gathering of the community, and witnesses to the church’s faith. He believes that too many of the individual aspects of the ordination rite for priests stress the power and hierarchy of the ordained priesthood. He believes that even the ideas of sacrifice can be twisted into images of power and subjugation.¹⁷⁸ Preoccupation with power and status can also influence the gathering of people around the presbyter in the local community; many local communities gather according to their comfort and social class.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 251 ff.

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 253-255

¹⁷⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *ibid.*

All of this leads to Power's final aspect for critique, which has been evident in the first three: the marginalization of the poor.¹⁸⁰ The language of sacrament has to include the oppressed and those who are ignored. The gospel demand for charity and conformation to the way of the cross challenges us ethically in our relations with others. What may have been marginal to the hitherto accepted symbolic code must be heard.¹⁸¹

Power concludes that conversion has to be religious, affective, ethical, and intellectual.¹⁸² Religious, in the sense that all images of order and sacrifice have to be integrated into the divine-human exchange that characterizes the excessive gift of God. Security and subjugation have to give way to a new way of living that is exposed to the future acceptance of the other. Conversion has to be affective, engaging emotions and the bodily values and loyalties. Conversion must also be a theme which touches people who live in the world of reality. It has to be ethical in that it affirms the value of the other. The idea of conversion must also have a rigorous intellectual quality, examining how we think, make decisions, and be always ready to critique ideologies.¹⁸³

3.3.3 Sacrament as the Language of God's Giving

For Power, the divine-human exchange originates in the Word-made-flesh and this is what is celebrated in sacrament.¹⁸⁴ From the earth, the Word takes human nature and brings it into the dynamic of love, sanctifying it with the gift of grace.

¹⁸⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 255-260

¹⁸¹ *ibid.*, pp. 261-262

¹⁸² *ibid.*, pp. 261-273

¹⁸³ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 276 ff.

The community and the individual are involved in the dynamic of giving but “(I)t is God’s gift and giving which makes the sacrament and not the people’s.”¹⁸⁵

Compared to other types of exchange, the gift-giving in this respect is not an imposition or the seeking of status but that which enables the living out of the gift.¹⁸⁶ The idea of gift as elaborated by Power both maintains the distance between the giver and the gift and does not imply any obligation on the part of the giver. Drawing an analogy between the gift of life given to a child by his or her parents, Power stresses that the living out and enjoying of the gift of life does not imply that the child is ever beholden to the parents themselves, but he or she is instead compelled to live life and pass it to the next generation. Here there seems to be a difference between Power’s notion of gift and that of Chauvet. Power sees the response to giving not as an obligation but in the act of more giving; the giving cannot be realized in the recipient in any other way. Overall, however, their conclusion as to the result of God’s giving is the same; the gift implies a future giving.

Power draws a comparison between gift and giving on the one hand, and the said and saying of sacramental language, on the other.¹⁸⁷ The gift is not a present for momentary enjoyment but for the continuous giving that results as a consequence.

He presents four themes which he maintains can be helpful in underlining sacramental language as a language of God’s giving: the iconic, the idea of ‘trace’ in revelation, the function of the analogy of being, and the idea of self-presence.

¹⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p. 277

¹⁸⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 278-281

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.*

1)The Iconic

In order to avoid the language of causality and the productionist schema, referred to by Chauvet, and to explain sacramental language in interpersonal terms, the language of the iconic, Power believes, has proven useful.¹⁸⁸ The use of this term has its origins in the use of icons in the religious worship of the eastern churches and the theology of John of Damascus.¹⁸⁹ The icon is an image which partakes of that which is 'imaged' but does not reproduce it or represent it. According to the theology of Pseudo-Dionysius, the icon symbolises the movement from God to creatures.¹⁹⁰

Power states that Jean-Luc Marion has drawn a contrast between the idol and the icon. The image is that which we project, whereas the icon, by its very visibility, reveals the divine; we are gazed at, rather than gaze. The icon points away from itself toward the other.¹⁹¹

Sacramental language can be seen as iconic. In sacramental language, words, images, and actions go together to form a whole and augment the meaning of life, giving a cumulative significance that is not of human making.¹⁹² Power writes,

But it is to the word of the sacramental celebration that we must look for the greatest augmentation of the reality and the act, and so of the world of being together...image is spoken before being seen. It is through the word event linked indeed to something happening in history that the visible icon becomes possible.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 282 ff.

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. 283 ff.

¹⁹⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*, pp.258-286. See MARION, J.-L., *God without Being*, Chicago, 1991, pp 7-24.

¹⁹² POWER, p. 286 ff.

¹⁹³ *ibid.*, p. 285

For Power, it is the blessing prayer that puts everything into the context of gift and giving.¹⁹⁴ In short, it is the prayer of blessing which refers to the gift of the Triune God, recalling the actions of the God of creation, covenant, and redemption, and enables the community to keep celebrating, or *saying*, the act of redemption. The gift of God takes form in different times and places according to culture and history, enabling the church to re-enact anew the gift of God. However, the sacramental language itself always points to the God who gives and to the saying or celebrating of the community that is still to come.

II) The Concept of Trace in Sacramental Language

Again rejecting attempts at the constructing of aesthetic wholeness, which he detects in the works of Von Balthasar and Marion, Power turns instead to the writings of Stanislas Breton for a better understanding of the discontinuous nature of the church's form, which is, he believes, the trace of God's revelation throughout history as found in the sacramental celebration.¹⁹⁵ Power says that Breton offers four steps in understanding the movement of the sacramental in relationship to the movement of revelation.

The first step is to realize that God is beyond being. He is the one from whom all things come by an act of freedom. Nothing in creation can provide an adequate image or analogy.¹⁹⁶

The second step is in accepting that this God empties himself to enter into history by an act of covenant. Since this happened in history, its passing on is

¹⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 286

¹⁹⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 288-290

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 288

recorded in human memory in action and story rather than representation. This opens up the disciples to thanksgiving and to the future.¹⁹⁷

The third step is to acknowledge that in this passage of the divine, recorded in the traces that are handed down, the people of Israel and then the church are invited to write themselves anew in testimony and gift.¹⁹⁸

The fourth step is to see that the divine advent of self-giving and the ecclesial act of self-creating constitute a being in history (*esse in*), and that within forms of thought, institution and rite, this constitutes a community in relation to the world and to the one to whom the community and world return (*esse ad*).¹⁹⁹

In adopting these ideas Power shows how the divine initiative, as well as the action of the community is underlined. What results is the continual saying of the divine love, which forms a community in relationship.

According to Power, Breton underlines the cross as the hermeneutical key for interpreting God's loving movement toward humanity. Power goes further and states, "Breton's understanding of the Word and of the Cross as gift and trace of God's love can be complemented by more attention to the gift of the Spirit."²⁰⁰ The power of the Spirit dwells in the church and in its members, and makes possible the remembrance of both what has been revealed and the possibilities of new expression in new historical and concrete circumstances. Thus, Power links the Spirit to the church and to the continual action and re-enactment in the sacraments.

¹⁹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p. 289

III) The Analogy of Being and Sacramental Language

Power believes that when viewed from the point of view of the language of causality and production the analogy of being is not helpful.²⁰¹ However, when the idea of being is used to emphasize the action of the giving God, as he states is found in Aquinas' notion of God as the *actus essendi*, as gifting subjectivity to human persons, then the analogy of being can be fruitful.²⁰² In this way, the endowment of human being from a free acting God can be seen to underline the notion of gift in a dynamic way. However, the language of being only serves to underline the gift, from the point of view of the human, not God's. Power writes:

It is human life which is described through the language of being, not the divine agapé which appears and is given through the sacrament to augment our being...The gift is addressed to participants with the possibilities of living and loving in a way that transcends the boundaries that circumscribe being in this world, even if on condition that one consents to these boundaries as the condition of life.²⁰³

In this way, and throughout his work, Power safeguards the newness of redemption and grace through Christ and the Spirit. Like Kilmartin, he uses the language of augmentation and new creation and still retains a place for speaking in the language of being. However, this way of speaking of being underlines the 'creatureliness' of the human and its dependence on God. It is the gift of grace that enables the necessary relationships to happen and be acted out. The important theme that emerges in Power's treatment is that the covenant is offered not by way of obligation or necessity but from the free act of a loving God.

²⁰¹ *ibid.*, pp. 281-282

²⁰² *ibid.*, p. 287; 308

²⁰³ *ibid.*, p. 290

To underline this, Power counsels against the static view suggested by the language of being; “(T)he being that is gift is best thought of in terms of act. A practical theology is needed that can heuristically grasp the structure of human action in its openness to gift.”²⁰⁴ This theology, Power believes, would look at the narrative in which the contours of action are evident, and seek to celebrate ritual in relation to the narrative. The narrative of the passion of Christ, which gives us new life, opens us up to see the suffering of others and spurs us on to act accordingly. This ethical commitment is elaborated further by Power in his treatment of other analogies that assist our understanding of gift in sacrament, such as covenant, justice, freedom, and communion.²⁰⁵

IV) Self-Presence

The theme of self-presence has been one on which we have touched throughout our consideration of the sacraments. The idea of the subject being able to come to or realize self-possession, and of expressing this subjectivity in ritual and culture, has been criticized by Osborne. Power seems to agree with this assessment. He writes

“Being is possessed only through language, beginning with the narrative. Humans live not by virtue of what is already possessed or realized in self, but in virtue of what is to come. This coming is not in virtue of human action and potency but in virtue of what is gratuitously given, what is to come to, rather than what is to come from, the self.”²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ *ibid.*, p. 291

²⁰⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 295-304. Cf. POWER, *The Eucharistic Mystery, Revitalizing the Tradition*, pp. 291-303. Here Power argues that the term ‘communion’ best sums up the central act of the Eucharist. His view is that this term signifies the purpose of the Eucharist, which is the bringing of the church and the individual into union with God. This view is supported, he says, by the writings of Paul, and the centrality of the altar as the table of communion in the liturgy.

²⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p. 294

According to Power, then, there is no pure and complete self-consciousness either of a person or a group. The church has to realize itself anew; it cannot consider itself a generic constant.

At the beginning of chapter four of our thesis, when considering the sacramental theologies of the twentieth century, we saw how certain theologians understood the presence of Christ's deeds in the sacraments according to some kind of a-temporal schema. Linking the idea of self-presence with this question, Power says "(T)he appeal that is sometimes made to some transtemporal quality in the acts of Christ that escapes both time and narrative seems to be based on the idea that we can be present to ourselves in the essence of our being, even within change."²⁰⁷ Power maintains that we cannot grasp anything in such a manner and goes on, "(H)aving an identity means finding it in a narrative that draws facts and event together in a plot. The plot, however, is open-ended, always pointing to the future."²⁰⁸

3.4 Summary

Two main themes emerge from our authors concerning the understanding of sacramental action: the loving initiative of God in the sacramental action and the human response in conversion. Osborne emphasizes the divine initiative both in his analysis of the sacrament as language event and in his reading of official church teaching. Both Chauvet and Power underline the power of the cross in sacramental language as the sign of the gifting God.

Chauvet sees the theme of conversion both in terms of the letting go of our egoism and in the allowing of ourselves being placed by the sacramental event in

²⁰⁷ *ibid.*

²⁰⁸ *ibid.*

the church, leaving aside our own desires to manipulate sacramental action. Power sees the need to critique the sacramental rite from the point of view of those whom the language of the cross represents, the poor and the oppressed. Here he seems to differ from Chauvet in that he sees the inclusion of human need and desire as part of that which the sacramental rite necessarily addresses. All three of our authors point to the necessary response of the believer in ethical action. Chauvet and Power see this return to the giving God as being open to new giving and newness. Osborne and Power make more specific mention of the need to pursue justice in our relations with others.

4. Christology and Trinitarian Theology

4.1 The Pasch of Christ as the Necessary Starting Point for Sacramental Theology

4.1.1 The Pasch or the Incarnation as a Starting Point?

Rather than beginning with the incarnation as the basis for the relationship of God to humanity in grace, Chauvet begins from the pasch of Christ.²⁰⁹ He begins this final section of his work with a review of the theology of Aquinas, which he believes has the beginnings of a theology of the Holy Spirit but in the end ‘collapses’ (my term) into a ‘christomonism’ that emphasizes the hypostatic union. Chauvet claims that he does this in order to find a fixed point from which a theology of grace could be viewed.²¹⁰ Because of this lack of development of the role of the Holy Spirit, whom both Christ and the church share, there is a split between Christ and the church.²¹¹ Furthermore, Chauvet claims that, while Aquinas does elaborate a comprehensive christology and sacramental theology, he

²⁰⁹ CHAUVET, *Symbol and Sacrament*, pp. 453-547.

²¹⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 453- 476

²¹¹ *ibid.*, pp. 459-474

does so from a view-point that presumes a self-evident understanding of God's action in the world. Chauvet argues that no such presumption can be made.²¹²

The centrality of the paschal mystery, he claims, is underlined in the liturgy of the church itself and is highlighted in the liturgical year which hinges on the Easter mystery.²¹³ The incarnation, he claims, represents a process of 'reading back' into Christ the significance of the paschal event.²¹⁴ This significance is God to us and for us. The soteriological "final purpose" of the incarnation must never be forgotten.²¹⁵ The questions then, Chauvet asks are, what kind of God comes to us in the paschal event and who is the God who is revealed?²¹⁶

4.1.2 The Revelation of God in the Death of Jesus

For Chauvet the death of Christ reveals the Triune God, and he presents four theses which underline the event of the cross in the definition of God in modern theology.²¹⁷ The first, we believe, is the most fundamental: "it is in Jesus, the Christ, that who God is is revealed to us."²¹⁸ Chauvet maintains that Christians cannot but proclaim the God who is shown in Jesus Christ, his life, death, and resurrection. However, who God is belongs to no one but God himself; we cannot own God, he is the 'other'. We can only accept him in humility, Chauvet argues, and proclaim him as God.²¹⁹

²¹² *ibid.*, pp. 474-476

²¹³ *ibid.*, pp. 476-489

²¹⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 487-489. Here Chauvet underlines the scandal that Jesus' execution signified for the Jews of his time. He argues that Jesus' concrete humanity must be taken into the story of Easter for it to speak to us, see p. 488, "If we do not take into account the empirical history of Jesus within the context of the Judaism of his time, we would not make any fundamental change by starting from the Easter mystery rather than the hypostatic union. We would still remain in the abstract, having to do not with Jesus Christ, but with a semi-Gnostic Christ..."

²¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 489. Chauvet claims that Scholastic theology did not lose sight of the soteriological dimension.

²¹⁶ *ibid.*

²¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 492-494

²¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 492

²¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 493

Chauvet's second and third theses relate to the meaning of the crucifixion. He states that his second thesis emerges from the theology of Eberhard Jüngel, who, he says, believes that God has chosen not to be without human beings, to the point that "God's humanity is already part of God's divinity."²²⁰ This implies that we have to rethink any *apriori* notions of God and of humanity: of the 'absolute' God or the self-contained nature of humanity.²²¹

Faced with the cross, we must acknowledge our own evil, our difference from God and our need of God's victory.²²² Chauvet states that we cannot accept the cross without calling ourselves into question and our own attempts at the manipulation of God. We must also abandon an infantile desire for the God of wonders.

Referring again to the theology of Jüngel and to that of Moltmann, the third thesis that Chauvet presents to us is that God is nowhere more divine than in his *kenosis* on the cross; that we cannot think of God without the crucifixion.²²³ Chauvet understands the cross as the symbol for the entire Christ event, the summing up of his existence.

The fourth thesis that Chauvet presents is, he says, taken from Moltmann's work "The Crucified God." He believes that we cannot understand the crucified God if we do not accept a Trinitarian concept of God from the outset.²²⁴ It is this last thesis which we believe is most important for Chauvet's own view of the Trinity. Chauvet reviews some of the literature that has been written on the revelation of the 'oppositions' in God revealed on the cross, beginning with Jesus'

²²⁰ *ibid.* Here Chauvet refers to Eberhard Jüngel's work, *God as Mystery of the World*.

²²¹ *ibid.*

²²² *ibid.*, p. 501

²²³ *ibid.*, p. 493

²²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 494

experience of abandonment by his Father on the cross.²²⁵ Jesus' experience of God's silence must be taken seriously, Chauvet argues, but has to be seen from the perspective of his whole life and mission. Jesus was the one who always allowed God to be God in his life, to be 'other'. This implies that *our* understanding of God has to move beyond one of defining God according to any metaphysical system, on the one hand, or, on the other, an acceptance of radical opposition in God. Both of these positions, Chauvet believes, share a belief in a God of objective essences.²²⁶

Chauvet argues for a symbolic interpretation of the Triune God, a "symbolic meontology" that goes beyond the onto-theological presuppositions exhibited both by a theology of over-identification of God with being, which does not admit of the full scandal of the cross and makes too many claims to knowing the essence of God, and also of a theology of the negation of knowledge of God, of what Chauvet calls an apophatic theology, saying only what is unknown. Both of these positions, Chauvet claims, presume their own a-temporal conceptual starting point.²²⁷

Ultimately Chauvet interprets the paschal event according to the symbolic schema which is present throughout his work. In other words, Chauvet believes that what is revealed in God is the acceptance by each of the persons in the Trinity of the other in dynamic relationship.²²⁸ This is not to say that the mystery of the Trinity is exhausted in this revelation but only that what we know and what we accept is the revelation of God's dialogue in our history, in the language event.

²²⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 494-499

²²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 499, "If God's revelation thus finds its decisive turn in Jesus' cross, if the relation of God and humankind finds its focal point there also (and, only by way of the cross, in the incarnation) this demands that the representation of 'God' be lifted to another plane than that of onto-theology."

²²⁷ *ibid.*

²²⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 502-509

Human involvement in the event of the cross was exhibited in the putting to death of the just one in history. Jesus became that which God is not, human and rejected. His death, his “crossing out”, was a result of historical action and human involvement. Yet, God comes to us precisely in this event, as other than he is.²²⁹ We can only, Chauvet believes, accept this as gift, and accept the opening out of God into our history in his coming as the crucified God.²³⁰ We are addressed in this event; we are, as it were, included despite the apparent opposition. In other words, in the Christ event, God begins the symbolic process by addressing us and inviting us to change in the face of his self-giving.²³¹ This process cannot but take place in our corporality, in the place where we are most included, where the symbolic implies both presence and absence; in other words in the sacramental.²³²

4.1.3 The Pneumatological Dimension of the Sacraments

Chauvet’s presentation of the role of the Spirit is made in coherence with, he claims, church tradition and his own reading of the symbolic structure of the divine-human encounter.²³³ Firstly, Chauvet argues, the role of the Spirit is as the memory of the church. The personal living memorial of Christ in the liturgy, he argues, cannot take place unless God himself inspires it. The Spirit bridges the gap, as it were, between an ahistorical mythic Christ, on the one hand, and a simple remembrance of an important but dead prophet Jesus, on the other.²³⁴ The Spirit’s role in bringing Christ to the community and the community to Christ has

²²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 508. Throughout these pages Chauvet acknowledges the influence of Breton’s thought.

²³⁰ *ibid.*

²³¹ *ibid.*, p. 509, “Therefore, it is impossible to separate the divine kenosis from the one that must be carried out in ourselves.”

²³² *ibid.*

²³³ *ibid.*, pp. 509-531

²³⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 509-510

always been understood in church tradition and is signified at the epiclesis of the liturgy.²³⁵

Furthermore, according to Chauvet's schema, the dialogue between the Father and the Son, revealed on the cross, requires a third term, the opening up of the consequence of the symbolic exchange between the persons of the Trinity and us. This third term is, he states, none other than the Spirit.²³⁶ The Spirit for Chauvet also represents what is closest and what is most different in God. On the one hand, the Spirit operates in our corporality as a gift to the church, bringing individuals into the community of Christ as sons and daughters of the Father. At the same time, the Spirit, as the very term suggests and as the Bible testifies, is the expression of the freedom of God because the Spirit is, as it were, nameless.²³⁷

According to Chauvet, in the liturgy the Spirit's role is symbolized in precisely this manner, as the God who comes in symbolic action. This demands our recognition of the corporality of Christian existence in the proclamation of the word and celebration of the sacrament. At the same time, this symbolic action recognizes the God who cannot be contained, who is always other.²³⁸

Sacramental grace, Chauvet argues, must be understood with the above perspectives in mind.²³⁹ Grace is not possessed by us but is the gift of the free God who invites us to recognize our need of him. This process is necessarily symbolic since it includes us and, at the same time, challenges us to change. It

²³⁵ *ibid.*

²³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 510

²³⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 511-523

²³⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 523-531. Chauvet gives as an example of the corporal and yet transcendent role of the Spirit in the anointing of the body in baptism. The very marking of the body by oil is a very physical act and brings the individual into the body of Christ while witnessing to the power of the Spirit present. Yet, Chauvet states, the Spirit points away from this action to the person of Christ and the Father, refusing, so to speak, to be pinned down, see pp. 529-531. Chauvet takes this as the prime example of the exhortation to the church and the individual in Pauline literature to be marked with Christ and to incorporate the gospel of the new covenant in their very bodies.

²³⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 531-558

implies an attitude of letting go of our presumptions (both of God and ourselves) and engaging with the God who is revealed in the pasch of Christ. This is the God who enables our own transformation by participating in a symbolic exchange which by its very nature is historic, real (in that the sacraments do accomplish what they speak of), gratuitous, and opens us up to the future.²⁴⁰

4.2 Jesus as the Primordial Sacrament

Applying his understanding of the sacramental encounter to christology, Osborne considers the image of Jesus as the primordial sacrament.²⁴¹ As we have seen, the theologies of Schillebeeckx, Rahner, and Kilmartin have attempted to represent Jesus as the primordial sacrament, the keystone for interpreting the sacramental encounter between God and humanity. Osborne states that Schillebeeckx and Rahner maintain the same basic premise: that Jesus in his humanity, in his concrete and historical existence, is the sacrament of God, unsurpassable and normative. For both theologians, Jesus' humanness is the sacrament of God's grace and redemptive mercy.²⁴²

Osborne acknowledges the attempts made by these theologians to interpret the bestowal of salvation on humanity from the perspective of the hypostatic union. If our starting point is the hypostatic union, which affirms the full humanity of Jesus, Osborne asks how we can understand Jesus as the primordial sacrament, since his humanity is historical and finite. Osborne goes on to say that according to classical Catholic theology, which follows the definition of the Council of Chalcedon, the personhood of Jesus Christ, the seat of his relations with God and humanity, is the divine Logos. If, as second person of the Trinity, Jesus is to be

²⁴⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 543-547

²⁴¹ OSBORNE, *Sacraments*, pp. 64-65; 84-111.

²⁴² *ibid.*, pp.84-88

considered the sacrament of God, then this implies subordination in the Trinity. If a sacrament is to be defined in terms of divine offer and human response, it would be difficult to see how Jesus could be considered a sacrament in his humanness.²⁴³

Osborne concludes that the idea of sacrament, even with qualification or used in an analogous way, cannot refer to his divinity, and when applied to his humanity it is hermeneutically meaningless. Church teaching makes it clear, Osborne maintains, that Jesus' divinity and humanity cannot be mixed or confused; to say otherwise would make the doctrine of the incarnation meaningless.²⁴⁴

God's pledge to us in Jesus, Osborne argues, is one of covenant and grace. The pledge of God and the response of Jesus' *kenosis*, his humility, or better humbleness, is a more fruitful starting point, Osborne believes, for considering the revelation of God in Jesus. Jesus is connected to us in his particular and individualized humanity, which is a sign of surrender to God. Jesus' humanity reveals something to us of what a response to the dynamic of a free God looks like. This could form a foundation for the understanding of the dynamic of sacrament in the life of Christ.²⁴⁵ Osborne claims that he is not questioning the official Catholic teaching on the uniqueness of Jesus but that this uniqueness has to be re-examined in the light of contemporary philosophy.²⁴⁶

We have noted the criticisms made by Paul Molnar of Coffey's trinitarian theology.²⁴⁷ He accuses Coffey of 'reading' the human experience back into the divinity of God. Osborne tries to avoid this but in the process seems to isolate the

²⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 88; 100 ff.

²⁴⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 102-104

²⁴⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 105-111

²⁴⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 161-162. Here Osborne considers the teaching of the *Catechism* on the centrality of Christ as God in the liturgy and the role of the Holy Spirit bringing us into communion with God. He does not elaborate on these trinitarian themes in his work to any great extent but simply states them as realities in the free self-disclosure of God in the sacraments.

²⁴⁷ See chapter four, footnote 150.

divinity of Christ from his humanity. According to Catholic teaching and the view of the theologians we have surveyed in our thesis, the God-Man remains normative for our relationships with God. Osborne's conception of sacrament may threaten this.²⁴⁸

It is, however, Osborne's lack of pneumatology and his under-developed trinitarian theology which poses the major difficulty. He seems to see the Trinity as acting as one in all *ad extra* relationships, which as we have noted is a traditional Catholic viewpoint. Yet, the immediate connection between God and the believer is seen by our other authors as the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of Christ. By not elaborating on this theme, Osborne sets up a dichotomy between Christ and the church, and indeed between Christ and the individual believer. This is particularly evident when he critiques the idea of the church as the foundational sacrament, seeing difficulty with any group claiming universal significance for humanity.²⁴⁹

4.3 The Liturgical Mystery of the Triune God

We have already seen something of Power's integration of the action of the Trinity into his understanding of sacramental action. To what we have reviewed above we add two further points from Power's theology. The first is the connection he makes between the inner and outer word of the sacrament, coordinating the missions of the Spirit and the Son.²⁵⁰ Power sees the Spirit as the inner dynamism of sacramental action which enables the community to

²⁴⁸ Cf. KASPER, W., *Jesus the Christ*, London, 1976, pp. 230-268. Kasper sees possibilities in interpreting the doctrine of Chalcedon in a dynamic and existential way by admitting that, in the modern sense of the word person, personhood could be applied to the humanity of Christ. In this way, the relationship between Jesus' humanity and his divinity can be seen to be fundamentally orientated towards one another without confusing his divinity with his humanity, see pp. 248-250.

²⁴⁹ OSBORNE, pp. 112-136

²⁵⁰ POWER, *Sacraments, language of God's Giving*, pp. 81-90.

appropriate the outer Word, the Son. This outer visible form, however, is always the Word of the cross, of God's self-emptying love.²⁵¹ The paschal event provides the believing community with the story or plot, which it must make its own throughout history under the guidance of the Spirit.²⁵² Under the direction of the Spirit, the church will continue to find new ways to rewrite itself in the circumstances in which it finds itself, always adhering to the gospel message of the paschal mystery.

The second point is Power's concern with the liturgical expression of the church's experience of the Trinity.²⁵³ Here Power emphasizes two things. The first is that the very nature of God is incomprehensible and other. We cannot exhaust the meaning of his giving, even by the analogies that we use in the terms 'love' and 'outpouring', though such analogies are the most suitable ones. God is not the gift received so much as the one who is constantly giving.²⁵⁴ The second point that Power makes, referring to the theology of John Milbank and Chauvet, is the understanding of the Spirit as the mutual love of Father and Son, and our inclusion in this love by the gift of the same Spirit, even though the Spirit itself is totally other and never possessed by us. In this, his theology is similar to that of Coffey and Kilmartin, even though there are no references to either in any of Power's works reviewed for this thesis.²⁵⁵

With these points in mind, the language of the liturgy has to be ultimately one of praise, of doxology, and of silence in the face of the eternally loving and giving

²⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 81

²⁵² *ibid.*, pp. 82-85

²⁵³ *ibid.*, pp. 304-310

²⁵⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 308-310

²⁵⁵ *ibid.* Cf. Robert J. Daly's introduction to KILMARTIN, *Eucharist in the West*. Here Daly makes the point that, though their theologies are compatible, Kilmartin makes no reference to Chauvet or Power.

God.²⁵⁶ From the human side, the sacrament represents our movement towards the perfection of our being. From the divine side, God accomplishes this by his constant giving.²⁵⁷

4.4 Summary

Both Chauvet and Power emphasize the pasch of Christ as the interpretive key for comprehending God and his action in the sacraments. Both underline the giving God who challenges the believer to change by the outpouring of his love. The dynamic of God's giving and our conversion is vital to the understanding of how God relates to us. Grace thus conceived is a process of responding to this always giving God and the rewriting of ourselves in our history according to the Spirit's guidance and conformity to the Word who is crucified for us. Osborne affirms that Jesus' attitude of humility is a model for our own lives but has no real explanation of how we appropriate this attitude except according to the category of human finitude.

5. Conclusion

We conclude this chapter and this part of the thesis by making three statements about God, the church, and the sacramental encounter that brings them together. The first statement is that God is revealed to us as Trinity, and our sharing in the life of God must conform to how he reveals himself (Rahner, Kilmartin and Coffey). Accepting and coordinating the personal missions of Christ and the Spirit

²⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p.310. Cf. BEECK, F. J. V., "Trinitarian Theology as Participation", *The Trinity*, ed. DAVIS, S. T., Oxford, 1999, pp. 295-325. Beeck argues for the inclusion of any and all theological insights into the trinitarian action. He maintains that continually reinterpreting traditional teaching in new ways can lead to an emptiness of expression. The real task is to grasp the insights that these teachings gained and to reinterpret them in the face of modern experiences of love and fellowship, see pp. 318-319. Ultimately, he believes, even soteriological language when used of the Trinity can be meaningless if not coupled with the doxological response to God who is all-in-all, see pp. 321-323.

²⁵⁷ *ibid.*

is vital for our understanding of how the Spirit works in our lives bringing us to Christ, an action which unifies us with God (Kilmartin, Coffey and Power). The outward form of our participation in the life of God, of our conforming to Christ, is dictated by the pasch of Christ and the language of the cross (Power and Chauvet). We cannot exhaust the meaning of God (Osborne, Power) and can only respond to his constant giving in ethical behaviour, which opens us up to new possibilities (Osborne, Power), and moves us to praise and thanksgiving (Power).

The second statement is that the church is the place of encounter (Kilmartin, Chauvet) in which, open to the traditions which we have received and which precede us (Chauvet, Osborne), believers write themselves anew, attentive to the voice of the marginalized, who are included in the language of the cross (Power). In the church we are placed into a giving relationship with God and our brothers and sisters (Kilmartin, Chauvet), and are called to work for justice in the world (Osborne, Power).

The third statement is on the dynamic of the sacramental encounter. It is in the work of the Spirit and in the performance of the liturgical rites that we encounter the presence of Christ (Kilmartin). In the celebration of these rites we do not possess God (Chauvet, Power) but find our true selves in the process of conversion (Chauvet, Osborne). The effect of the sacramental action is part of the definition and final purpose of the sacraments (Kilmartin, Chauvet, and Power). The sacraments are symbols of who God is and who we are, and how we meet in relationship (Kilmartin, Chauvet). It is the power of language, particularly the language of the cross, which unites us to God in the sacraments, though we can never 'say it all' (Kilmartin, Chauvet, Osborne, and Power).

PART THREE – THE GIFT OF ASSURANCE

Chapter Six - The Presbyter as a Gift of God to the Church

1. Introduction

1.1 Sanctification in the Life of the Local Community

The presbyter functions in almost every aspect of the day-to-day life of the Catholic Church. The references in the ‘Code of Canon Law’ to the responsibilities of the presbyter, especially when he has been appointed as a pastor, are numerous and wide ranging.¹ Even when a presbyter is part of a pastoral team, the expectations are similar and the qualifications demanded are the same.² According to canon law, among the most important duties of the presbyter in the parochial context are: the announcing of the word of God, the celebration of the Eucharist and the other sacraments, the performing of funerals, and the conduct of the church’s rites during the Easter season.³ Intimately connected to this is the requirement of the presbyter to know the people to whom he ministers and to attend in particular to the poor, the sick, and the marginalized.⁴ In his ministry he is to promote the role of the faithful and cooperate with the diocesan bishop and the other presbyters within the diocese.⁵

This outline of the presbyter’s duties accords with the shape of ministry given by *Presbyterorum Ordinis*.⁶ This document, when taken together with the ‘Code of Canon Law’ and the rite of ordination, makes it clear that the normal

¹ This is not to prejudice the role of the lay faithful in the Catholic Church, it is simply the case that in almost every decision made in a parish as to the celebration of the sacraments, the financial running of a parish and the evangelical life of a local community, the presbyter, when he is the parish priest, makes the final judgement; see Canons 528-537. References to the Code of Canon Law are again taken from CANON LAW SOCIETY OF AMERICA, *Code of Canon Law, Latin- English Edition*.

² Canons 528-535

³ Canons 521, 542. The first qualities that are noted of the presbyter in Canon 521 are that he should be known for sound doctrine and moral integrity. Cf. Canon 1029 for the qualities required for a candidate to ordination.

⁴ Canon 528

⁵ Canon 529

⁶ PO 4-6

understanding of the presbyter's ministry is within the context of the local church, serving as a pastor or as part of a pastoral team. Indeed it would be difficult to see how the presbyter would exercise all of these duties except in a limited territorial area.

We take note of two things: that the presbyter serves the church in a visible way and that the activities of the presbyter are orientated towards the gathering of the people of God. The first point has been introduced in the previous chapters of our thesis, especially in our consideration of the sacraments as language events or visible celebrations of the action of God with his people. The presbyter has no authority over the interior life of the person as such; however, insofar as we believe there to be no truly human engagement without visible signs and symbolic activity, his ministry is intimately connected with the *realization* of the relationship between God and the believer.

The second point, connected with his 'gathering function', is highlighted by *Presbyterorum Ordinis*. In the paragraphs of this document which first describe the three *munera* of the presbyter (as preacher, sanctifier and pastor) the term 'gather' or 'gathering' is used at the beginning of the paragraph and/or as the focus for the presbyter's activity.⁷ The accent in each case is on God's initiative. God acts especially through the ministry of preaching and the celebration of the Eucharist. He works in the ministry of the presbyter, bringing people into union with himself and the church. Thus the ministry of the presbyter serves the unity of the church and the visible structures of this unity (particularly with regard to the

⁷ PO 4, "The people of God are initially gathered into one by the message of the living God..."; PO 5, "God, who alone is holy and can alone make holy, wished to gather people somewhat as his companions and helpers to give humble service to his work of sanctifying."; PO 5, "The eucharistic assembly is...the centre of the gathering over which the priest presides."; PO 6, "As they fulfil within their own measure of responsibility the role of Christ the Head and Shepherd, priests gather the family of God in the name of the bishop into one fellowship inspired for one purpose, and lead them in the Spirit, through Christ to God the Father."

bishop and the parish). However, this visible unity of the church signifies the deeper reality, which is union with God. The work of sanctification, in which the presbyter participates by virtue of his ministry, is nothing other than the bringing of people into union with the Triune God.⁸ This the presbyter does because he is first gathered as God's 'companion', brought into this ministry of sanctification by the gift of God.⁹

If we maintain the perspective offered by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, *Lumen Gentium*, and *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, of the people of God as a priestly people, called to share in the priesthood of Christ and thus orientated to the passing from the world of darkness into the realms of the Father, then the activity of God toward his church can be summed up by the one word 'sanctification'. The work of God consists in making the people of God holy and priestly. Therefore, both in terms of the constitution of the presbyter's ministry and the object of his ministry, we can say the following: in the context of the local church, and normally as attached to a local community or neighbourhood church, the ministry of the presbyter serves the sanctifying work of God towards the church in a visible way. The presbyter is a symbol of God's outreach towards his people and the response given to this action in the gathering of people for the proclamation of the word of God and the celebration of the sacraments. The response or return to the gift of the Father is normally realized in the local community, in the ordinary circumstances of the life of the believer. A symbol of this 'ordinary' return to the Father is the ministry of the presbyter precisely because of the responsibilities and ministry conferred by the church. In conferring these responsibilities the church recognizes that, while it legislates for the practical exercise of the ministry of the

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ *ibid.* Cf. PO 5

presbyter in order to assist its execution, it does not *own* the action of God present in the ministry of the presbyter but must accept it, and indeed has chosen to accept it as a gift from God.

1.2 The Outline of the Chapter

To further appreciate the visible dynamics, the *sacramental language*, involved in this relationship between God, the church, and the presbyter, we recapitulate the themes explored in the first part of our thesis but this time in direct relationship with those surveyed in the second part. We do this within the ministerial framework provided by *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, namely, the three *munera*, or offices, of priest, prophet and pastor. While we do not necessarily seek in these pages to stress one aspect of presbyteral ministry at the expense of the others, we devote more pages to the priestly work of assurance in order to underline that the notion of assurance is the most apt term to identify the ministry of the presbyter, when taken together with the concepts of authenticity and authority. These latter qualities help to further delineate the office and, we believe, flow from and augment the idea of assurance.

In concrete, we consider the symbolizing of God's action in the church in the ministry and life of the presbyter under the three headings from part one, which we explicitly link in this chapter with each of the three *munera*, namely Assurance- Priest; Authenticity – Prophet; Authority - Pastor. Each of the three *munera* could be applied to any of the three aspects of assurance, authenticity, and authority but we believe that these are the most adequate pairings. The founding relationship between the three pairings is the action of the God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In the first section, we highlight the ministry of the presbyter in the visible gathering of the people of God, enabling their return/response to the Father in the sacraments. We explicitly link this function with the action of the Spirit and Christ who appoint the presbyter to share in the apostolic office of the bishop as a necessary part of the received structure of the church. As an example of the visible gathering of the presbyter's action, we examine the dynamics of the sacrament of reconciliation. We conclude with a word on the notion of character and another look at the images of shepherd and steward. We conclude that the 'giving of assurance' best summarizes the presbyter's ministry.

The second section focuses on the life of the presbyter. The first duty of the presbyter is to announce the Good News. However, as an integral part of this ministry the presbyter must live the Gospel, respecting the 'other' both within and outwith the church. We focus on the role of the Spirit and the local community in the life of the presbyter and in the formation of candidates for the ordained priesthood. We then consider the presbyter's imitation of Christ in his life and ministry with a view to stressing the 'unpossessability' of Christ, even by those who would emulate him in their ministry. We conclude this section with an examination of pastoral charity.

In the third and final section, the authority of the presbyter is explored in connection with the specific example of sacramental preparation. A brief consideration of Chauvet's suggestions on the management of the request for sacraments is given in order to provide an illustration of how the presbyter's true authority as a symbol of God's action comes to the fore in such situations.

2. The Priestly Work of Assurance

2.1 The Visibility of the Presbyter

The question that forms the background to our discussion concerns the necessity of the ordained priesthood for the realization of the action of God and the church. In order to begin to answer this question we recall two basic beliefs of Catholic theology. The first is that the visibility of the sacraments remains a necessary element in their celebration, and the second is that the ordained priesthood is a given of the structure of the Catholic Church.

2.1.1 The Sacrament as Effective and Effecting

In the second part of our thesis we saw, especially in the theology of Kilmartin, how the sacraments signified the participation of the church in the covenantal relationship with God, a relationship based on the divine relationships as they are revealed in the gift and response of love between the persons of the Trinity. In other words, the action of God brings the believer into the relational life of God, and this is symbolized in ritual action, i.e. brought about and established in the language of sacrament. This positioning of the human person in relation to God is shown by the nature of the sacrament as a language event.

We have also seen in the work of our authors that the ongoing life of the church implies the rewriting of the church in ethical action, in living the new life of grace in love of neighbour. The emphasis here is upon the grace of the sacramental encounter, i.e. what is signified is the actual offer of God and the real effect of this offer in the faith response that brings new life and orientation (the two being mutually inclusive concepts) in the sacramental event.¹⁰

¹⁰ Because of the anti-Pelagian nature of the Catholic Church's teaching on grace the accent has been on the free gift of God towards the human being (DS 1525). However, there has also been

The symbolic nature of the sacraments, according to our authors, demands that they be *visible* and *present*. The visibility of the sacraments does not just refer to the signs and materials used but to the event itself. The sacramental event can be viewed either from the point of view of justification, as the forgiveness of sins and the placing of the faithful in a ‘just’ relationship with God, or from the perspective of sanctification, which describes the ongoing growth of the life of the just in God. The effects of the sacrament are commensurate with the significance of the sacraments, and the effect is discernible, visible, in the life of the individual and the community. By its very definition, visibility has to be present for it to be seen. In other words, the sacrament has to have a ‘here and now’ quality to it.

an insistence in Catholic theology on the possibility of the human person being able to live a life of grace, i.e. for the person to be so determined that his or her life exists in openness to God because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (DS 1530). The distinction between actual grace, where grace is seen as both the offer of God’s love and also that which enables the person to respond to the offer, and habitual grace, where the grace of God is continually offered on the basis of the grace already received (say, in baptism) is problematic, given the understanding of God’s creative and redeeming act as determinant of human subjectivity, see RAHNER, K., "Grace (Theological)", *Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, ed. RAHNER, K., London, 1975, pp. 587-595. However, the idea that a continual or habitual orientation of the human being towards God is present, having already responded to the gift of God, is still part of Catholic theology, even if this tends to suggest that grace is a possession. Again, Catholic belief is in the irrevocable change wrought in the human person by grace at the level of their being. For David Coffey, both the justification of the believer and the ongoing life of sanctification are included in his understanding of the action of the Holy Spirit, who assimilates the person to Christ and continues the work of assimilation in the liturgy and in a believer’s ethical choices. This is depicted as a growth in *being in* the realm of God, see COFFEY, *Grace: The Gift of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 249-253. It is difficult to see how a “growth in being”, given a static notion of being, relates to, for example, Osborne’s idea of the concrete sacramental encounter, where the particularity of the offer and response is emphasized in order to underline God’s freedom. For our purposes we accept that growth in the life of grace is a phenomenon in the life of the believer but not in the sense of a ‘given’ that does not require further action. What we underline, by combining the theology of Coffey and Chauvet, is the idea of being situated by the action of God and that this *situation* has consequences for the ongoing life of the believer.

2.1.2 The Ordained Priesthood as Part of the Received Structure of the Church

We have seen in the theology of Chauvet and Power that a necessary part of the sacrament is that which is received or instituted.¹¹ We are first addressed by the action of God in the church. The action of Christ and the Spirit has made the story of the church and its faith a 'given' in our own individual faith journey. The church *mediates* salvation as part of the symbolic action of the sacrament. The symbolic implies corporality and militates against an unmediated possessing of God. The sacrament of holy orders is part of this received ecclesial structure.

Kilmartin is keen to stress the connection between the apostolic office and the faith of the church.¹² He sees the apostolic office as a transparency for the ground of the faith of the church, Christ.¹³ The basis for this statement, he says, cannot be the institutional will of Christ since this leaves open the question of how the will of Christ was realized at first in the church.¹⁴ The connection between the function of the apostolic office and the faith of the church can only be drawn, Kilmartin argues, by beginning with the modes of Christ's presence in the church.¹⁵

Christ's presence in the church, Kilmartin argues, is realized through his resurrection. Christ's presence is possible for all times in virtue of the power of the Spirit.¹⁶ Kilmartin states that in his appearance to the disciples after his resurrection Christ was both the source and the content of their faith; this faith

¹¹ In Power's theology we see that he accepts certain givens. One of these is the action of the Spirit in the church, and another is the church as the place of sacramental 'eventing', see POWER, *Sacrament: The Language of God's Giving*, pp. 48; 86-88.

¹² KILMARTIN, E. J., "Apostolic Office: Sacrament of Christ", *Theological Studies* 36 (1975), pp. 263-284.

¹³ *ibid.*, pp. 248; 252. For all practical purposes Kilmartin does not distinguish between the offices of bishop and presbyter but seems to refer to one and then the other, using them almost interchangeably.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 253-254

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 254-255

was in the abiding presence of Christ in his church.¹⁷ In this context, Kilmartin believes the apostolic office to be an exercise of the obedience of faith in Christ's presence in the Spirit, and as such is a sign for the whole church of the presence of Christ.¹⁸ The apostolic office is not a direct representation of Christ, according to Kilmartin, but only represents Christ insofar as it is related to the church.¹⁹ The grace that is signified by the apostolic office is the covenant of God with the church in Christ and the Spirit.²⁰

David Coffey sees a parallel between the sending of the Spirit on the graced humanity of Christ and the sending of the Spirit upon the church.²¹ The relationship between the Father and the Son in the Trinity as regards the Holy Spirit can be seen, he argues, in the sending of the Spirit upon the church at Pentecost. The sending of the Spirit upon the church by the Son (a theandric act) is the sacrament of the Spirit's bestowal upon the Father by the Son in the transcendental act in the immanent Trinity.²² The authoritative sending of the Spirit by the Father is acknowledged, Coffey believes, when an individual accepts the offer of grace. In other words, the believer is brought into the life of the Trinity when he or she admits that the Spirit has been sent by the Father through and with the glorified Christ.²³ The sovereign act of the sending of the Spirit does

¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 255-256

¹⁸ *ibid.* See also p. 257, "Those who succeed the apostles as leaders of the church derive their faith from the faith of the church, which has its apostolic succession or tradition from the apostolic office and the witness of all believers to their faith. Thus the apostolic office, strengthened by the gift of the Spirit in ordination, is a special mode of the exercise of the faith of the church."

¹⁹ *ibid.*, pp 259-260

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ COFFEY, *Grace: The Gift of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 159-162.

²² *ibid.*, p. 159

²³ *ibid.*, p. 160

not depend on the faith of the individual, however, but only has effect when such an act is received.²⁴

For Coffey, the act of the sending of the Spirit by Christ is best seen in the founding of the church. According to his analysis, both the graced humanity of Christ and the church are created by the Holy Spirit. However, whereas the graced humanity of Christ was created from nothing, the church was created relatively, from an existing group of disciples.²⁵ Coffey believes that the grace that founded the church is the grace of the church as such, even if it includes the individual. The grace of the church includes the priesthood of bishops and presbyters. These participate in the grace of Christ in a particular way. They are not identified with Christ but are agents of the continuing outpouring of the Spirit.²⁶

The relationship between the ordained priesthood and the other sacraments of the church is considered more particularly by Coffey when he speaks of the range of the sacraments of grace.²⁷ By the 'range' of the sacraments, Coffey intends the variety and intensity of the occasions when grace is offered and accepted.²⁸ With an explicit reference to the theology of Rahner, Coffey sees the term sacrament as

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 161

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 162, "The grace in which the church was created at Pentecost was the grace of the church as such...the grace that assured its continuance and advancement. Foremost in this connection, because of its link with the Eucharist, is the special priesthood of the bishops and priests. This is a particular participation in Christ's grace of headship, i.e. the grace by which he is the source of the Holy Spirit for others...The recipients of the above mentioned participation in the grace of headship do not become simple multiples of Christ, for the grace is not given to them in the same way as it was to him. They merely participate, though in a stable way, in the grace that remains of Christ...Concretely, they receive with the Spirit of Christ a participation in his authority to send the Spirit to others..." There is some discussion among our authors as to the role of the laying on of hands as the empowering sign of the ordained priest to bear the necessary apostolic authority in the Spirit, see KILMARTIN, E. J., "Ministry and Ordination in Early Christianity against a Jewish Background", *Studia Liturgica* 13 (1979), pp. 42-69; POWER, *Sacrament: The Language of God's Giving*, pp. 260-261; GRESHAKE, *Ser Sacerdote*, 26; 61-65. This discussion centres too upon the opposition between office and charism in the ministry. We can say that our authors do not see an opposition between the two, charism and office, as long as the fundamental connection with the church is not lost.

²⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 179-188

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 179

applying to those moments when the person accepts the grace of Christ in unconditional love of another. These he refers to as secular sacraments, the “humblest” of sacramental moments. These occasions can lead to the more eminent of sacramental moments culminating in the Eucharist.²⁹ All of these occasions are moments when the sacred humanity of Christ is engaged to save the person from sinful self-affirmation, and they lead the person to openness to the other and to his or her final destiny.³⁰

Coffey maintains that when the sacraments of grace are presented by the ordained ministry they constitute the highest moment of the offer of grace because this action is in direct continuity with the grace offered by the sacred humanity of Christ at Pentecost. This means, for Coffey, that the ministerial acts of the ordained priesthood draw others into the mystery of the Trinity.³¹

2.1.3 The Priority of the Symbol

Gisbert Greshake does not draw an opposition between the ordained priest acting in the person of Christ and acting in the person of the church; he sees the two as mutually inclusive.³² In fact, as for Kilmartin so with Greshake: what is given to the ordained priesthood is a sign of that which founds the church and

²⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 179-180

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 182

³¹ *ibid.*, pp. 181; 185. Coffey writes, p. 185, “By the divine economy the supreme sacrament in which the offer of grace is made by the Father is the glorified Christ, who from Pentecost on acts most fully through the special (or ministerial) priesthood, particularly in its highest exercise, the Eucharist, in which the full saving reality of Christ is contained. In the exercise of this ministry the offer of grace is made by Christ, for by ordination and appointment the priest is authorized to act in his person... This presentation of the sign of Christ is guaranteed to be effective (provided the conditions required of the recipient are also fulfilled) by the authority of Christ invested in the priest. When the recipient, then, accepts the offer of grace thus made, the ministerial act becomes an authoritative sending of the Holy Spirit in the name of Christ... as in the revelation of the Trinity the Father sends Jesus Christ, and then through and with him sends the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, so in the operation of the Trinity the Father sends the priest, in that the latter is invested at ordination with the person of Christ, who lives always as sent by the Father; and then through and with the priest the Father sends the Holy Spirit...”

³² GRESHAKE, *Ser Sacerdote*, pp. 21-34.

represents the definitive call to salvation, i.e. Christ.³³ However, there is a danger of seeing the ordained priesthood as a ‘crystallization’ of the action of Christ with the church, i.e. in the ordained priesthood one sees everything that the church needs, the grace offered and returned.³⁴

Kilmartin considers this danger in relationship to the Eucharist, and in particular when he considers the doctrine of transubstantiation and the moment of consecration.³⁵ He argues that a fixation with the change in the elements of the bread and wine, and with the consecratory moment of the Eucharistic change identified with the words spoken by the ordained priest, leads to the identification of the power of the ordained priest with that of Christ. This leads in turn to a ‘belief’ in the ability of the ordained to represent the church in a way exclusive of the rest of the community.³⁶ Chauvet refers to this as the ‘sacerdotalization’ of the sacrament, the idea that somehow the sacrament of orders (or any sacrament) is sufficient unto itself.³⁷

Power, Kilmartin, and Chauvet all argue that the sacrament of orders and the Eucharist have to be seen within the overall structure of the covenant relationship offered by God and enacted in the celebration of the sacraments by the whole church, giving a voice to the members of the church and enabling them to fulfil their respective roles.³⁸ In other words, the ordained priesthood performs an

³³ *ibid.*, p. 31

³⁴ Greshake seems to steer away from an explicit affirmation of this in his work but he does raise the question and seems to favour it as a possible interpretation of the ordained ministry at least as it relates to the church as a sign of all that the church is, see *Ser Sacerdote*, pp. 29-30; 116-118.

³⁵ KILMARTIN and DALY, *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, pp. 138-153; 248-250; 353.

³⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 143-153

³⁷ CHAUVET, *Symbol and Sacrament, a Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, pp. 308-310, especially p. 309.

³⁸ For references to Kilmartin and Chauvet see above footnotes 35-37; for Power see in particular POWER, *Sacrament: The Language of God's Giving*, pp. 258-260; POWER, *The Eucharistic Mystery, Revitalizing the Tradition*, pp. 320-321; 346.

essentially symbolic function; it participates in the reality of God and signifies the essential call to the church to union with God.

Coffey states that the ministry of the ordained priest is given in two forms, word and sacrament.³⁹ This he parallels with the action of God in the processions of the Son and the Spirit. The ministry of the word signifies the first moment of ministry as the sign of Christ, while the ministry of sacrament signifies the second moment as the sign of the bestowal of the Spirit.⁴⁰ Coffey states that the celebration of the word is ordered towards the sacrament in both the celebration of the Eucharist, the most intense manifestation of the ministry of the ordained priesthood, and in the general ministry of the ordained priest.⁴¹ In this way, the dynamic of the ministry of the ordained priest relates to the experience of grace in the sacrament as the return of the Spirit to the Father through the Son by the action of the church. Thus the sacrament of holy orders relates to the faith journey of the Christian who responds to the call of the word of God and is enabled by the Spirit to participate in the life of God in the sacramental celebration.⁴² Coffey limits the exercise of the special or ministerial priesthood to specific occasions, the celebration of word and sacrament. At other times, he argues, the ordained will respond according to their baptism and confirmation, as sharers in the common priesthood.⁴³

³⁹ COFFEY, *Grace*, pp. 185-188.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 186

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² *ibid.*, pp. 186-187

⁴³ *ibid.*

2.1.4 An Example of the Visibility of the Presbyter – the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Both Chauvet and Coffey have shown how the sacrament of reconciliation is an example of the church's continuance of the ministry of Christ's forgiveness.⁴⁴ We present a brief synthesis of Coffey's theological approach to sin and then explain his and Chauvet's approach to the role of the ordained priest as acting on the church's behalf in the reconciliation of penitents.

1) Elements of a Theology of Sin

David Coffey's theological treatment of sin is set against the background of the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation in the rite of penance as celebrated by the Catholic Church. In constructing a theology of sin he starts by reflecting on the love of God and love of neighbour.⁴⁵

He discusses the distinction between sins that are considered to be grave (or mortal), which, according to traditional Catholic understanding, require the sacrament of reconciliation,⁴⁶ and so-called venial sin.⁴⁷ Coffey focuses on grave sin, the sin committed against moral virtue and charity, and which 'loses' the grace of God in the life of the person. He considers the mitigating circumstances that surround personal responsibility in committing sin and concludes that, while it is still appropriate to speak of grave sin, there may be other factors to take into account when judging the personal responsibility involved.⁴⁸

It is the accent on personal responsibility that Coffey highlights most of all in his consideration of sin and he elaborates this, he says, with reference to the

⁴⁴ CHAUVET, *Symbol and Sacrament, a Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, pp. 430-436; COFFEY, D., *The Sacrament of Reconciliation*, Lex Orandi Series, Collegeville, Minn., 2001.

⁴⁵ COFFEY, *Sacrament of Reconciliation*, pp. 4-9; 18-27.

⁴⁶ DS 1680; 1701-1707; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 1456.

⁴⁷ COFFEY, *Sacrament of Reconciliation*, pp. 9-13.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 12-13

theology of Karl Rahner.⁴⁹ He explores the notions of “imposed necessity” and “original freedom” as he finds them in Rahner’s theology.⁵⁰ The former is what he terms the ‘negative general factor’ in Rahner’s theology of sin and refers to the existence of antecedent factors in the life of the individual, which may affect the person’s responsibility in the committing of sin against God and neighbour. These may be, for example, error or ignorance (especially as regards the sinfulness of personal action), or passions such as lust and anger. These are transcendental, in that they are antecedent to the person’s actions, and personal, in that they affect the person’s ability to relate and function morally.⁵¹ These factors, Coffey states, are also presented in church teaching in terms of immaturity or habit forming actions which can form the person’s attitude.⁵²

The positive general factor, Coffey states, is Rahner’s idea of original freedom. This concept Coffey applies to charity, which is nothing other than one’s commitment to God and neighbour. God and neighbour are included in the basic orientation of the person in love, of giving oneself to another.⁵³ Again this foundational attitude precedes specific moral acts, and Coffey is clear on the distinction that he believes needs to be made between the exercise of specific charitable acts (for example in exercising the moral virtues) and the basic

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 14-27

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 15-18

⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 16

⁵² *ibid.* Cf. *Catechism*, paragraph 2352. In Coffey’s note on p. 29, he points out that these ideas are spoken of in the context of sexual morality. Coffey wants to apply this to the general realm of personal responsibility and sin. It is important to note that the notion of concupiscence is not directly related to these ideas, see COFFEY, pp. 4-5; 17. Concupiscence, as understood by the Catholic Church, is the residual tendency to sin because of our human nature and is thus a condition that affects all, see *Catechism*, paragraphs 1264; 2515. Catholic teaching does not admit that a person is ‘justified and sinner’ at the same time in that there are two opposing realities in a person’s life; we are redeemed by Christ in baptism. However, it is clear from these paragraphs that concupiscence has to be brought into the consideration of life in the Spirit and is seen as a difficulty in this respect.

⁵³ *ibid.*, pp. 17-19

commitment of the person so constituted by God in grace.⁵⁴ Coffey's basic point here is that a person's fundamental option, constituted by the grace of God, is not easily lost, even by acts that are serious. This takes into account two things: the priority of the action of God over sin (i.e. sin does not determine God but that God is capable of redeeming all), and the negative transcendental factor discussed above, which can affect a person's capacity to jeopardize the relationship with God.⁵⁵

Coffey argues that charity is a quality of relationship and cannot be measured as such but depends ultimately on the gift of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁶ He concludes that our sins against God, which consist in a turning away from this gift in our lives, also include the turning away from neighbour because of the link between the two distinct but related acts of love of God and love of neighbour.⁵⁷ Here it is also appropriate to recall Coffey's theology of the Holy Spirit where the bestowal of the Holy Spirit by the Son on the Father includes us in Christ's human love, animated and configured by the Spirit. If the gift of the Spirit is refused, then also refused is Christ's divine-human love for his brothers and sisters. While it is difficult to judge whether a person's acts have brought them to this fundamental decision against God, it is the possibility of this break in relationship, occasioned by human freedom, which is the focus for Coffey's theology of sin; a break which explicitly involves a break with neighbour.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 18-27

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 24-27. In these pages Coffey discusses the possibility of a final and personal rejection of God, which would constitute a person's sin being considered mortal. While this remains a possibility, Coffey maintains, it is less likely, he believes, than was once thought.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 27

⁵⁷ *ibid.*

II) The Role of the Church and the Ordained Minister in the Sacrament of Reconciliation

The mission of reconciliation and forgiveness is central to the church's mission as a whole, since this is central to the mission given it by Christ and sums up his work of redemption.⁵⁸ In Coffey's treatment of the sacrament of reconciliation he highlights two aspects. The first is the necessity of ongoing repentance, even of a quite fundamental nature, in the life of the individual. This is an experience in and of the church over the centuries.⁵⁹ That a person truly repents is fundamental to the healing of the individual and the forgiveness of their sins.

The second aspect is the connection between the reconciliation of the individual with God and the reconciliation with the church, the latter signifying the former.⁶⁰ Since the Second Vatican Council, Coffey argues, the role of the church as forming part of the symbolic nature of the sacrament of reconciliation has been underlined.⁶¹ The role of the church in reconciling individuals is in direct connection with its foundation by Christ in order to continue his mission of reconciliation. The social dimension of sin, with the above link between love of God and neighbour in mind, implies that reconciliation with others is a necessary part of our reconciliation to God, and in this respect the church's role in reconciling penitents is necessary.⁶² He states that this is not underlined in the celebration of the rite of penance with individual penitents but is emphasized by a common celebration of the sacrament in penitential services, which, he notes, is

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 32-41

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 41-56

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 53-56

⁶¹ *ibid.*, p. 55

⁶² *ibid.*, pp. 76-77, "This way of executing the divine plan (the founding of the church) engages an aspect of our nature as created by God, namely its social dimension. A human being is not meant to be an isolated individual, but is destined to come to fulfilment in society and at the same time to contribute to society's welfare. This is true at all levels, including and especially the spiritual...we ...encounter him (God) as members of the human family and of the Church. The sacrament of reconciliation ...expresses and engages this social dimension of our relationship with God..."

increasingly becoming the normal way in which Catholics celebrate the sacrament.⁶³

Chauvet sees the sacrament of reconciliation as an example of the symbolic efficacy of the sacraments.⁶⁴ He believes that the sacrament accomplishes what it signifies by addressing people and ‘speaking’ them in their most real connection with themselves, others, God, and the world. These relationships are at work in the illocutionary quality of the sacrament, i.e. they are manifest in the performance of the sacrament that symbolizes the covenant between God and his people.⁶⁵ In other words, the celebration manifests that which is already there: the forgiveness of God.⁶⁶

He analyses the parts of the sacrament of reconciliation from the perspective of his theological system. Chauvet argues that the ‘we’ of the church is implied in any ritual greeting, and this signifies that sins against God are also sins against the community.⁶⁷ The celebration of the word of God precedes the examination of conscience and emphasizes that the grace of God always precedes and reveals the

⁶³ *ibid.*, pp. 55; 148-164. Coffey states that the words of absolution suggested by the rite of penance do not explicitly make the connection between the reconciliation of the penitent with the church. He maintains that the connection is made with the church by the extending of or laying on of the hand by the ordained priest at the speaking of the words of absolution, a practice which goes back to the early church, see p. 55. However, it must be noted that in the words of absolution, commonly suggested in the rite of penance, the ministry of the church is mentioned in the context of the paschal mystery, see CATHOLIC BOOK PUBLISHING COMPANY, *Rite of Penance*, New York, 1975, p. 40. In connection with the celebration of the third rite of penance, commonly referred to as ‘general absolution’, Coffey argues for a relaxation of the rules governing the use of this rite, which may help to ‘expose’ people to the experience of the sacrament particularly in an ecclesial context, see pp. 145-148.

⁶⁴ CHAUVET, *Symbol and Sacrament, a Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, pp. 430-436.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 430-431

⁶⁶ *ibid.* The accent here is on the offer of God that is present, not necessarily on a presumption of its taking effect in the life of the individual without the sacramental encounter, though the differences with Osborne’s theology should be noted.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 431-432. It should be noted that this is not made explicit in the rites of penance but is a presumption that Chauvet makes.

person as sinner. The word reveals the transformation of the person in an authentically Christian experience.⁶⁸

According to Chauvet, the main elements of the celebration of the sacrament, the confession of sins, the words of absolution and the penitent's response in 'doing penance', reveal three characteristics of the symbolic efficacy of the sacrament. Firstly, the ministry of the bishop or presbyter is an exercise of the ministry of the church, which intercedes for sinners.⁶⁹ Secondly, 'going to confession' signifies that any conversion has to pass from the heart into act.⁷⁰ The penitent's response to the grace offered is a manifestation of the acceptance of the mediation of the church, which symbolizes the forgiving action of God. None can forgive sins but God, yet this forgiveness is mediated by the corporality of the church and the person's lived reality.⁷¹ In other words, the words and actions of the ordained minister manifest the ministry of the church in symbolizing the forgiveness of God, which by the act of the sacrament places the person in a newness of relationship. Thirdly, Chauvet argues, the act of thanksgiving for the grace celebrated is manifested in the person's ethical living out of this forgiveness.⁷²

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 432-433. Again it should be noted that, for the reconciliation of individual penitents, at least in the English edition of the rites, the celebration of the word is considered optional, even if recommended. The celebration which highlights Chauvet's proposed dynamic is the penitential service.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 433-434

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

⁷¹ *ibid.*, pp 434-435

⁷² *ibid.*, p. 435, "The sacrament comes into truth only when we become what we have celebrated and received."

III) The Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Visibility of the Presbyter

We now bring together the elements of the sacrament of reconciliation presented by our authors and make explicit their connection with the ministry of the presbyter as the gift of visible assurance in and to the church.

We can begin either from the lived experience of the subject or from the paschal mystery which reveals God's action; both, we believe, lead to the same conclusion as regards the ministry of the presbyter. From the perspective of a person's lived subjectivity, we can say that the experience of being limited and in dialogue with others reveals the need for conversion, a process of 'becoming' a person in relationship with God and others. In this dialogical experience, the person realizes that there are experiences and traditions that precede his or her own individual horizon, and which reveal both his or her original freedom and also the limits that are imposed by personal actions and decisions (not necessarily by human nature, i.e. weakness or concupiscence).

In other words, the celebration of the sacraments of the church, seen as part of the 'given' of our Christian existence, places us in a situation in which we recognize the meaning of our Christian lives as mediated and as 'placed'. This necessarily involves the acknowledgement of ourselves as sinners and in need of the actual and visible forgiveness of God. This is manifested in the church (in particular circumstances of life) by the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation.⁷³ The 'normal' place for this process is not so much in the local church as in the neighbourhood church. While the ministry of reconciliation is

⁷³ COFFEY, *Sacrament of Reconciliation*, pp. 62-63.

exercised by the presbyter in necessary communion with the bishop⁷⁴, it is the presbyter who gathers the community in the neighbourhood church, and who is commonly the contact with the penitent, either on an individual basis or as expressed communally in a service of penance.

From the perspective of the paschal mystery, we can emphasize the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation as an exercise of the church's received grace. The Holy Spirit is poured out on the church, which is founded by Christ's authority in sending the Spirit. With this authority, the presbyter, as part of the received structure of the church, celebrates the person's further immersion into the life of the Trinity in the name of the Trinity and of the church, the latter symbolizing the action of the former. This process is directly related to the ongoing repentance in the life of the individual and the community.

Both of these perspectives come together in the celebration of the rites of penance (or sacrament of reconciliation). By the action of God, witnessed on behalf of the church by the ordained minister, the person is placed in a new and deeper relationship with the Triune God because of the new and deeper relationship with the community. By 'deeper' we do not necessarily imply degree but a lived 'newness' in response to God's gift, as manifested in ethical living. This is set in the broad sense of the relationship in charity to God and neighbour, as well as the living out of the moral virtues. The 'speaking' of this new relationship is necessary for the sacramental event. Someone must 'speak' the relationship. The authoritative speaking of the presbyter witnesses both to the action of God and the church.

⁷⁴ See Canons 965-966; *Catechism*, paragraph 1461. Here it is stressed that by the virtue of the sacrament of holy orders the ordained priest can celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation. The faculty to do so is then a juridical recognition and regulation of this ministry.

2.1.5 The Character of Ordination

According to Catholic teaching, one of the main effects of ordination to holy orders is the imprint or conferral of a spiritual character, which cannot be repeated or be given temporarily.⁷⁵ The teaching of the Catholic Church is that this indelible mark configures the person for the rest of his life and even in the case of laicization remains a permanent factor in the person's life.⁷⁶ As we have seen, the understanding of the Catholic Church in this regard has been that the character fundamentally configures the person to Christ as Head and Shepherd of the flock.⁷⁷ However, this configuration to Christ is not understood without the gift of the Holy Spirit and the necessary ecclesial context.⁷⁸ In fact, the teaching of the Catholic Church explicitly includes both the action of the Spirit and the ecclesial relationship in its explanation of the character of the ordained priest.

Taken together with what we have said above about the symbolic function of the ordained in the life of the church, we can conclude that a necessary part of the definition of sacramental character is the action of the Triune God with and in the church, and with and in the life of the individual to whom the ordained priest ministers. The grace that is signified in the character of ordination is not only the union of the person ordained with God in the sacramental rite of ordination but also the grace of the union of persons with God symbolized in the ministry of the ordained. Therefore, while we can agree with Osborne that the notion of character underlines the transcendental action of God and the church's belief in the irrepeatability of the sacrament of holy orders, it also includes the symbolic action

⁷⁵ *Catechism*, paragraphs 1581-1584. Cf. DS 1767; PO 2.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, paragraph 1583

⁷⁷ PDV 15, and throughout this document.

⁷⁸ *ibid.* Cf. *Catechism*, paragraph 1581.

of the church, and the individual in his or her response and return to God.⁷⁹ Whether the person is believed to be configured at the level of his being by the sacrament of holy orders in such a way that he remains an ordained priest after laicization is largely an irrelevance to the dynamic of the sacramental life of the church and the life experience of Christians.

2.2 Conclusion

2.2.1 The Necessity of the Sacrament of Orders

We return to the question of the necessity of the ordained ministry for the church. Could not the church community simply take over the role that is assigned to the ordained? The founding of the church at Pentecost by the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the response in mission by the apostles, does not exclude the possibility of the church as a whole exercising the functions passed on to the church. In modern sacramental theology the accent has been on the celebration of the sacrament by the whole community, and the ordained priest as part of this community.

We believe, in apparent contradiction to a traditional Catholic understanding of the ordained ministry, that over-emphasis upon the christological foundation for the sacrament of holy orders can actually lead to the conclusion that it is possible to organize a community in such a way that the presence of Christ is celebrated by and in the community with only the barest of leadership structures. If we see the presence of Christ in the church and the sacraments as paramount, and we do, then the leadership of the community can be seen as a particular presence of Christ to and for the community but in a way that can be determined by that community in response to its own needs. The 'given' structure of the leadership in

⁷⁹ OSBORNE, *Christian Sacraments in a Postmodern World*, pp. 174-175.

the apostolic office could be altered if we believe that *access* to Christ is somehow hindered by the particular historical form of that office.

However, we underline two aspects of sacramental action: the action of the Trinity understood in the foreground and not in the background of the sacrament, and the fundamentally dialogical nature of the sacraments as language events. We consider the latter aspect first. If we are first addressed by the sacrament as a language event, and in a process that engages the individual as a person, then someone has to speak. We might argue that the scriptures and the rituals speak for themselves; however, words are only words on a page, and the elements of the sacrament are only elements, no matter their 'given' meaning. It is fundamental, we believe, to the dialogical nature of the sacrament that there is a personal dimension to the 'addressing' and to the 'speaking' of the sacrament. So fundamental is this aspect that the church has recognized that it is an indispensable 'given' in the sacrament of orders and signifies the transcendence of God, not apart from the church but as part of what the church celebrates.

The action of the Trinity, which is revealed in the symbolic dimension of the sacrament as the action of Father, Son, and Spirit in drawing the person into union with God, is vital for our understanding of the sacramentality of orders. It is fitting that the basic activity of the church should be symbolized in the action of its spiritual leaders, i.e. that the ordained priesthood should be identified with reference to the offer and response of grace in the church. For a person to fulfil this function, we believe that he must participate in the reality that is signified. In other words, he must be, at least in the principal actions of his leadership, symbols of that divine action. This symbolic reality is expressed, in the Catholic Church, by the language of sacrament.

It is the very nature of symbol, as we have seen especially in the theology of Chauvet, that it both allows participation and prevents possession. An unmediated access to God is not a Roman Catholic understanding of the divine economy. An over-subjective or imaginary identification with the means of salvation is perilous to the faith journey. The belief in the sacramentality of orders, which signifies the action of the Triune God and the corporality of the church, prevents such a possession of grace. In other words, a fuller understanding of the symbolic action of the Trinity and the church as shown in the ministry of the ordained prevents an over identification between Christ and his church.

2.2.2 The Gift of Assurance

We conclude this section with a further ‘word’ on the images of shepherd and steward as applied to the ordained priesthood, and to the presbyter in particular. As we have said in concluding part one, the images of shepherd and steward, while they are biblically based and are suitable terms, also have their limitations. After what we have said in part two and in this final chapter, we can add two further comments on each of these images.

Our first comment on the title ‘shepherd’ as identifying the ordained priest is that, when it is traditionally applied, it can lead to an over-identification between the ordained and Christ. It also ignores the eternal shepherding of the Father, the gathering role of the Spirit, and the mediation of the church. If we were to apply the term shepherd to the ordained priest with this in mind, then we could highlight the action of each person of the Trinity and of the church in the function of the ordained ministry in terms of shepherding. However, this may be stretching the metaphor to breaking point. The second comment that we make on the title shepherd is connected with the role of the presbyter in the local community. As

we have said, the title of shepherd is perhaps better applied to the bishop. As representative of the bishop, the presbyter could be identified in such a way. However, the use of the word 'shepherd' does not indicate clearly the dynamic role of the presbyter in the local situation where the ordinary life of the Christian requires a more personal and less over-bearing ministry than the term shepherd suggests.

On the other hand, the term steward seems to fit in well with the idea of the sacraments as signifying as much the absence, or transcendence, of God (and indeed the sacrament itself); his 'un-possessability.' However, while the image of steward again is biblically based and suggests relative authority, is it apt to describe as steward one who participates in the rewriting of the church and the individual in the sacramental encounter? Is a steward not someone who merely maintains, who keeps the tradition going but is not a party to its real development? Again, in the local situation, the term steward is practically unusable and meaningless, perhaps less understandable to the dynamic project of sacrament than is the title shepherd. The question we ask here is, does the church need a steward or does it need to engage with the reality who is God in the 'eventing' of the sacrament?

The term 'assurer', or perhaps better, 'the one who gives assurance' neither suggests over-identification with the reality of God's action nor does it imply a caretaking role. Rather it symbolizes the real participation of the person in the sacramental action of God's giving to and in the church, in which the community and the individual receive the assurance that the action of God is present and that their response and return (in giving) actually signifies a new reality. In short, the

priestly work of the ordained in enabling the priestly people of God to be exactly that, priestly, is the work of assurance.

While both the title shepherd and the idea of steward are valuable ways of describing the ministry of the presbyter, they both imply an over-identification with one or other of the sources of the identity of the presbyter and are perhaps too static. The title of shepherd ‘over-identifies’ the presbyter with the authority of Christ. The presbyter is not Christ, while he does participate, in the Spirit, in the reality of Christ’s assuring leadership. The presbyter also helps to create something new in the ongoing life of the community and the individual. He does not simply work to maintain a system, church structure, or an inheritance, as perhaps implied by the term steward.

The notion of assurance implies a personal involvement rather than the adoption of status or title. If someone ‘assures’ or reassures another, it implies that the one giving the assurance is also a believer and is not simply repeating formulae or acting in a way that is simply commensurate with a position or title held. The assurer is trusted because of his or her commitment and knowledge.

The presbyter as primarily a believer who is gifted with the grace that assures is underlined, rather than a person who holds a title first and believes second. If faith is “the assurance of things hoped for” (Heb. 11, 1), then the role of the presbyter is directly related to the faith life of the community and the individual. This is seen both in terms of the presbyter’s having the authority to encourage faith and help it to grow by facilitating the encounter between God and his people, which brings about the life of faith, hope and charity, and also by being a person of faith in the midst of the community. It is in considering the presbyter as believer, as well as leader, which also helps to maintain a healthy distance

between Christ and the presbyter, and does not reduce the rest of the community to the role of disciples while the presbyter adopts the role of Christ.

3. The Authentic Voice of the Prophet

3.1 The Action of the Spirit in the Local Community

As regards the preaching of the gospel by the ordained priest, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* makes two things clear. The first is that the authority to act as an ambassador for Christ comes from the laying on of hands and the gift of the Holy Spirit, which enable the ordained priest to share in the apostolic mission. The second is that the call to holiness, which effects and affects the life of the ordained priest in carrying out this mission, is again the work of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁰ We have already seen in chapter two of this thesis that *Pastores Dabo Vobis* describes the work of the Holy Spirit as inspiring the ordained to read the signs of the times and to be, as it were, the ‘subjective element’ in the ministry of the ordained.⁸¹ *Presbyterorum Ordinis* exhorts the ordained to preach the message of the Gospel not in the abstract but rather with a view to the life experience of the hearers of the word.⁸² Thus the *preaching* of the gospel and the *living* of the Gospel by the ordained is impossible without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, for it is the Spirit that makes the essential link between Christ and the community, and between the effective preaching and living-out of the Gospel.

In his study of ministry and ordination in the early church, Kilmartin believes that in ordaining or commissioning candidates for the ministry, the rite of ordination, as it emerged in the third century, called attention to the action of the Spirit as granting the necessary charism *for* the exercise of the office and not the

⁸⁰ PDV 15-16; 18-20

⁸¹ See chapter two, section 2.3.2; PDV 5.

⁸² PO 4

charism *of* office.⁸³ In other words, the prayer for the individual focused on the faithful exercise of the office of preaching. He also states that the authority of the ministry was recognized only in the ordained priest's fulfilment of this imposed service to the word.⁸⁴

In his analysis of *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Timothy Costello highlights the human element in the formation of candidates for the ordained priesthood.⁸⁵ In particular, he calls attention to human maturity as a necessary but insufficient condition for the assimilation of priestly ideals.⁸⁶ His research takes him into the field of human development in order to find what other useful anthropological and psychological factors need to be assessed in order to make a judgement about the suitability of the candidate for a commitment to the life of ordained ministry.⁸⁷ We believe that the recognition of maturity, by definition, takes place in a situation where the person is known over a period of time.

In bringing together the perspectives offered by Kilmartin and Costello, we can say that, from a theological point of view, the dialogue in grace, which enables the person to fulfil the command to preach and to witness to the Gospel, is one which takes place within the church and particularly in the local community. If the suitability for candidates for ordination rests in part on the assessment of human factors, and if the authority of ministry is recognized by the church precisely in the exercise of the office in the power of the Spirit, then the process of the formation of candidates necessarily involves the community which is most

⁸³ KILMARTIN, "Ministry and Ordination in Early Christianity against a Jewish Background", pp. 45-48. Kilmartin discusses the laying on of hands in this article and concludes that we can only say that its usage may emerge from the New Testament church but can only be said to be a stable element in the rite of ordination from the third century.

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, p. 49.

⁸⁵ COSTELLO, *Forming a Priestly Identity*, pp. 118-119.

⁸⁶ *ibid.*

⁸⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 120-252

affected by the ministry of the ordained, as well as the more ‘professional’ agencies.

Identifying the work of the Spirit in calling people for ministry is done in the context of the dialogue which takes place between God and his people. Against the background of the sacramental encounter, the specific charism for ministry is revealed in and recognized by the church community in the lives of individuals. The practical assessment of personal qualities must be seen within the context of the gift of God calling a person to a specific consecration in the body of Christ, within the general consecration of the person’s graced subjectivity and their response to this grace in ethical commitment. In other words, it is not just a matter of assessing the person’s human qualities, for example, whether the person shows leadership qualities, or whether the person is known to be of good character. Rather, an assessment of the person has to be made in terms of his response to the Holy Spirit signified and realized in the person’s religious and ethical life.

Against this background, we can agree with Susan Wood on the need for greater involvement of the community in the ritual of ordination.⁸⁸ Wood also emphasizes that the ordination of a presbyter is normally for a local church for work in a local community and not for the church in general.⁸⁹ This places the local church and the local community at the heart of the discernment process. She also underlines the priority of the spiritual role of the presbyter rather than the role of governance, which, she argues, is more of a factor in the office of the bishop.⁹⁰ Wood states that the spiritual role of the presbyter is exercised for and in the church. Thus it is

⁸⁸ WOOD, *Sacramental Orders*, pp.107-122.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 112

fitting that the church, where the Spirit acts, makes the assessment of the person based on spiritual terms.⁹¹

The role of the local community in fostering vocations is recognized by *Pastores Dabo Vobis* but is not elaborated in any detail.⁹² We believe that more could be said about the spiritual and theological role of the community in such a process. The authenticity of both the call to and exercise of the ordained ministry is lived and realized in the neighbourhood church. This links the presbyter to the local community in both formation and in ministry. One might conclude that prophets *are* recognized by their own people.

3.2 A Ministry beyond Fulfilment

Pastores Dabo Vobis makes it explicit that the mission of the ordained does not belong to them, it is Christ's mission.⁹³ The mission committed to the apostles, and carried forward in a particular way by the ordained ministry, is a gift from God. In this sense ministry is 'beyond' the ordained priest.⁹⁴

Dermot Power believes that the hallmarks of the ordained priesthood are intimacy with Jesus and fidelity to the call to ministry that is consistent with the mission entrusted by Jesus to the disciples.⁹⁵ In fact, referring to the work of Raymond Brown and the theology of Von Balthasar, he believes that the mission of the ordained priest, which includes the spiritual ideals of the disciples of Jesus and the functions embraced by the ordained in the ministry of preaching, governance, and sacrament, is beyond the capacity of any one person.⁹⁶ The grace

⁹¹ *ibid.*, pp. 112-113

⁹² PDV 68

⁹³ PDV 14

⁹⁴ PDV 14-16

⁹⁵ POWER, *A Spiritual Theology of the Priesthood: The Mystery of Christ and the Mission of the Priest*, pp. 71-74.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p.73

of the call to service in a life of intimacy with Jesus bridges the gap, he believes, between the ability of the individual and the demands made of that person in the ministry.⁹⁷ Kenan Osborne believes that it is the quality of service-leadership that is the best foundation for any ministry in the church, since this was how the church understood the person and mission of Jesus and the ministry of the apostles.⁹⁸

This call to service is exemplified by the washing of the disciples' feet in the Gospel of John's setting of the Last Supper (Jhn. 13, 1-15). However, David Ford has called attention to the contradictory atmosphere of the Last Supper.⁹⁹ He sees in this gathering of Jesus with his disciples the integration of the homely with the dramatic. The familial gathering of the disciples with Jesus at the Passover underlines the intimate nature of the Last Supper, but two differences are present in this meal that did not feature in previous gatherings: the betrayal of Jesus by Judas and the announcement of Jesus' death. Ford believes that it is Jesus' self-giving that bridges the gap between the horror of Holy Thursday and the community of the resurrection that waits on the other side.¹⁰⁰ As Ford sees it, the prophetic act of Jesus at the Last Supper indicates that he will do the dying and the giving; all the disciples need do on Holy Thursday is accept.¹⁰¹

However, the command to 'do this' in remembrance of Jesus (Luke 22, 19 and parallels) is crucial for the disciples after the resurrection. The idea of non-identical repetition by the disciples is in response, Ford believes, to the gift of the other, Jesus.¹⁰² In enacting the command in the Eucharist to remember Jesus, the

⁹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 73-74

⁹⁸ OSBORNE, *Orders and Ministry: Leadership in the World Church*, p. 42.

⁹⁹ FORD, *Self and Salvation: Being Transformed*, pp. 146-159.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 146-150

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*

¹⁰² *ibid.*, pp. 155-156

community is invoking the one who is totally other and who gave himself in a total and surprising way at the Last Supper. In this way, the church is taken up into the dynamic of blessing, which Ford sees as a ‘facing of one to the other’, of encounter.¹⁰³ Ford’s notion of encounter, of giving in response to giving, fits in well with what we have seen in Chauvet, Osborne, and Power as regards the respect for the other in the dialogue between subjects.¹⁰⁴

Service, therefore, does not just witness to the disciple’s intimacy with Jesus; it is given precisely in response to the otherness of Jesus. As we have seen, John Paul II has emphasized the Last Supper as the context for the foundation of the Eucharist and the ministerial priesthood.¹⁰⁵ In *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, he crystallizes the self-giving of the ordained priesthood in the notion of pastoral charity.¹⁰⁶ This self-offering of the ordained priest in his ministry can be seen in response to the gift of Jesus himself, the offering in surprise and unconditional love in face of the weakness and indeed horror of the human situation. Service is not just given in imitation of the ministry of Jesus, but in response to his ‘eventing’ in the life of the church in the Spirit. This takes place in the present, after the resurrection and with the gift of the Spirit.

Authenticity of service in the ministry and life of the ordained priest is based on ‘living up to’ this ideal of service, while at the same time realizing that it is something that cannot be fully achieved in the life of any one individual, precisely because the one that the ordained seek to emulate is not ‘possessable’ even in his giving. The tradition received from the context of the Last Supper, which witnesses to the prophetic act of Jesus’ self-giving and his commandment of love,

¹⁰³ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ See chapter five, section 2.

¹⁰⁵ *Dominicae Cenae*, chapter two; PDV 13.

¹⁰⁶ PDV 21-25

underlines this. Therefore, any restatement of the commitment to service in the ministerial priesthood must take this into account and not seek to over-prescribe this service with any one model, even when it is seemingly based on the example of Jesus. Again the danger is of over-identification with Jesus, this time in connection with his example of love.

However, the renewal of the ordained priesthood, as with the life of any Christian, must always refer to this command of charity. When power rather than service is the goal, then the implicit claim is made that somehow Jesus is possessed by the ministry of the ordained priest.¹⁰⁷

3.3 The Dialogue of Pastoral Charity

If we follow the logic of the sacramental theology of Power, Chauvet, and Osborne, then the dialogue between subjects must be about something. While keeping in mind that the dialogue between God and the ordained priest takes place in the church, we can also say that this dialogue can be considered from the point of view of an encounter between two subjects. The dialogue between God, as revealed in the Christ and the Spirit, and the ordained priest is always about the church. The dialogue between the ordained priest and the other members of the church and the community is always about God revealed in the paschal mystery.

The dialogue of love between brothers and sisters in the church, and between those who serve the church and the rest of the body of Christ, is always about the founding event that gave the church life. The response of the ordained priest to the service of Jesus in the Spirit is always taken up in the love that Christ has for

¹⁰⁷ The pursuit of power and status in the church, by those who are committed to its service, is witnessed from New Testament and early church times, remaining a constant element in need of renewal and purification, see OSBORNE, *Orders and Ministry*, pp. 42-53. Osborne points to the tension that exists in the need for ordering the church, which encourages the exercise of power, and the ministry of service.

his church. In the former, the encounter between brothers and sisters, the conversation will always be about the overwhelming love of God; in the latter, between God and the ordained, it will always be pastoral in nature, i.e. how the community and individuals can be brought into the loving mystery of the Godhead. Thus, the pastoral charity highlighted by John Paul II in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* can be understood not just as a configuration of the ordained to the person of Christ, and then in the dynamic movement of the ordained, in imitation of Christ, toward the church; it also involves the dynamic movement of the ordained toward the love of God in the conversation that takes place between those who are redeemed. This last aspect gives us an indication of how the ordained priest should exercise authority.

4. The Authority of the Pastor

4.1 Catechesis for the Celebration of the Sacraments

In chapter three we considered two main issues under the heading of authority: the issue of authority for the sacrament of orders in contemporary society, and the place of the presbyter in relation to the bishop and the parish. The latter theme has already been developed in this chapter, particularly in connection with the priestly work of assurance undertaken by the presbyter in the local community. In this final section we turn to the first issue we raised in our third chapter, namely the attitude of contemporary western society towards the church in general and the ordained priesthood in particular.

This is a vast theme and here we focus on just one aspect which especially affects the presbyter: the management of the request for sacraments. We have chosen this theme for three reasons. Firstly, it brings into focus the symbolic function of the presbyter, who assists the Christian to participate in the

sacramental event. Secondly, it brings into play some of the cultural issues which form the background to the presbyter's pastoral relationship with people who may have a varied relationship with the church as an institution. Finally, this theme allows us to apply some of the theology we have reviewed, particularly that of Chauvet, to a crucial part of the presbyter's ministry. We may consider this theme to be more of an issue for pastoral theology. However, we are not suggesting any particular pastoral strategy but examining a particular pastoral relationship that touches on the authority of the presbyter as one who represents God and the church, and who, at the same time, seeks to function as a symbol for the encounter between God, the church, and the individual.

The document on the liturgy from the Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, points to the need for the active participation of the faithful in the liturgy, with a proper disposition of heart and mind.¹⁰⁸ The 'Code of Canon Law' calls for a suitable catechesis on the sacraments.¹⁰⁹ If the presbyter is to assist the faithful in acquiring a disposition which is open to the sacramental encounter, this catechesis has to involve more than the teaching of propositions or the giving of information. The presbyter must attempt to engage with individuals in a personal way, helping them to open up to the possibilities offered by the sacramental encounter.

¹⁰⁸ SC 10-11

¹⁰⁹ Canon 777

4.2 The Pastoral Interview

4.2.1 The Ritual Expectation

People who have little ‘active’ contact with the church, and who appear to have little knowledge of what the church actually believes happens in the sacramental encounter, still make requests for the celebration of the sacraments.¹¹⁰ This discrepancy between the level of active participation and explicit faith and the request for the rites of the church at key moments in a person’s life, and those of their families, provides Chauvet, in his later work on the sacraments, with a starting point for considering how best to catechize and prepare such people for the sacramental celebration.¹¹¹ Chauvet is certainly speaking from the situation of the Catholic Church in France and refers to studies conducted there regarding religious attitudes and beliefs.¹¹² The United Kingdom is different from France in culture and religious expression, yet we believe that some of his findings are applicable to the situation of the Catholic Church in this country.

We referred earlier to Chauvet’s analysis of the human motivations that may lie behind the celebration of the sacraments.¹¹³ In this later work, he refers to these in more detail with particular reference to the request for the celebration of sacraments, especially those of baptism and marriage. He focuses on two differences. The first is the *social* difference between what is the expected outcome of the celebration of the sacraments on the part of those who have little contact with the church and the social attitude of those who regularly attend

¹¹⁰ This is a statement that we make with direct reference to the experience of the author of this thesis and the shared experience of other presbyters.

¹¹¹ CHAUVET, L.-M., *The Sacraments, the Word of God at the Mercy of the Body*, Collegeville, Minnesota, 2001, pp. 173-200. This work in many ways summarizes Chauvet’s earlier work, to which we have already referred, and provides material for pastoral reflection.

¹¹² *ibid.*, pp. 174-176. Chauvet refers to France as a highly secularized country, p. 174, yet despite this, there is, he says, a relatively high number of requests for the rites of the church.

¹¹³ See chapter five, section 2.1.4.

church. The second is the difference between the church's officially stated beliefs as to what the sacraments mean and the ritual expectation of those who approach the church for the sacraments.¹¹⁴

Chauvet argues that two basic social models dominate this situation according to, on the one hand, the logic of communion, and, on the other, the logic of difference.¹¹⁵ According to the logic of communion, the prevailing social model is one of tradition and of a closed society, in which there is strong identification with the group and with the continuance with the past. According to the logic of difference, which, Chauvet argues, dominates today, the mentality of the open society leads to an individual and a community identifying itself in divergence from the prevailing culture. For the Catholic who regularly attends mass and has absorbed some of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, the experience is one of identification-in-difference.¹¹⁶ Both of these attitudes influence the expectation of the person who requests the sacraments, but the first may dominate in the mind of the person who requests the sacraments yet has little contact with the church. For example, those who have little contact with the church may have the attitude that baptism and marriage are in accord with tradition and the placing of the person in society, the celebration of a rite of passage. The idea of baptism may mean as much an initiation into the ways of the western world as initiation into the church.¹¹⁷

Against this background, Chauvet talks about his main theme in these pages, the function of the ritual. He states that we have to be aware of the fact that ritual can be 'auto-productive', taking on a life of its own independent of its origins and

¹¹⁴ CHAUVET, *The Sacraments*, pp. 176-183.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 177-178

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 178

from the institution and theology behind it.¹¹⁸ Especially when it comes to the celebration of baptisms and weddings, people's expectations may be that the ritual celebrates a rite of passage for those concerned and links with the familial need to celebrate an important moment.¹¹⁹ There may be conscious or unconscious forces at work of a psychological and social kind, which are bound up with images of God and the church. For example, behind the request for baptism may lie some anxiety surrounding the place of the child in society and the desire to pass on identity. Linked with this is the notion of a church which can ritualize that identity, and an image of a God of tradition, of the tribe, or a nostalgic image of the God of childhood.¹²⁰

Against this is set the belief of the church, the desire for faith, conversion, and a commitment to the Gospel and to the church as an institution.¹²¹ It is not simply a matter, Chauvet believes, of the church taking a position of belief over-against an attitude on the part of the requester who has more of a cultural and psychological motivation for the request. Social and psychological factors also play a part in the motivations of those who act as pastoral agents of the sacraments.¹²²

4.2.2 The Authority of the Presbyter

The presbyter is at the 'business end' of these situations. Together with pastoral assistants and ministers of various kinds, the presbyter must try to negotiate the difference between the two perspectives, of ritual expectation and of the church's belief in the meaning of the sacrament. Chauvet points to the 'pastoral interview'

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 178-179

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*, pp 179-183

¹²⁰ *ibid.* This is just one example of those given by Chauvet in his cultural and ritual analysis. See p. 183, "Most of the time, the locutionary (the content of the request) only masks the illocutionary, which is first of all a begging for recognition."

¹²¹ *ibid.*, pp. 183-184

¹²² *ibid.*

as providing a context in which the dialogue between participants can reveal a moment of grace.¹²³ When each of the participants recognizes the other as a subject and communicates, then the real focus of the discussion becomes the possibility for conversion.¹²⁴ Chauvet believes that the process is fraught with difficulty and is inherently conflictual. This is exacerbated when the partners in the discussion fail to acknowledge the operational codes behind the other's request.¹²⁵

In addition to being attentive to the process of dialogue, which respects the other, the pastor has to be aware of the structural questions involved. These have to do with the type of church and the type of initiation involved in the mind of the participants, which indicate the image each has of God.¹²⁶

Postmodern society, Chauvet believes, has lost some of the traditional points of reference for both the pastor and those requesting sacraments and, in order to guide the pastor through the process of the pastoral interview, Chauvet provides some guidelines.¹²⁷ Along with the need to enter into true dialogue, with all that implies, he also indicates the approach that might be taken by the pastor. Often, he claims, the pastor exhibits one of two tendencies: to be 'hard' in attitude or to

¹²³ *ibid.*, pp. 183-200, see especially pp. 196-198. By the pastoral interview, Chauvet intends the conversation between, on the one hand, the pastor or pastoral assistant and, on the other, the requester.

¹²⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 185- 187

¹²⁵ *ibid.* As an example of this, Chauvet talks of the situation of a couple seeking marriage. On the side of the couple, they might talk of their feelings and desires, whereas the presbyter or pastoral minister may be talking about faith. For the two ideas to have any chance of meeting there has to be real communication. The presbyter or pastoral minister must also take into account the feelings of insecurity on the part of the requester, especially when the symbolic function of the one acting for the church is unclear, for example in the case of other pastoral lay assistants being the ones who conduct the pastoral interview.

¹²⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 190-191. Questions which may be asked, for example, are: is the initiation involved an initiation into a believing community or a tribe? Is the type of church a church of diversity, conforming to rules, or a confessing community of faith? The situation is complicated by the cultural role of Christianity.

¹²⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 192-198

be ‘soft’.¹²⁸ The hard attitude is where the pastor adopts the role of the parent or even of God, and insists on a ‘mini theology course’. The soft attitude is represented by the pastor’s attempting to be the brother or sister of the requester, renouncing the obligation to be a symbolic representation of the mystery of God and the law of the church. This can spring from a narcissistic tendency on the part of the pastoral agent.¹²⁹ Chauvet suggests that the pastoral interview should take the “evangelical way”, stressing the gratuitousness of the action of God and the gift of the gospel, and witnessing to the process of conversion.¹³⁰

It is clear that the real authority of the pastor in these situations is bound up with being the personal and engaged symbol of God’s action in the life of the individual. The ‘moment of grace’ that is afforded by the pastoral interview has some of the hallmarks of the sacramental encounter, when each of the subjects, the pastor, and the requester, address each other and are addressed by the action of God. In other words, the conversation between the individuals is about the paschal mystery, the action of God demanding change in the other.

5. Conclusion

In exploring the ministry of the presbyter we have made an explicit link in this chapter with the gathering function of the presbyterate as taught in the documents of the Roman Catholic Church and in local and particular situations. We have integrated the qualities of assurance, authenticity, and authority, examined in the first part of our thesis, with the insights offered by our authors in the second part. We have chosen to do this by pairing the quality of assurance with the priestly work of the presbyter, of authenticity with the prophetic work of witnessing to

¹²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 193

¹²⁹ *ibid.*

¹³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 197

Christ and his word, and of authority with the work of the pastor according to one example which illustrates his wider contact with those who make demands upon the church in particular life situations.

As we have stated, there is a certain fluidity in the pairing of these qualities with the three offices of the presbyter. This is as it should be, since the founding identity of the presbyter does not, we believe, originate in any one image or in any one instance of ministry. Instead the identity of the presbyter is to be found in the dynamic of his symbolic function, as a 'transparency' and 'assurance' of the action of God and the response of the church and the individual. This has to be reflected in his own personal commitment to symbolic action, which neither identifies him too closely with the action of God nor the response of the individual.

The presbyter *re-presents* the closeness of God in the local ordinary situation of a person's faith life, and symbolizes the distance of God who cannot be possessed or manipulated by prior desires, even, and perhaps especially, those of the presbyter. The presbyter also symbolizes the church in a similar way: as the official representative of the bishop and the local (and universal) church, he represents the presence of the church in the local community; as part of the received structure of the institution, he signifies the law and the necessary 'corporality' of the church, which is part of the received mystery of redemption.

Conclusion

1. Outline

The conclusion to our thesis consists of two sections. The first section reviews the main chapters of the thesis and their conclusions. It traces the development of the thesis as it has unfolded, and highlights the connections between the different parts and chapters. In the second section, we make some concluding remarks, firstly about the idea of assurance, and then on how the thesis has achieved its aims.

2. Review of the Main Chapters

2.1 Part One – Identifying the Presbyter

In the first part of our thesis we sought to identify the presbyter with reference to the perspectives offered by the Second Vatican Council, the magisterial statements of the Catholic Church, and the theological debate surrounding the ordained priesthood in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. We also introduced some of the ideas that were considered in more detail in parts two and three of the thesis. These included the idea of the ordained priest as symbolizing the encounter between God and the believer in the sacramental life of the church. The definition of the sacramental encounter in modern Roman Catholic theology was explored in part two. The symbolic function of the presbyter in the life of the church, according to the three offices of priest, prophet, and pastor, was discussed in part three. This was done in such a way that further defined the priestly work of assurance, authenticity, and authority.

Assurance was placed first, before authenticity and authority, because we believe that this is the most important element of the ministry of the ordained

priest. Authority was considered last because, according to the perspectives offered in this thesis, it cannot be exercised without reference to the work of assurance and a life of authenticity.

2.1.1 Chapter One – Assurance

Chapter one reviewed the relevant documents of Vatican II, and reflected on the relationship between the priesthood of the baptized and the priesthood of the ordained, highlighting the ecclesial context for the ministry of the ordained.

We saw how the question of the precise relationship between the two priesthoods led to the emergence of two particular discussions: a hermeneutical analysis of the development of ministry in the church's history, which sought to find a founding identity for the ordained priest, and a debate over whether the ordained priest acts principally *in persona Christi* or *in persona ecclesiae*. As an introduction to the hermeneutical question we chose to consider the document from the 1971 synod on the ministerial priesthood and the subsequent response to this document (and to the perceived needs of the church) in the theology of Edward Schillebeeckx. We then examined some of the reactions to his theology and reflected further on the understanding of the ordained priesthood in the early church.

From this analysis, certain constants emerge for the identity of the ministerial priesthood, including the presence in the church from earliest times of a ministry of authority, which is perceived as a gift from God and has a direct reference to the service of the church. These two 'poles', the authority derived from divine commission and service to the mission of the church, were examined in the light of the theology of David Power and David Coffey. We concluded that the principal object of the ministerial priesthood is to serve the priesthood of the

church in its goal of union with God and consecration of the world. Through the theology of Coffey, we introduced the pneumatological dimension and elucidated the symbolic function of the ordained priesthood as it participates in the divine-human dialogue. The covenantal relationship between God and the church as symbolized in the sacramental encounter became an important theme in chapter four.

This chapter made two contributions to our thesis: firstly, the presentation of the term ‘assurance’ as applied to the ministry of the ordained and, secondly, the introduction of literature which provides the background for our discussion. We expressed a preference for the term assurance over that of symbolic function because of its more personal and ‘accessible’ qualities. The theme of assurance was taken up again in chapter six and linked with the insights developed in part two of the thesis.

2.1.2 Chapter Two - Authenticity

In our second chapter, we looked at the theme of authenticity in terms of restatement and renewal. With specific reference to the magisterial teachings of John Paul II, and a detailed examination of the document *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, we considered how the magisterium of the Catholic Church sought to address the issue of the identity of the ordained priesthood in contemporary circumstances.

We saw how, in making an explicit link between the ordained priesthood and Christ, as Head and Shepherd of the church, thus emphasizing the christological and ecclesiological references for the ordained ministry, the teaching of John Paul II restates traditional Catholic theology. However, we also saw that, in presenting the Holy Spirit as the agent of consecration and mission in the ministry and life of the ordained, and as the one who inspires and enables the discerning ministry of

the ordained priest, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* both continues a theme already present in the discussions at the Second Vatican Council and also offers a renewal of the theological definition of the ordained priesthood.

The development of the notion of pastoral charity in the document also underlines the ethical demand on the ministerial priesthood as a defining part of this ministry. This ethical dimension provides an important ingredient in the definition of the sacramental encounter discussed in chapter five. We saw in chapter five that this ethical element is the effect of the sacrament on the community and the individual in conversion and love of neighbour, a response to the giving God.

2.1.3 Chapter Three – Authority

Chapter three dealt with the issue of authority under two aspects: firstly, the attitude of modern western culture towards authority and religion and, secondly, the place of the presbyter in relation to the parish and the bishop. We also looked at the issues of power and community, globalization, and the influence of public scandal on the ordained priesthood.

This chapter provided three important coordinates for the definition of the presbyter. The first is the brief description of the shift that has taken place in how people understand knowledge and relationship. In today's western culture, people seek meaning in dialogue with others as active subjects and do not necessarily accept the pronouncements of any group claiming authority over the individual. This was an important theme in chapter five where we analysed this with reference to postmodern thought and its influence on sacramental theology.

The second coordinate is the placing of the presbyter in relationship to the bishop and the parish community. Here we saw that the identity of the presbyter,

as distinct from that of the bishop, is found in relation to the neighbourhood church and the realm of the ordinary, i.e. the everyday life of the Catholic as experienced in the parish. We also saw a third coordinate in how the ordination rite of presbyters draws attention to the spiritual role of the presbyter, as opposed to the more obvious governing role of the bishop. These themes were taken up in chapter six with specific relationship to the priestly work of assurance in the church, and in a consideration of how the presbyter should exercise authority in the faith life of the community and the individual.

We concluded this chapter and the first part of our thesis by looking at some images of the ordained priest, particularly those of ‘shepherd’ and ‘steward’. At this stage of our work, we concluded that there are limits to those two images in terms of their relevance to contemporary society. The image of shepherd may be considered authoritarian and anachronistic, while the idea of steward highlights the absence of God and the notion of management. We expressed a preference for the term assurance because it connected with the needs of the ordinary spiritual life of people in parish communities.

2.2 Part Two – Gift and Return

The second part of our thesis sought to explain the sacramental encounter between God and the believer in terms of the dynamic of ‘gift’ and ‘return’. We wished to deepen the discussion over the identity and role of the presbyter by making explicit reference to modern sacramental theology, something which we consider to be somewhat lacking in many modern theologies of the ordained priesthood.

In doing this we intended to do two things. The first was to highlight that the idea of ‘sacramental encounter’ has a wider application than that of the seven

chief rites of the Catholic Church, commonly called sacraments. The second was to understand this encounter as the gift of God and the response of the community, and the individual, in conversion and ethical living. In emphasizing the sacrament as the gift of a free God, we sought to elaborate the role of the Trinity in the encounter and secure a theological ‘place’ for the action of the Spirit. In considering the sacrament in terms of human response we sought to underline the purpose of the sacrament as the participation of the person in the relational life of the Trinity. We understand the purpose or the effect of the sacrament, as forming part of the definition of sacramental grace.

2.2.1 Chapter Four – Participation in the Life of the Trinity

In chapter four, we focused on the theology of Edward Kilmartin. We examined the origins of his theology in the debates over the presence of Christ in the liturgy and the existential theologies of Edward Schillebeeckx and Karl Rahner. We also examined the influence on his thought of the trinitarian theology of David Coffey. We saw how Kilmartin develops a theology of the liturgy and sacrament as a theology of the Trinity, underlining the role of the Holy Spirit as the one who unites the church to Christ and who inspires the response to God’s offer. In Kilmartin’s theology, it is the Spirit who forms in the believer the mind of Christ, the covenantal love of the Father.

This chapter connected with the second chapter in which we explored the role of the Spirit in the definition of the ordained priesthood, and it yielded two important points which were taken up in chapter six. The first was the role of the Holy Spirit as the essential link between the believing community and Christ. The gift of the Spirit, which conforms the believer to Christ, is fundamental in defining sacramental action. The role of the Spirit is, therefore, vital for the identity of the

ordained priest and the description of his mission. The sacraments are privileged moments of the encounter between God and the believer precisely because of the work of the Spirit of Christ. In chapter six, we coupled the theology of David Coffey with that of Kilmartin to indicate that the Spirit is the gift to the church at Pentecost. This is important in considering the ordained priesthood as part of the received structure of the church. The second important point was the elaboration of the covenantal model of sacramental action established by Christ's pasch. The ordained priesthood is portrayed in chapter six as that which serves this covenant between God and believer.

2.2.2 Chapter Five – The Priority of the Giving God

Chapter five explored the sacramental theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet, Kenan Osborne, and David Power, three theologians who have attempted to integrate some of the insights of postmodern philosophy into their sacramental systems. We saw in this chapter how these writers have made their understanding of postmodern philosophy central to their understanding of sacramental action. We also saw how their theology has highlighted the priority of God's action and the response of the believer as a subject, historically conditioned and in dialogue with others. We believe that the notion of dialogue is crucial to the modern explanation of the sacrament. This dialogue between God and the believer leads to a new 'writing' of the church's story in the contemporary situation.

We also saw in this chapter the emphasis upon the response or return of the believer in conversion and ethical action. The paschal mystery of Christ is central to how the effects of the sacrament are to be understood in the conversion of the individual and the ethical outreach to the other. This is seen, firstly, in response to

God's self-giving, and, secondly, in the pursuit of justice and the inclusion of the marginalized.

We concluded this chapter and part two by making three statements: on God, the church, and the dynamic of sacramental encounter. The God we encounter in the sacraments is the Triune God, who brings us into relationship with him. The church is the place of encounter, mediating us and placing us in relationship with God and the community. The sacramental encounter describes the relationship that is established by God in the church in transforming the community and the individual.

2.3 Part Three – The Gift of Assurance

2.3.1 Chapter Six – The Presbyter as a Gift of God to the Church

We brought together the first two parts of our thesis in this final chapter. In doing this we did not make explicit connections between every aspect of the presbyter's ministry and the elements explored in the second part. Instead, we sought to root our reflections in the 'Code of Canon Law' and the teaching of the Catholic Church, and, from there, apply the theological reflection of our authors to the three offices of the ordained priesthood.

In the first section of this chapter, we emphasized the necessity of the presbyter's ministry as part of the received structure of the church within a dialogical dynamic. The ministry of the presbyter is a 'given' of the sacramental situation, and the presbyter exercises authority as such. However, that ministry serves the symbolic encounter between God and the believer. In referring to the insights gleaned in the second part of our thesis, we underlined the visibility of the presbyter's ministry. By 'visibility' we do not just intend the presence of the presbyter in the parish as a *sign* of the church and of God but a ministry focused

on the visibility of the *symbolic action*, which constitutes both the foundation and the exercise of presbyteral ministry in the neighbourhood church. For this reason we concentrated on the priestly work of assurance, symbolizing the action of God and the gathering of the people of God. We offered the sacrament of reconciliation as an example of this visibility of the ministry of the presbyter. In the rite of penance, the individual elements of the presbyter's ministry are shown as witnessing to God, the church, and the response of the person in their journey of faith as he or she returns to the Father.

We concluded this first section with a word on the theological character of the ordained priest, and with further reflection on the images of shepherd and steward as applied to the ordained priesthood. The aim here was to show again how the identity of the presbyter is rooted in the symbolic work of assurance and not in any single image.

In the second section, we looked again at authenticity in the life and ministry of the presbyter. Firstly, we emphasized the work of the Spirit in the life of the presbyter and in the identifying of candidates for the ordained priesthood. If the work of the presbyter is principally one of spiritual leadership in the local community, then the response given by candidates for the ordained priesthood in their own lives of grace is best judged in the context of the community.

We then looked at how the ordained priest is called to imitate Christ in ministry and attitude. We concluded that the command to imitate Christ's attitude of service is a ministry beyond fulfilment. Christ is always 'beyond' us and can never be possessed, even when one seeks to exemplify the command of love in one's life. This led us to consider pastoral charity as an essentially dialogical reality, a conversation between subjects about something. The concern here was

to underline the symbolic nature of pastoral charity, seen not as a 'possessed quality' but as a loving conversation between active subjects.

The third section of this chapter referred to the authority of the pastor. We dealt with one aspect of how this authority might be exercised in the context of the request for the celebration of the sacraments made by those who may have no active contact with their local or neighbourhood church. Here, we found the reflections offered by Louis-Marie Chauvet helpful. While this matter touches on the field of pastoral theology, we believed that by considering this issue we were able to bring out once again the symbolic action of the presbyter in a particular instance of church life and the needs of the individual. Once again, the focus was on dialogue, which is a necessary part of the journey of faith for the church as a whole and for the individual.

2.3.2 The Gift of Assurance

Concluding the sixth chapter we deliberately drew attention to the fluidity of the ministry of the presbyter. The presbyter does not find a 'home' in any one image of ministry but in the present and visible action of God with his people in the return of thanksgiving and conversion. In other words, the identity of the presbyter is bound up with being a gift of assurance to the church and to the individual. The presbyter witnesses to the presence of the giving God and the spiritual progress of the community and individuals in their pilgrimage of faith. If faith is defined both in its subjective aspect, as a personal response to the revelation of God, and in its objective aspect, as belief in something, then the presbyter symbolizes faith as *realized and open to further realization*. He does this because he represents the given 'objective' tradition, which witnesses to

God's giving and the church's response in the past, and assists the appropriation of the mind of Christ by the believer in an attitude of self-offering in the present.

3. Concluding Remarks

3.1 The Presbyter as 'Assurer'

The term 'assurer' may be a clumsy one. One could say that it conjures up the world of finance and insurance rather than the life of God with his church. However, we believe that the giving of assurance is a vital function in the church, particularly in the fragmented experience of Christians today. The presbyter is a symbol of the action of God and the response of the believer in the celebration of the sacraments, and of the sacramental encounter. For most people this encounter takes place in the ordinary situations of life, in historical and individual circumstances. It is in the midst of these situations and circumstances that many people today attempt to find meaning in their lives. They are less inclined to trust in the pronouncement of ideals by any over-arching authority. The presbyter acts in the realm of the ordinary where grace is lived and experienced, and thus he is best placed to witness to the journey of faith of the community and the individual in today's world. In this way, the focus is not on any generic or idealized image of ministry, or response to God's action, but rather on the 'daily' pilgrimage of the church.

There are many areas of the ordained ministry and its connection with the life of the church which we have not considered. For example, we have not discussed the issues of celibacy, the ordination of women, the ecumenical context for ministry, or the ministry of others in the church.¹ In dealing with these issues, we believe

¹ For the Catholic Church's magisterial position on the question of women's ordination see CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *The Declaration Inter Insigniores*,

that the idea of ‘the giving of assurance’, as discussed in this thesis, is a useful criterion for assessing ministry in general and ordained leadership in particular.

3.2 The Identity of the Presbyter in Modern Roman Catholic Theology

3.2.1 The Purpose and Methodology of the Thesis

The stated aim of this thesis was to identify the presbyter in modern Roman Catholic theology. We have done this in three steps. Firstly, we both reviewed and coordinated the teaching of the magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church and recent theological reflection. We considered the current debate on the representative function of the ordained priesthood and the place of the presbyter in relation to the parish. Already, this first step provided us with enough material to make the assertion that it is the ‘giving of assurance’ that characterizes the ministry and identity of the presbyter.

Our second step was to examine the idea of the sacramental encounter in the theology of selected authors who have integrated modern philosophical and theological ideas into their systems. This is lacking in many of the modern theologies of the ordained priesthood, which tend either to consider the ordained priesthood in relation to the historical development of ministry, from a particular ecclesiology, or to coordinate the elements from previous studies without precise and systematic reference to sacramental theology in general.

AAS 69 (1977), 108-113; JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, AAS 85 (1994), 545-548. See also The Apostolic Letter of JOHN PAUL II, “On the Dignity and Vocation of Women”, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, AAS 80/2 (1988) 1653-1729, especially 1715-1716. Edward Kilmartin deals with this issue in KILMARTIN, E. J., "Arguments (against Women's Ordination) Based on the Nature of Pastoral Office," *Research Report: Women in the Church and Society*, Ed. BUTLER, S. Vol. 37, Washington, 1978. For the ecumenical dimension of ordained ministry in the church, see WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Geneva, 1982, pp. 20-32. The wider issue of ministry in the church is the subject of O'MEARA, *Theology of Ministry*.

Our emphasis has been upon the sacramentality of the presbyterate, not just in terms of the rites of ordination or the history of the church and the liturgy but, more explicitly, as a sacrament in the modern sense of the term: as realizing the divine-human dialogue in and for the church. Even when this is a feature in the theology of some authors, such as Kilmartin and Coffey, they do not fully coordinate their sacramental theology with their theology of the ordained priesthood, though perhaps Kilmartin and Coffey come closest. Furthermore, Kilmartin and Coffey do not make explicit reference to the theology of Power and Chauvet, even though their theologies are compatible. In addition, we have considered the theology of Kenan Osborne, perhaps more radically postmodern than that of Power and Chauvet, a theology to which none of the first four main theologians refer. In this second step, then, we moved further in identifying the presbyter according to modern Roman Catholic theology, according to the schema of gift and return in the dynamic of sacramental life, and in terms of the divine-human dialogue that is the hallmark of a modern definition of the sacrament.

In each of these first two steps we pursued a conversational method, placing our authors in dialogue under the aspects which emerged from their own theology and which we considered important in bringing out the essential elements of the presbyterate. At times, this may have appeared descriptive rather than progressive. However, the method employed was necessary both in order to do justice to the insights of our authors and also to highlight those elements that we used for our own conclusions.

Our third step was in integrating the insights developed in the second stage with the perspectives offered by the teaching of the church and the 'practical' ministry of the presbyter in the parish. The integration of the insights of Susan Wood was

helpful, and an explicit reference to the parochial context and the three-fold office of the presbyter further defined the presbyter in modern Roman Catholic theology. The theology developed in the second part of our thesis led us to see this parochial context as the realm of the ordinary, the place where most people find meaning and in which the presbyter ministers. In this third part, our conversational method gave way to a more progressive synthesis.

In order to appreciate the place of the presbyter in the life of the church we can afford neither to retreat into authoritarian images nor simply describe the relationships that the presbyter enjoys, for example, with the bishop or the parish. We must identify precisely what the presbyter does in these relationships, what the presbyter is for. If we do not, then we shall portray the ordained priesthood in general, and the presbyterate in particular, as either anachronistic or as a catalyst for the hidden desires of a secular society; the one removes the sacred from the profane, the other profanes the sacred. Our emphasis upon the presbyter as the one who gives assurance finds the third way that Chauvet has suggested, the evangelical way, and thus we applied his insights to the theology of the ordained priesthood in a progressive way. By developing the idea of the giving of assurance, and relating it to the themes of authenticity and authority, we have guarded against the ‘sacralizing’ of the ordained priesthood, on the one hand, and the trivializing of the ministry, on the other.

3.2.2 The Originality of the Thesis

We claimed in the introduction that the originality of this thesis rested upon the deliberate coordination of a theology of the presbyterate with wider sacramental theology. We have shown in the preceding section how we did this and have pointed out the results from this coordination.

We have also further developed the idea of the ordained priest as symbolic function, evident in the theology of Edward Kilmartin and David Coffey. We have achieved this in three ways. Firstly, we integrated into our thesis the ideas of selected theologians to whom these first two do not explicitly refer, and thus situated this symbolic function in the realm of the ordinary life of the Christian. Secondly, we connected the insights gleaned from these theologians with the magisterial teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, and so rooted this symbolic function in the Catholic tradition. Thirdly, we suggested a term, that of assurance, as a more personal and, in the modern sense of the word, a more sacramental description of the ministry of the presbyter.

Bibliography

1. Main Ecclesiastical Documents

BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF SCOTLAND, *Catholic Directory*, Glasgow, 1992-2002.

BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF SCOTLAND, *Norms for Priestly Formation*, Ayrshire, 2005.

CANON LAW SOCIETY OF AMERICA, *Code of Canon Law, Latin- English Edition*, Washington, 1983.

CATHOLIC BOOK PUBLISHING COMPANY, *Rite of Penance*, New York, 1975.

CATHOLIC CHURCH (JOHN PAUL II), *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, London, 1994.

COMISION EPISCOPAL DEL CLERO, *La Formación Pastoral*, Madrid, 1998.

CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, Vatican City, 1994.

---, *The Priest and the Third Millennium*, Vatican City, 1999.

---, *The Priest, Pastor and Leader of the Parish Community*, Vatican City, 2002.

CONGREGAZIONE PER LA DOTTRINA DELLA FEDE, *Dall' "Inter Insigniores" All' "Ordinatio Sacerdotalis"*, Vatican, 1996.

ICEL, *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, London, 1987.

JOHN PAUL II, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, "Pastores Dabo Vobis"*, Vatican City, 1992.

---, *Apostolic Letter, "Dominicae Cena"*, Vatican City, 1980.

---, *Apostolic Letter, Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, Vatican City, 1994.

---, *Priesthood in the Third Millennium: Addresses of John Paul 2 1993*, Princeton and Chicago, 1994.

PIUS XII, *Encyclical, "Mystici Corporis Christi"*, Vatican City, 1943.

---, *Encyclical, "Mediator Dei"*, Vatican City, 1947.

TANNER, N.P., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils Volumes I & 2*, London,

VATICAN II, (JOHN XXIII, PAUL VI), *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Vaticani II*, Vols. 1-4, Vatican City, 1970-83.

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Geneva, 1982.

2. Principal Authors

CHAUVET, L.-M., *The Sacraments, the Word of God at the Mercy of the Body*, Collegeville, Minnesota, 2001.

---, *Symbol and Sacrament, a Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, *Symbole et Sacrement: Un relecture sacramentelle de L'existence chretienne*, Trans, MADIGAN, P., Collegeville, Minnesota, 1995.

COFFEY, D., "The Common and Ordained Priesthood", *Theological Studies* 58, June (1997), pp. 209-236.

---, *Deus Trinitas: The Doctrine of the Triune God*, New York, 1999.

---, *Grace: The Gift of the Holy Spirit*, Sydney, 1979.

---, "The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love of the Father and the Son", *Theological Studies* 51 (1990), pp. 193-229.

---, "The 'Incarnation' of the Holy Spirit", *Theological Studies* 45 (1984), pp. 466-480.

---, "Priestly Representation and Women's Ordination", *Priesthood, the Hard Questions*, Ed. GLESSON, G. P., Newton, Australia, 1993, pp. 79-99.

---, *The Sacrament of Reconciliation*, Lex Orandi Series, Collegeville, Minn., 2001.

COSTELLO, T., *Forming a Priestly Identity*, Analecta Gregoriana, Rome, 2002.

HALL, J. M., *We Have the Mind of Christ: The Holy Spirit and Liturgical Memory in the Thought of Edward J. Kilmartin*, Collegeville, Minnesota, 2001.

KILMARTIN, E. J., "The Active Role of Christ and the Spirit in the Sanctification of the Eucharistic Elements", *Theological Studies* 45 (1984), pp. 225-253.

---, "Apostolic Office: Sacrament of Christ", *Theological Studies* 36 (1975), pp. 263-284.

---, "Arguments (against Women's Ordination) Based on the Nature of Pastoral Office," *Research Report: Women in the Church and Society*, Ed. BUTLER, S. Vol. 37, Washington, 1978.

- , *Christian Liturgy: Theology and Practice*, Kansas City, Mo., 1988.
- , *Church, Eucharist, and Priesthood: A Theological Commentary on "the Mystery and Worship of the Most Holy Eucharist"*, New York, 1981.
- , "Ministry and Ordination in Early Christianity against a Jewish Background", *Studia Liturgica* 13 (1979), 42-69.
- , "Theology of the Sacraments: Towards a New Understanding of the Chief Rites", *Alternative Futures for Worship: Volume 1 General Introduction*, Ed. DUFFY, R. A. Vol. 1, *Alternative Futures for Worship*, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1987, pp. 123-175.
- , *Toward Reunion: The Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Churches*, New York, 1979.
- KILMARTIN, E. J., and DALY, R. J., *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, Collegeville, Minn., 1998.
- MICHALSKI, M., *The Relationship between the Universal Priesthood of the Baptized and the Ministerial Priesthood of the Ordained in Vatican 2 and in Subsequent Theology : Understanding "Essentia Et Non Gradu Tantum," Lumen Gentium No. 10*, Lewiston, NY, 1996.
- OSBORNE, K. B., *Christian Sacraments in a Postmodern World*, New York, 1999.
- , *Orders and Ministry: Leadership in the World Church*, Theology in Global Perspective, New York, 2006.
- , *Priesthood, a History of Ordained Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church*, Oregon, 1989.
- POWER, DAVID, *The Eucharistic Mystery, Revitalizing the Tradition*, Dublin, 1992.
- , "Priesthood Revisited: Mission and Ministries in the Royal Priesthood", *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Lay and Ordained Ministry*, Ed. WOOD, S. K., Collegeville Minnesota, 2003, pp. 87-120.
- , "Representing Christ in the Community and Sacrament", *Being a Priest Today*, Ed. GOERGEN, D., Collegeville, Minnesota, 1992, pp. 97-123.
- , *Sacrament: The Language of God's Giving*, New York, 1999.
- , *Unsearchable Riches: The Symbolic Nature of the Liturgy*, New York, 1984.

POWER, DERMOT, *A Spiritual Theology of the Priesthood: The Mystery of Christ and the Mission of the Priest*, Washington, D.C., 1998.

RAHNER, K., "Consecration in the Life and Reflection of the Church", *Theological Investigations Volume 19*, New York, 1983.

---, *Foundations of Christian Faith, an Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, New York, 1985.

---, "Grace (Theological)", *Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, Ed. RAHNER, K., London, 1975, pp. 587-595.

---, "Reflections on the Unity of the Love of Neighbour and the Love of God", *Theological Investigations*. Vol. 6, London, 1969. 231-249.

---, "Theology and Spirituality of Pastoral Work in the Parish", *Theological Investigations Volume 19*, New York, 1983, pp. 87-102.

---, *The Trinity*, Trans, DONCEEL, J., English ed, London, 1970.

SCHILLEBEECKX, E., *Christ, the Sacrament of the Encounter with God*, New York,, 1963.

---, *The Church with a Human Face, a New and Expanded Theology of Ministry*, London, 1985.

---, *Ministry: A Case for Change*, Kerkelijk ambt, London, 1981.

WOOD, S. K., ed. *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Lay and Ordained Ministries*, Collegeville, Minnesota, 2003.

---, "Presbyteral Identity within Parish Identity", *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood*, Ed. WOOD, S. K., Collegeville Minnesota, 2003, pp. 175-194.

---, "Priestly Identity: Sacrament of the Ecclesial Community", *Worship* 69, March (1995), pp. 109-127.

---, *Sacramental Orders*, Lex Orandi, Ed. LAURANCE, J. D., Collegeville Minnesota, 2000.

3. Auxiliary Authors

AQUINAS, T., *Summa Theologiae*, Blackfriars Edition, London and New York, 1975.

ARNAU, R., *Orden Y Ministerios*, Madrid, 1995.

ASCHEBRENNER, G. A., *Quickening the Fire in Our Midst: The Challenge of Diocesan Priestly Spirituality*, Chicago, 2002.

- ASHLEY, B. M., "The Priesthood of Christ, the Baptised and the Ordained", *The Theology of the Priesthood*, Ed. GOERGEN, D. G. A., Collegeville, Minnesota, 2000, pp. 139-164.
- BEECK, F. J. V., "Trinitarian Theology as Participation", *The Trinity*, Ed. DAVIS, S. T., Oxford, 1999, pp. 295-325.
- BROWN, R. E., *The Gospel According to John (1-12)*, Anchor Bible, London, 1966.
- , *Priest and Bishop: Biblical Reflections*, New York, 1970.
- BRUCE, S., *God Is Dead, Secularization in the West*, Religion in the Modern World, Malden, Oxford, 2002.
- COZZENS, D. B., *The Changing Face of the Priesthood: A Reflection on the Priest's Crisis of Soul*, Collegeville, Minn., 2000.
- , *Sacred Silence: Denial and the Crisis in the Church*, Collegeville, Minn., 2002.
- COWAN, M. A., *Alternative Futures for Worship Volume 6: Leadership in Community*, Alternative Futures for Worship, Ed. LEE, B. J., Collegeville, Minnesota, 1987.
- FAHEY, M., "In Memoriam: Edward J. Kilmartin, S.J. (1923-1994)", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 61 (1995), pp. 5-18.
- FERRARA, D. M., "In Persona Christi: Towards a Second Naivete", *Theological Studies* 57, March (1996), pp. 65-88.
- , "Representation or Self-Effacement: The Axiom in Persona Christi in St. Thomas and the Magisterium", *Theological Studies* 55, June (1994), pp. 195-224.
- FORD, D., *Self and Salvation: Being Transformed*, Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine 1, Cambridge ; New York, 1999.
- GALOT, J., *Theology of the Priesthood*, San Francisco, 1985.
- GAILLARDETZ, R., "The Ecclesiological Foundations of Ministry within an Ordered Communion", *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood*, Ed. WOOD, S. K., Collegeville Minnesota, 2003, pp. 26-51.
- GOERGEN, D. & GARRIDO, A. eds., *Theology of the Priesthood*, Collegeville, Minnesota, 2000.
- GRESHAKE, G., *Ser Sacerdote*, Priestersein, Trans, GAZTELUMENDI, M. O., Salamanca, 1996.

HOGUE, D. R., WENGER, JACQUELINE E., *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood, Changes from Vatican 2 to the Turn of the Century*, Collegeville, Minnesota, 2003.

KASPER, W., *Jesus the Christ*, London, 1976.

KERKHOFS, J., ed. *Europe without Priests?*, London, 1995.

LADARIA, L., "La Teologia Trinitaria De Karl Rahner", *Gregorianum* 86/2 (2005), pp. 276-307.

LOUDEN, S. H., FRANCIS, LESLIE J., *The Naked Parish Priest, What Priests Really Think They Are Doing*, London and New York, 2003.

MAGNUSEN CHAPP, C. M., *Encounter with the Triune God: An Introduction to the Theology of Edward J. Kilmartin*, San Francisco, 1998.

MARION, J.-L., *God without Being*, Chicago, 1991.

MARTINA, G., "The Historical Context in Which the Idea of a New Ecumenical Council Was Born", Trans. LESLIE, W., *Vatican 2: Assessment and Perspectives: Twenty-Five Years After.*, Ed. LATOURELLE, R. Vol. 1, New York, 1988, pp. 3-74.

MEYER, J. R., "Coordinating the Immanent and Economic Trinity", *Gregorianum* 86,2 (2005), pp. 235-253.

MOLNAR, P. D., "Deus Trinitas: Some Dogmatic Implications of David Coffey's Biblical Approach to the Trinity", *Irish Theological Quarterly* 67 (2002), pp. 33-54.

NICOLAU, M., *Sacerdotes Y Religiosas Segun El Vaticano 2*, Madrid, 1968.

O'DONNELL, J., "Karl Rahner on Easter Faith", *Gregorianum* 86/2 (2005), pp. 357-367.

O'MEARA, T. F., *Theology of Ministry*, Revised ed, New York, 1999.

PHILIBERT, P., ed. "Issues for a Theology of the Priesthood: Status Report", *Theology of The Priesthood*, ED. GOERGEN, D., GARRIDO, A., Collegeville, Minnesota, 2000, pp. 1-42.

---, *Steward of God's Mysteries: Priestly Spirituality in a Changing Church*, Collegeville, Minnesota, 2004.

ROSATO, P. J., "Priesthood of the Baptised and Priesthood of the Ordained, Complimentary Approaches to Their Interrelation", *Gregorianum* 68, 1-2 (1987), pp. 215-266.

SCHWARZ, C., ed. *The Chambers Dictionary*, Edinburgh, 1993.

SULLIVAN, F. A., *From Apostles to Bishops: The Development of Episcopacy in the Early Church*, New York, 2001.

---, *Magisterium, Teaching Authority in the Catholic Church*, New York, 1983.

TANNER, N. P., *The Church and the World: Gaudium Et Spes, Inter Mirifica*, New York, 2005.

TAYLOR, C., *The Ethics of Authenticity, The Malaise of Modernity*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1991.

---, *Sources of the Self, the Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge, 1989.

TRACY, D., "Trinitarian Speculation and the Forms of Divine Disclosure", *The Trinity*, Ed. DAVIS, S. T., Oxford, 1999, pp. 273-293.

VORGRIMLER, H., *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican 2*, Ed. VORGRIMLER, H., Vols. 1- 5, New York and London, 1969.

WHITEHEAD, E. E., "Leadership and Power: A View from the Social Sciences", *Alternative Futures for Worship, Volume 6, Leadership Ministry in Community*, Ed. COWAN, M. A. Vol. 6, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1987, pp. 39-68.

WHITEHEAD, J. D., "Stewardship: The Disciple Becomes a Leader", *Alternative Futures for Worship Volume 6, Leadership Ministry in Community 6* (1987), pp. 69-80.