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ON PRIESTLY HOLINESS*

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The priesthood is one of the favorite topics of Fr. Catalino Arévalo, S.J.[1] We intend to explain this short statement about priestly holiness as clearly as possible: The configuration to the Christ-Shepherd and the constant exercise of ministerial functions of preaching, sanctifying and pastoral care constitute the source and the requirement for the holiness of the priest, who as such is called to reach the summits of the mystical experiences of divine love.

[1]Fr. Arévalo dealt with the theology of priesthood since his doctoral thesis on the "Collegio Romano in [the] 19th century" (1959), but he published *The Priest and the Priesthood after Vatican II* (Quezon City: Loyola House of Studies) in 1971. See also, by Arévalo, *Evangelization in Asia Today* (Quezon City: Loyola School of Theology, 1974) and *And they shall Name Him Emmanuel* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1999).

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Introduction: A Distinct Priestly Holiness

Holiness is a category that we apply only to *persons*. If we say that *things* are holy they are considered as such in relationship with persons. We could describe the notion of holiness like this: the perfect coincidence between being and action of the person that prevents any kind of voluntary failure, and shows the truth of his sanctified being in God and the fullness of his shining bounty.

This holy fullness exists in an absolute and eternal manner only in the three persons of the Most Holy Trinity and their eternal charity. In a derived and shared way, holiness exists also in angels and blessed humans in heaven for ever. Amidst the risk, and with the possibility of increasing, holiness is also present in Christians and human persons during their earthly pilgrimage.

In the History of Salvation, whose summit is the Paschal Mystery of Christ, holiness of human persons appears first as the grace that forgives sins and grants the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit, with the new dynamism of adoptive sonship. It is called to develop according to the measure of God's grace with the complete collaboration of the person.

Christian holiness is first ontological—the grace of justification that follows faith and baptism—but it is also ethical through the conscious and persevering answer to the first and succeeding graces in order to reach the fullness of charity.[2] We shall not touch the aspect of the holiness outside of Christianity.[3]

We shall give the biblical and traditional answer to these questions with regard to the present conditions of the priest, especially focusing on Vatican II positions.

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[2]"The followers of Christ, called by God … have been made sons and daughters of God by the baptism of faith and partakers of the divine nature, and so are truly sanctified. They must therefore hold on to and perfect in their lives that holiness which they have received from God" (*Lumen gentium* 40).

[3]This aspect has attired the attention of theologians in recent times. As an example, we quote "Mysticism in Christianity and other Religions," *Studia Missionalia* 26, special issue (Gregorian University Press, 1977).

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Biblical Foundations

Holiness is one of the key concepts of the Old Testament not only in regard to God, but also in regard to Israel, the People of God. Holiness especially embraces persons, times, places and objects. In *Leviticus,* "basically holiness means the mysterious *transcendence* of God, which is absolutely distinct, incomparable, ineffable, and inaccessible to man."[4]

However, we can say that in general the Bible, far from reducing its message to separation or transcendence, includes in the divine holiness the entire richness and life possessed by God, his power and mercy. Holiness is more than just one attribute among others; rather, it is the entire characteristic of God in himself—so his Name is Saint (Ps. 34:21; Am. 2:7; Ex. 3:14), the Lord swears by his own holiness (Am. 4:2).[5]

But God will reveal and shine his holiness in the election of Israel: "The Lord spoke to Moses and said: 'Speak to the whole community of Israelites and say: Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy'" (Lev. 19:1–2). This election gives to Israel the prerogative to be a "holy nation" (Ex. 19:6; 33:12–17) and demands ritual purification for holy worship, and also moral observance of the Law that sanctifies the heart. This twofold dimension on the one hand explains the multiple prescriptions about purity (Lev. 11–16), and on the other the call to the "Law of holiness" (Lev. 17–20) and the words of the prophets (Is. 1:4–20; Ps. 50).

In this context we understand very well the rules of holiness concerning the priests (Lev. 21:1–22)[6] in general and particularly the high priest (Lev. 16f). Let us quote some significant texts about priests:

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[4]See Introduction to the *Leviticus,* in *Traduction œcuménique de la Bible* (*TOB*) (Paris: Cerf, 1988).

[5]Cf. J. de Vaux, "Holy," in X. Leon-Dufour, ed., *Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Pasay City: Paulines, 1998), 236–237.

[6]"Priests have the task of putting the people in contact with the living and holy God. So they must avoid as [much as] possible the contact with death and the profane defiled things (Lev 21: 1–15). In this perspective, an infirm member of a priestly family must be excluded for ever from the priestly exercise (21:

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> Speak to Aaron and his sons. They must be consecrated by the holy offerings of the Israelites and must not profane my holy name; for my sake they must sanctify it; I am the Lord. (Lev. 22:1–2)

To the high priest:

> The Lord spoke to Moses and said: Tell Aaron your brother that he may not enter the sanctuary inside the curtain in front of the mercy-seat on the ark whenever he chooses, in which case he incurs death, for I appear in a cloud on the mercy-seat. (Lev. 16:2)

The sense of the necessity of holiness for priests appears very evidently through the description of the sins of the sons of Eli, the high priest of the shrine of Silo, and in their punishment (1 Sam. 4:11). Indeed, they sent servants to collect the uncooked meat (against Lev. 3:3–5, 9–11, 14–16), and they slept with the women at the entrance to the tent of meeting (1 Sam. 2:22). The text comments: "The young men's sin was very great in the Lord's eyes, because they treated with contempt the offering made to the Lord" (1 Sam. 2:17).

Similarly, kings and prophets and other great personages in Israel ought to show themselves worthy of their function through the holiness of their life and their fidelity to their mission (Ps. 101).

In summary, we can say that God, *The Holy* par excellence, by election and covenant made Israel as a "holy People" (Ex. 19:5–6). The ceremonial prescriptions intend the fulfillment of the moral holiness of the Law, and that is constantly recalled by the prophets (Is. 1:4–20). The High Priest, Priests and Levites have particular obligations toward the law of holiness.[7]

In the New Testament, let us first recall the holiness of *Jesus*. In fact, since his conception we hear: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and

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15–24), and it is forbidden to the priest in [an] impure state [to consume] the holy offerings (22: 1–16)" (*TOB,* in Lev. 21:1).

[7]J. Jeremias explains in detail the risk of the High Priest on the Day of Expiation during the times of the New Testament (cf. *Jerusalem in the Times of Jesus* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishing, 1975]). See Rita J. Burns, *Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1983).

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the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be *holy*; he will be called Son of God" (Lk. 1:35).

Anointed by the Spirit at his baptism (Acts 10:38), proclaimed "beloved Son" (Lk. 3:22) and called "Holy One of God" (Mk. 1:24), Jesus crosses paths doing good (Mk. 7:37), and could claim, before the Jews, "Which of you convicts me of sin?" (Jn. 8:46).

The holiness of Jesus appears then not only under the moral aspect—the man who is good in his deeds—but especially under the ontological and exemplary aspect of his being. He is holy in his being and the source of holiness in his mission to apostles and men:

> *Sanctify* them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I *sanctify* myself, so that they also may be *sanctified* in truth. (Jn. 17:17–19)[8]

Seated at the right hand of the Father, he is truly called "the *Holy*" (Rev. 3:7; 6:10) and the faithful proclaim him "*holy* servant of God" (Acts 4:27), "the *Holy*" and "the Righteous" (Acts 3:14).

In his Paschal Mystery, Christ constitutes the source of human sanctification (cf. Rom. 6:1–11 with allusions to the baptism); the Holy Spirit sent by him at Pentecost becomes the main cause of Christian sanctification.

> You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. (Acts 1:5)

> But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. (Rom. 8:9)

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[8]The consecration-sanctification is the work of the Father (Jn. 17:11). The instrument of this sanctification is the truth of God which is manifested in the incarnate Word. The consecration-sanctification renders the disciples capable for mission because it puts them aside but without retiring them from the world. The consecration to God engages the whole being and action of man. It involves the oblation of the death. Jesus expresses the will of freely offering his life for the consecration of his disciples—"priestly prayer." Finally, the sanctification of the disciples is based on the sacrifice of the Cross and in the gift of the Spirit by the glorious Christ (Cf. *TOB,* in Jn. 17:17–19).

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> But you have been anointed by the Holy One. (1 Jn. 2:19).

Suitably, the New Testament calls Christians the *holy ones*: "To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be *saints*" (Rom. 1:7).[9] Therefore, we have the expression in the second letter of Peter: "You may become *participants in the divine nature*" (1:4).

In addition, Paul stresses very well the passive aspect of the gift we receive for our sanctification, and also the active aspect, i.e., the answer of the Christian putting in practice the virtues that assimilate him to Christ by the dynamism of the Spirit:

> … Clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and *holiness.* (Eph. 4:24)

> I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Eph. 4:1–3)

But the fullness of sanctity of the People of God will appear only in the "holy city" (Rev. 21:2), the heavenly Jerusalem, where every impurity and defilement will be excluded (Rev. 21–22) and the hymn to the holiness of God will be lifted up by the renewed creation (Is. 6:3; Rev. 4:8).

Within the general sight of Christian holiness with baptismal roots, what can we say about the holiness of the ministers of the New Covenant?

Jesus called twelve apostles from among his disciples and he instructed them in a particular way with his teachings. He proposed to them an ideal of holiness that overcomes the Jewish practices of purity that were often marked with abhorrent hypocrisy (cf. Mt. 5:20).[10]

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[9]See also Acts 9:13; 20:32; 1 Cor. 14:33.

[10]Regarding the seven maledictions against the hypocrisy of Pharisees and Scribes (Mt. 23), Fr. C. Spicq writes:

> Never have we seen Jesus at such [a] point of rage. Why? First, because the focused hypocrisy belongs to the doctors of the Law and they

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Jesus makes his apostles witnesses of his miracles and appoints them co-workers in the preaching of the Kingdom. He draws them to a radical fidelity to their mission, and demands of them the giving up of all earthly goods and the confident following of the Master (cf. Mt. 10).

The last supper and the subsequent events—Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and Pentecost—have extraordinary significance for the apostles. These culminate in their first vocation to be set apart for the Lord. In the apostolic ministry, Christ entrusts them with the true sanctification of their beings for the goal of their mission. The words of Jesus quoted above can be especially applied to the apostles: "And for their sakes I *sanctify* myself, so that they also may be *sanctified* in truth" (Jn. 17:17–19).

Let us give some samples.

Above all, the Apostles must assure "prayer and the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4).

Peter traces an image of the apostle in his first letter. Certainly it matches with his life:

> Now as an elder—"presbyter"—myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God

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> are supreme[ly] responsible; but they do not enter the Kingdom and they prevent the people that would like to enter. They put their own authority instead of God's authority and make his disciples worthy of the Gehenna. Moreover, they talk and they do not act. They do not observe the prescriptions they impose [on] others. They are impostors. In addition, full of malice, and spite of fine appearance, their innermost is dirty like the sepulchers with bones and dirtiness. Finally, and above all, these hypocrites are godless; they accomplish the legal rites but Isaiah had good prophesized: 'These people draw near with their mouths and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me.' This is the point! Pharisees represent the sclerosis of revealed religion, a cult of the Law which is against the New Covenant, i.e. a lived in the Holy Spirit religion …. (under "Hypocrisy," in *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994])

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> would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but [be] examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away. (1 Pt. 4:1–4)

Paul feels himself called to be an apostle (Rom. 1:1), "to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God" (Rom. 15:16). In the midst of the trials of his ministry, he boasts: "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace towards me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any other of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me" (1 Cor. 15:10).

Paul considers himself "minister of Christ and steward of God's mysteries" (1 Cor. 4: 1). He opposes the snares of Satan (2 Cor. 12: 7–10). He completes in his body the sufferings of Christ for the Church (Col. 1:24) and he does not hesitate to claim: "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). His testament is still a confession of faithfulness to his ministry: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7). Even his discourse of farewell to the presbyters of Ephesus becomes a witness of the holiness of his apostolic ministry (Acts 20:17–35).

From the ministers after the apostles we find similar statements: the granted ministry is holy and demands personal virtues, thus in the election of Matthias (Acts 1:15–16) and in the election of deacons (Acts 6:1–6).

The pastoral letters draw up the image of the ministers of the Church: bishops, presbyters and deacons, and the moral qualities and charity demanded by the exercise of the ministry (1 Tim. 3:1–7; Titus 1:7–9; 1 Tim. 5:17–21; Titus 1:5–6; 1 Tim. 3:8–13).

Nevertheless, the foundation is the "spiritual gift" (*charisma*): "I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands" (1 Tim. 1:6). This demands the attentive choice of future ministers: "Do not ordain—lay hands on—anyone hastily, and do not participate in the sins of others" (1 Tim. 5:22).

On ministerial holiness, Fr. C. Spicq writes:

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> If simple Christians are able to make the beauty of Christianity shine and then to argue in favor of the truth of their faith, all the more the priest who is in a prominent place as the house [on] the top of a mountain. He cannot remain hidden from the sight of people. Thus, he is capable of preaching through the holiness of his life Jesus' doctrine and morals.
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> Beholding his life the people will indeed understand the divine revelation or they will perceive a caricature. If he lives like his Master who was always going truth (Jo 10: 31) he can be sure of removing objections and dissipating critiques. He will draw many souls to faith. The beautiful life is the first means for the conversion of world.[11]

Tradition and Magisterium

We cannot make a complete journey through patristic sources on priestly holiness. We will be content in pointing to some examples within the uninterrupted Catholic tradition.

We already find excellent descriptions of Episcopal holiness in the letter of Ignatius of Antioch to Polycarp.[12] In the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus of Rome it is written that ministers must be "blamelessly and in purity of heart."[13]

A clear example of the care for priestly holiness in the Ancient Church is given to us by some disciplinary canons of the Council of Nicaea (325). In regard to the clergy we find these aspects: castration (canon 1),[14] neophytes and ministry (canon 2),[15] on women who abide

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[11]Translated by author from Ceslas Spicq, *Spiritualité sacerdotale d'après Saint Paul* (Paris: Cerf, 1949), 199.

[12]*The Epistles of St Clement of Rome and St Ignatius of Antioch*, Ancient Christian Writers, trans. James A. Kleist (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1961), 96–99.

[13]See Gregory Dix, ed., *The Treatise on Apostolic Tradition of St Hippolytus of Rome* (London: SPCK, 1968), 18.

[14]See N.P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* Vol. 1 (Washington: Sheed & Ward/Georgetown University Press, 1990), 6. Remember the problem of Origen.

[15]*Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*. Remember the problem of Cyprian of Carthage, who was elected bishop a short time after baptism.

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with clerics (canon 3),[16] on ministers who were promoted without examination (canon 9),[17] on the apostates during persecution who later were promoted to orders (canon 10),[18] on the clerics who are moving from city to city (canon 15), on those who do not abide in the churches where they have been assigned (canon 16),[19] and the clerics who loan with interest (canon 17).[20]

In a yet young Church (although established throughout the Roman Empire), these canons show on the one hand the care of the Church for the holiness of her ministers, and on the other hand the virtues that were mostly lacking in the clergy: humility, chastity, fidelity, and justice.[21]

We have preserved some patristic homilies for the day of the ordination or for its anniversary. They are living witness in favor of priestly holiness.

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[16]Only a mother, sister, aunt or a woman exempt of all suspicion are allowed (cf. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils,* 7).

[17]It deals with the moral quality of the candidates. If they later confess their sins, they must be excluded according to the ecclesiastical law (cf. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 10).

[18]Cf. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 11.

[19]These two canons are similar. They demand the stability of the ministers (cf. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 13).

[20]The canon is very strict:

> Since many enrolled (among the clergy) have been induced by greed and avarice to forget the sacred text, "who does not put our money at interest," and to charge one per cent (a month) on loans, this holy and great synod judges that if any are found after this decision to receive interest by contracts or to transact the business in any other way or to charge (a flat rate of) fifty per cent or in general to devise any other contrivance for the sake of dishonorable gain, they shall be deposed from the clergy and their names struck from the roll. (*Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 14)

That should be usury.

[21]See J. Gaudemet, "L'Ordre dans la legislation conciliaire de l'Antiquité," in *Etudes sur le Sacrement de l'Ordre* (Paris: Cerf, 1957), 233–256.

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Thus, we still possess the homily of the priestly ordination of John Chrysostom (Antioch, 386). The newly-ordained praises his bishop, Flavianus, and concludes asking for prayers for himself: "Since we are given this heavy and grave yoke, copious hands must lift in prayer that we may render to the Lord intact the content that was entrusted to me on this day [or 'be raised in prayer that we may render to the Lord intact, the deposit entrusted to me on this day']."[22] Similarly we have some homilies of Augustine for the anniversary of his Episcopal ordination.[23] From Leo the Great, we keep sermons uttered at the occasion of his episcopate. He stresses the grace of the priesthood: "The Church welcomes as leaders those whom the Holy Spirit has prepared. Therefore, in the priestly and royal people adopted by God it is not an earthly privilege that leads to the anointing, but the worthiness of the above grace that begets the priest."[24]

At the beginning of the Middle Ages, Gregory the Great wonderfully explains the struggle for holiness of the good shepherd.[25] Let us recall the "Gregorian Reform" in the 11th century, so called in honor of Saint Gregory VII. Its origin is, however, in the Benedictine reform of Cluny (910) and in the attempts of the Roman pontificate since Pope Leo IX and other Popes, with the significant help of Saint Peter Damian (†1072). We recall that one of the works of this doctor of the Church is the *Liber Gomorrhianus*, about the sexual sins of the clergy.[26] In fact, the reform focused above all on concubinage, simony (payment for ecclesiastical charges), and investiture (the choice of

[22]The complete doctrine of Chrysostom is to be found in his treatise *De Sacerdotio,* and also in his homilies on the Letter to Hebrews.

[23]Patrick Chauvet, ed., *Sacerdoce des baptisés, sacerdoce des prêtres. Textes de l'antiquité chrétienne* (Paris: Migne, 1991), 79.

[24]Cf. Chauvet, *Sacerdoce des baptisés, sacerdoce des prêtres. Textes de l'antiquité chrétienne*, 84–92.

[25]We refer to Gregory's homily on Ezekiel that has been chosen as a reading for his feast in the Breviary (September 3), but we also point to his classical book on priestly concerns, the *Regula Pastoralis.*

[26]Cf. *Book of Gomorrah: An Eleventh-century Treatise against Clerical Homosexuality Practices*, trans. P.J. Payer (Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University, 1982).

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the hierarchy by the kings and nobles of the time). Through councils and sanctions, the reform was very effective. Later on, we have the foundation of the Cistercian Order and their champion St. Bernard of Clairvaux (†1153). He was very attentive to all kind of priestly defects and sins. Among his works we have *On the conduct and duties of Bishops*.

In the 13th century, the new mendicant Orders will deepen the reform of the Church under different aspects, and, being mostly clerical, they will influence the improvement of the spirituality of the clergy and the pastoral ministry. As a sample of his period we study a fragment of the Testament of Saint Francis of Assisi:

> And the Lord gave me such faith in churches that I prayed simply, saying, "I adore you, Lord Jesus Christ, with all your churches throughout the world, and we bless you because you redeemed the world through your holy cross." Later God gave me and still gives me such faith in *priests* who live according to the form of the Holy Roman Church that even if they persecuted me I would still run back to them, because of their position. And if I had all the wisdom of Solomon and came upon some poor little *priests* in their parishes, I would preach there only if they wished me to do so. And I want to fear, love and honor these and all others as my *lords*. And I do not even want to think about there being any sin in them, because I see the Son of God in them and they are my *lords*. And I do this because in this world I physically see the most high Son of God only in his most holy body and blood, which they receive and they alone administer to others.[27]

This vision of the priest from faith and focusing on the Eucharist will pervade the spirituality of this period. Beyond the falls of the clergy, this Franciscan devotion will help the people of God to keep their trust in their pastors. In fact, we will find the same spirit in a very difficult and somehow dissolute moment of the 14th century, when the Popes were in Avignon and Saint Catherine of Siena strove for their return to Rome. Again, the scandals in clergy life were frequent and public. Catherine showed boldness in decrying them, but with a very deep sense of their dignity and respect. Let us see this sample of a

[27]Paul Halsall, *Medieval Sourcebook: Testament of St Francis of Assisi* (January 1996), http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/stfran-test.html (accessed July 28, 2013).

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letter addressed to Gerard du Puy, relative of Gregory XI and Papal Legate to Tuscany:

> In reply to the first of the three things you ask me, I will say that I believe that our sweet Christ on earth should do away entirely with two things which ravage the Bride of Christ. The first is the over-great tenderness and care for relatives, which ought to be entirely mortified. The other is that excessive good nature which is founded on too great mercy …. Christ holds three vices as especially evil—impurity, avarice, and swollen pride, which reign in the Bride of Christ among the prelates, who care for nothing but luxuries and honors and vast riches. A strong justice is needed to correct them, for too great pity is the greatest cruelty. As to the other question, I say: When I told you that you should toil for Holy Church, I was not thinking only of the labors you should assume about temporal things, but chiefly that you and the Holy Father ought to toil and do what you can to get rid of the wolfish shepherds who care for nothing but eating and fine palaces and big horses. Oh my that which Christ won upon the wood of the Cross is spent with harlots! I beg that if you were to die for it, you tell the Holy Father to put an end to such iniquities. And when the time comes to make priests or cardinals, let them not be chosen through flatteries or moneys or simony; but beg him, as far as you can, that he notice well if virtue and a good and holy fame are found in the man; and let him not prefer a gentleman to a tradesman, for virtue is the thing that makes a man gentle.[28]

Another very important step in the reform of the clergy is found after the Protestant Reformation, in the foundation of the "Clerks Regular." This is a vast movement in the Church of the 16th century. The first example is the Order of Theatines, followed by the Barnabites, Somaschi, Jesuits, Caracciolini, Camillians, and Piarists, and especially the Society of Jesus. This is a new form of religious consecration in which to be in community under a Rule and with the religious vows is the way to support the priestly ministry in its original splendor and apostolic effectiveness. These clerics, sometimes called "reformed priests," contributed to the formation of new patterns for the Catholic

[28]Vida Dutton Scudder, ed. & trans., *Saint Catherine of Siena as Seen in Her Letters* (London/New York: J.M. Dent and E.P. Dutton, 1905), www.onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/gutbook/lookup?num=7403 (accessed July 28, 2013).

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Priesthood.[29] In Spain, we have the important attempts St. John of Avila for priestly spirituality.[30] In a global way, we stress the institution of Seminaries for priestly formation by the Council of Trent. The decree is from 1563, during the 23rd session. We should underscore the first paragraph of this important decree:

> Whereas the age of youth, unless it be rightly trained, is prone to follow after the pleasures of the world; and unless it be formed, from its *tender years*, unto piety and religion, before habits of vice have taken possession of the whole man, it never will perfectly, and without the greatest, and well-nigh special, help of Almighty God, persevere in *ecclesiastical discipline*; the holy Synod ordains, that all cathedral, metropolitan, and other churches greater than these, shall be bound, each according to its means and the extent of the diocese, to maintain, to educate religiously, and to train in ecclesiastical discipline, a certain *number of youths* of their city and diocese, or, if that number cannot be met there, of that province, in a *college* to be chosen by the bishop for this purpose near the said churches, or in some other suitable place. Into this college shall be received such as are at least twelve years old, born in lawful wedlock, and who know how to read and write competently, and whose *character and inclination* afford a hope that they will always serve in the *ecclesiastical ministry*.[31]

We underline the "tender age" (since twelve years old), the moral purpose of the training and education (avoid vices and foster the ecclesiastical discipline), the previous preparation in studies, and the good character and inclination.

The implementation of this decree took much time, and we find important differences according to countries. Italy tried to be the first, and important personalities like St. Charles Borromeo were appointed by Pius IV for this mission. Among the characteristic saints and institutions that shaped the ideal pattern of Catholic priesthood

[29]Cf. Luis De Diego, *La opción sacerdotal de Ignacio de Loyola y sus compañeros (15-15-1540)* (Caracas: Centrum Ignatianum, Universidad Catolica Andres Bello, 1975).

[30]See John of Avila, *Escritos sacerdotales* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1969).

[31]http://www.the counciloftrent/ch.23.htm (accessed Sept. 11, 2013).

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in these centuries after Trent, we count first in Rome St. Philip Neri (1515–1595) and his Oratory, with very flexible structures but a high quality of priestly holiness. In fact, he became the "confessor" of the city and his pedagogical and artistic activities contributed in a deep way to the Catholic Reformation.[32] His Eucharistic celebration was often interrupted by ecstasies of love, and thus took considerable time. But these high mystical graces were lived by him in a very simple and almost humorous way.[33]

A little later, in France, we note the foundation of the French Oratory by Cardinal Pierre de Bérulle (1575–1629). In fact, this fervent priest introduced the Carmelite Reform in France with enormous success. In 1611, he founded the French Oratory of Jesus and Mary. This was not a religious order, but a society of priests that lived in community under some Rules while remaining diocesan clergy. They stressed the acts of ministry and they started the "popular missions" and schools. The intention was the holiness of priesthood. Success was enormous. We also observe a vast movement with other founders and congregations. We especially pay attention to St. John Eudes (1601–1680), a former Oratorian,[34] and also to Jean Jacques Olier (1608–1657), the founder of another priestly society, called Saint Sulpice, for the formation of seminarians. In fact, this society for centuries guaranteed the preparation of future priests in France and other countries.

In this same line, we have the impressive figure of St. Vincent de Paul (1581–1660). He was for a while under the spiritual direction of Bérulle, but later discovered his own vocation through direct contact with the poor and farmers in their extreme ignorance of

[32]Fr. Louis Bouyer, of the French Oratory, has written in his honor the book *La musica de Dio. San Filippo Neri* (Milan: Jaka Book, 1980). The best biography until now is the first one written by P. G. Bacci, and published in 1642.

[33]We have analyzed John of Avila, Ignatius of Loyola, and Philip Neri in the article "Situación de la espiritualidad sacerdotal en tiempos de Calasanz," *Analecta Calasanctiana* 50 (1083): 295–336.

[34]He is known in the Philippines through the Religious of the Good Shepherd that consider him their founder.

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faith.[35] His sacerdotal concern came also through his encounters with poorly-trained priests in the French countryside. A practical genius, he organized spiritual retreats for candidates to the priesthood, and even gave conferences for them. His style was always simple, rather moral, deeply spiritual and pastoral. With the Sulpicians, the so-called Lazaristes or Vincentians undertook the task of priestly formation since the 17th century.[36]

In the Philippines, their contribution to priestly formation is very noticeable. In fact, since their arrival in 1863, they took over the direction of many seminaries and formed the new generations of priests, at a time in which the Filipino dioceses were to increase in a very spectacular way.[37]

We can thus say that the Tridentine ideal of the priesthood was a reality in the Church through the efforts of a holy generation of Founders and Pastors at the grass-roots of the People of God.

After the turmoil of the French Revolution and its "Civil Constitution of the Clergy" (1790), we know the difficult situation of priests accepting the revolutionary oath and priests who refused it.[38] But in 1801, the Concordat between Napoleon and Pius VII changed the scene. We observe the restoration of old Orders and the foundation of new Congregations, especially with missionary purpose. The 19th century and the first half of the 20th century were again a great period of priestly spirituality in Europe. Spain, for example, saw the foundation of the "Hermandad de Operarios Diocesanos" by Blessed Manuel Domingo y Sol in 1883. This "Fraternity" tries to be at the service of priestly formation in Spain and other Spanish-speaking countries.

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[35]The best biography is André Dodin, *Saint Vincent de Paul and Charity* (La Rochelle, New York: New City Press, 1993).

[36]For the situation in France, see Y. Krumenacker, *L'école française de spiritualité* (Paris: Cerf, 1999).

[37]We have the excellent study of Rolando Dela Goza and Jesus M. Cavanna, *Vincentians in the Philippines* (Manila: Adamson University, 1985).

[38]"Mutatis mutandis"—that should be the situation of Chinese clergy after the creation of the Patriotic Church.

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In recent times, the Roman Pontiffs showed special attention to priestly spirituality. We give the list of the most important documents with this purpose: Pius X, *Haerent animo* (1908), Pius XI, *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii* (1935), Pius XII, *Menti nostrae* (1950), and John XXIII, *Sacerdotii nostri Primordia* (1959).[39] But now let us explain the horizon of priestly holiness in the Council Vatican II, namely in *Presbyterorum Ordinis*.

Vatican II and Priestly Holiness: A Synthesis

Vatican II issued the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests on December 7, 1965. We intend to present only three paragraphs of chapter three: "The Life of Priests." The sub-titles are eloquent: n. 1: "Priests' Call to Perfection," n. 12: "Call of Priests to Holiness," n. 13: "The Exercise of the Threefold Priestly Function both Demands and Fosters Holiness," and n. 14: "Unity and Harmony of Priests."

"Priests' Call to Holiness" (n. 12)

Christian vocation to holiness has baptismal roots (LG 40). But the priest has a special title: he is consecrated to be a living instrument of Christ the Eternal Priest; therefore, he receives "particular graces":

> Since every priest in his own way assumes the person of Christ[40] he is endowed with a special grace. By this grace the priest, through his service of the people committed to his care and all the people of God, is able the better to pursue the perfection of Christ, whose place he takes. The human weakness of his flesh is remedied by the holiness of him who became for us a high priest "holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners" (Heb. 7:26). (PO 12)

This should be the ontological aspect of priestly holiness.

The priest must correspond to this grace of mortifying the flesh in order to foster the "perfect man" (Eph. 4:13). Hence, the virtues of

[39]The encyclical of Paul VI, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus* (1967), explains this specific point, even if it contains many spiritual advices.

[40]The council avoids the expression "alter Christus." Here, it explains the sacramental nature of this personal identification.

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humility and obedience (n. 15), celibacy (n. 16), and voluntary poverty (n. 17)[41] are especially stressed. This should be the moral aspect of priestly holiness.

How to Reach this Perfection? (n. 12,3 and 13)

"Through the exercise of the ministry of the Spirit and justice" (2 Cor. 3:8–9), the Council stresses first the liturgical acts of every day—namely the Eucharist and the Divine Office—but adds the entire ministry. It specifies the dimension of "ecclesial communion."

This is an essential point of our document, whose sources are in *Lumen Gentium* (no. 41, 3). Indeed, our chapter tries to develop in a systematic way "the exercise of the threefold priestly function that demands and together [fosters] holiness" (n. 13). Thus, the first source of priestly sanctification is the ministry of the Word of God—teaching, the second, the ministry of the sacraments and prayer—sanctifying, and finally, the pastoral ministry to the people of God—leading.

Preaching demands the reading of the Word (1 Tim. 4:15–16). We find the famous idea of St. Thomas's *contemplata aliis tradere* (to give the others your own contemplation).[42] The Council argues:

> By the keeping in mind that it is the Lord who opens hearts and that the excellence comes not from themselves but from the power of God, they will be more intimately united with Christ the Teacher and will be guided by his Spirit in the very act of teaching the word. (PO 13)[43]

The Eucharistic celebration leads the priest "to imitate the things he is accomplishing";[44] hence, we have the sacrificial aspect of the ministry, which was explicitly aimed at by the French School of spirituality.[45] The words of the Council are:

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[41]Observe the classical religious vows as virtues for the diocesan priest.

[42]*Summa Theologica* (S.T.) IIa–IIae, q. 188, a. 7.

[43]See also *Dei verbum* 25 and *Pastores dabo vobis* 26, 1.

[44]Formula of the ritual of ordination.

[45]The successor of Bérulle, Father de Condren excels in this aspect.

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> As they celebrate the mystery of the Lord's death they may take care to mortify their members from the vices and concupiscence (…). When priests unite themselves with the action of Christ the priest they daily offer themselves completely to God, and by being nourished with Christ's body they share in the charity of him who gives himself as food to the faithful. (PO 13)

The council alludes also to the sacrament of Penance and to the Divine Office.[46]

Lastly, the exercise of pastoral care is a source of priestly sanctification. Here again is the example of the Good Shepherd who leads until the sacrifice of his own life. But in a common way it demands

> the asceticism suited to pastors of souls, renouncing their own convenience, seeking not their own good, but that of the many, that they may be saved, always making further progress towards a more perfect fulfillment of their pastoral work and, where the need arises, are prepared to break new ground in pastoral methods under the guidance of the Spirit of love who breathes where he wills. (PO 13)[47]

The Council crowns this section with a paragraph dedicated to the "Unity and Harmony of Priests." In fact, the present demands of the

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[46]See *Pastores dabo vobis* 26, 4 and *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 83–87.

[47]The corresponding paragraph in *Pastores dabo vobis* is very complete:

> This *munus regendi* represents a very delicate and complex duty which, in addition to the attention which must be given to a variety of persons and their vocations, also involves the ability to coordinate all gifts and charisms which the Spirit inspires in the community, to discern them and to put them to good use for the up-building of the Church in constant union with the bishops. This ministry demands of the priest an intense spiritual life, filled with those qualities and virtues which are typical of a person who "presides over" and "leads" a community, of an "elder" in the noblest and richest sense of the word: qualities and virtues such as faithfulness, integrity, consistency, wisdom, a welcoming spirit, friendliness, goodness of heart, decisive firmness in essentials, freedom from overly subjective viewpoints, personal disinterestedness, patience, and enthusiasm for daily tasks, confidence in the value of the hidden working of grace as manifested in the simple and the poor. (26, 6)

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ministry makes priests "perplexed and distracted by the multiplicity of tasks facing them and may be very concerned about how they can unify their interior life and their program of external activity" (PO 14, 1). Beyond the "purely external organization"—the priestly agenda—and the "practice of exercises of piety," the council proposes the example of the unity of Christ in his messianic task: the accomplishment of the Father's work (Jn. 4:34). Here is the key text about this very deep vision of priestly existence:

> Priests will unify their lives by uniting themselves in recognition of the Father's will and in the gift of themselves to the flock entrusted to them. In this way, by adopting the role of the Good Shepherd they will find in the practice of the pastoral charity itself the bond of priestly perfection which will harmonize their lives and activity. (PO 14, 2)

The paragraph ends with an appeal to the evangelical discernment of pastoral activities by the priest and to the communion with the bishop and the presbyterium.

Let us consider also paragraph 18, "Helps for the Priest's Life." Overall, the text reflects the tradition of the Church: Bible, Eucharist, frequent sacramental Confession, devotion to the Virgin Mary, Eucharistic worship, spiritual direction, retreats, prayer and the spirit of adoration.

During the post-conciliar period, priestly spirituality has been dealt with by the Synod on priestly formation and thereafter by the exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* of John Paul II (March 25, 1992).[48] Pope John Paul II published in 1996 the history of his own priestly vocation. The English title is *Gift and Mystery: On the Fiftieth Anniversary of My Priestly Ordination.* It constitutes a living witness of priestly life.

Secularized civilization after Vatican II deeply affected the clergy especially in Western Europe and the United States. We do not intend

[48]The Congregation for the Clergy gave a *Directory for the Life and Ministry of Priests* in 1994 and later the document *The Priest, Teacher of the Word, Minister of the Sacrament and Guide of the Community toward the Third Christian Millennium* (1999). We do not intend here to deal with the abundant literature about the sexual abuses of priests that has pervaded the media during these last years.

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to describe the crisis and its possible sources. However, around the Jubilee Year 2000 and with the constant efforts of John Paul II (priestly ordinations during his journeys, letters to priests every Holy Thursday, World Day of Prayer for Vocations, etc.), we have been detecting a new situation in Latin America since the 1980's and a real flourishing of priestly spirituality in Asia and Africa. The meetings of the FABC through its Office of Education and Student Chaplaincy, published by Fr. Vicente G. Cajilig, OP, are eloquent in this sense: *Clergy of Asia: Lights and Shadows* (1997), *Clergy of Asia: More Lights than Shadows* (2001) and *Theology in Context: Forming Evangelizers* (2002) (Manila: University of Sto. Tomas Press). The "priestly year" (2009–2010) proclaimed by Benedict XVI on the 150th death anniversary of St. John Mary Vianney had the same purpose, and in spite of many scandals discovered during this time, it had a really good impact on the clergy of the world.

Theological Reflection

What should be the theological reasons for priestly holiness?

An appeal to the holiness of Christ, Messiah of God and Savior of man, will help us to explain these reasons in a concise way.

Christ is holy by his *being*, by his *acting*, and by his *shining*. The human nature of Christ was sanctified in a singular mode in its being, since the existence act of this human nature—its *esse*—is just the existence act of the Son of God, who personally assumes it. This is the *grace of the hypostatic union*.[49]

The human nature of Christ is holy in a unique way in its acting—*agere*—since all the human faculties of Jesus and all his actions belong to the divine person of the Word. Therefore, they are the perfect exercise of all moral virtues. This is the *sanctifying grace of Christ*.[50]

[49]Cf. S.T. III, q. 2, a. 6.

[50]Cf. S.T. III, a. 7, a. 9–11.

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The human nature of Christ is shining holiness in a unique way since it is the source of all sanctification. It is in Him and through Him that the Father will bless mankind and lead men and women to justification, holiness and eternal salvation. This is the *capital grace of Christ*, the Head of rescued humanity—*caput*—, and Spouse of his Church.[51]

Let us now apply this to the priest and *a fortiori* to the bishop.

By his ordination the priest is configured in his *being* according to Christ, Head and Shepherd of his Church. That means that the priestly character he received from the Holy Spirit is sanctifying him ontologically in order to accomplish his ministry. This is the perpetual gift of his ordination, and the sacred character of his person. The priest is already united to Christ through the ministerial participation in his priesthood.[52]

The priest must confirm this given holiness in his *actions*, i.e., in the exercise of his ministry that becomes source and exigency of holiness.[53]

In a specific way, the ministry of the Word demands and fosters the living assimilation of the message of the Christ-Prophet. The ministry of Sacraments demands and fosters the sacrificial attitude of total love that the Christ-Priest showed for the Father and mankind. The ministry of Pastoral Care demands and fosters the specific virtues of the Christ-Good Shepherd in his generosity to the faithful, filled with prudence, courage, moderation, justice, and responsibility.[54] This is the sanctifying grace of the priest. It must always grow through his fidelity to the current graces granted to him all through his pastoral ministry.

Finally, there is the pastoral *shining* of priestly holiness through his action. The essential efficacy of the ministerial acts in which the priest is pure instrument of grace—the sacraments—is granted by the Holy Spirit, and accordingly is beyond the personal holiness of

[51]Cf. S.T. III, q. 8, a. 5–6.

[52]Cf. *Pastores dobo vobis* 21–23 (and also 15, 5; 16, 5 and 18, 4).

[53]*Pastores dobo vobis* 24–25.

[54]*Pastores dobo vobis* 26.

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the minister. Nevertheless, the spiritual efficacy normally is the fruit of pastoral service and priestly witness and it is this that shines upon souls, drawing them to conversion, to sanctification and to apostolic commitment. This is the grace of the priest as instrument of Christ, Head of his Mystical Body.

We have to recall the distinction between the different "instrumentalities" according to the different ministerial acts. Only in sacraments does the minister have this privilege of acting "in persona Christi." In the ministry of the Word, neither the bishop as individual nor the priest has the charism of infallibility in their preaching.[55] Their homilies depend on their preparation. Similarly, in the pastoral dispositions and in the way of leading the flock, there is no absolute supernatural assistance. It is the prudence of the shepherd, with the prayer and help of the pastoral council and other canonical means, that will shape the living community of disciples. Therefore, in the ministries of preaching and governing, the responsibility falls on the priest, even as he can trust in the actual graces of the Lord and must humbly pray for them.

What can we say about possible weaknesses and sins of the priest?

The Church is holy, but she has sinful members. The priesthood is holy, but priests are subjects to temptations and sin.

Let us explain.

Studying the teachings of Cardinal C. Journet, we can say that the Church "which is not without sinners, is however without sin."[56] Indeed, sinners are such in spite of and against their belonging to the Church, which remains the holy and immaculate Spouse of Christ (Eph. 5:25–27), and, as such, is the sacramental source of sanctification in Christ.

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[55]This especial charism is reserved to the solemn acts of the Ecumenical Council—Episcopal college—and to some acts of the Roman Pontiff—*ex cathedra* teachings.

[56]Charles Journet, *L'Eglise du Verbe Incarné* Vol. II (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1962), 904.

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In an analogical way, we say that the priesthood is holy in spite of the sins of ordained priests.[57] Indeed, the priestly infidelities to the will of God are not at all consequences of the grace-given character, but they are voluntary contradictions to this grace. This places the conscience of the priest in a crucial dilemma: hypocrisy unto the stubbornness of the heart, or repentance and conversion.

However, we would like to make this very clear. We point to the conscious, free, voluntary, and grave transgression of God's Law, and to the attitude refusing conversion, as in the case in which sacramental confession is not possible (before the celebration of the Mass or other ministerial acts, for example). A liturgical celebration in the state of mortal sin constitutes a new sin specifically called sacrilege.

We thus understand the sublime synthesis of respect and deep regret that led the saints to sacrifice and intensive prayer during the periods of grave decay of priestly holiness.[58]

The priestly life is not called to the abyss of sin but to the summits of grace. What then can we say about priestly prayer? Is it not the privileged means in the itinerary of ministerial holiness?

Prayer belongs to the priestly ministry according to a specific explanation of Louis Bouyer.[59] The Church requires him to pray on her behalf in a precise and solemn way, and if possible even with the

[57]Historically, the common sins of the priests have been concubinage, simony, irresponsibility (absence), arrogance, and sometimes alcoholism. Some other abuses can be specific of regions or cultures, e.g., the ministry of exorcism with considerable income, the multiplication of Masses for economic reasons, the connivance with superstitions, etc.

[58]We focus on the figure of Catherine of Siena during the Avignon and Schism periods. In this time of sexual abuses of priests, I visited in Javier (Spain) the convent of the contemplative Oblates of Christ Priest. The superior was absolutely living this attitude of prayer and reparation, and declared to me that it is better for the Church to clear the situation and stop the scandals.

[59]"Le ministère de la prière," in *Le sens de la vie sacerdotale* (Tournai, Belgium: Desclée, 1960), 165–183.

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people of God. What, then, is the meaning of the Divine Office for deacons, priests and bishops?

Let us quote the *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*:

> The Liturgy of the Hours is entrusted to sacred ministers in such a special way that even when the faithful are not present it should be recited by individuals with the adaptations necessary under these circumstances. The Church commissions them to celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours in order that, at least in their persons, the duty of the whole community may be carried out regularly and reliably, and the prayer of Christ continue unceasingly in the Church.
>
> The bishop represents Christ in an eminent and visible way and is the high priest of his flock; the life in Christ of his faithful people may be said to derive from him and depend on him. He should then be the first of all the members of his Church in offering prayer. In the recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours his prayer is always in the name of the Church and on behalf of the Church entrusted to him. Priests, united as they are with the bishop and the whole presbyterium, are themselves representative in a special way of Christ the priest, and so share the same responsibility of praying to God for the people entrusted to them, and indeed for the whole world.
>
> All fulfill the ministry of the good Shepherd who prays for his sheep, that they may have life and so be brought into perfect unity. In the Liturgy of the Hours, which the Church sets before them, they are not only to find a source of devotion and a strengthening of personal prayer but must also nourish and foster pastoral and missionary action by abundant contemplation, and so bring joy to the whole Church of God.[60]

The reform of the Breviary by Vatican II—vernacular language, psalms distribution in a new translation, intercessions, biblical and patristic readings—rendered the Breviary a very well-adapted means for the ministry of priestly prayer.

Priestly prayer must also include silent meditation and contemplation to reach the summits of spiritual life. Let us introduce

[60] *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*, n. 28, in *The Liturgy of the Hours* I (Bangalore: N.B.C.L.C., 2005), 36–37. This new edition tried to correct the criticisms formulated against the classical Breviary edited by St. Pius V after the Council of Trent.

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a brief consideration on this aspect by following the teachings of the French School of Spirituality. In fact, its founder, Cardinal Pierre de Bérulle, put the summit of the spiritual life in the mystical passivity in Christ, according to the expression of Paul: "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:19–20).

> The passive state or the mystical union should be the normal universe of the priest. Indeed, only this state fits with the way in which the High Priest Jesus takes possession of his person through priestly ordination. When this mystical union between the function and the life is reached, the minister of Christ becomes priest not only through the exercise of his priestly power and the granted authority, but through the state and condition of his being and his interior and exterior life. His whole life becomes priestly since the everlasting Priest Jesus is all his life.[61]

Conclusion

In the logic of our exposition we could say that the personal and mature decision on proper sanctification would coincide with priestly ordination. Thus the sacrament becomes the personal acceptance of the priest's own spiritual path. Indeed, we ought to give our personal answer to the divine gift of God who is granting us a sharing in the eternal priesthood of his Son. The consciousness of this grace should stir the responsibility of avoiding its uselessness or sterility in us. Paul expresses this precise experience as he says: "So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:26–27).

The Fathers of the Church following St. Paul compare this struggle with the effort of athletes. Frequency in the sacrament of reconciliation, spiritual direction, retreats and recollections, spiritual readings, and deep dialogues with confreres of presbyterium can help foster perseverance in the spiritual fight.

[61]P. Cochois, *Bérulle et l'Ecole Française* (Paris: Seuil, 1963), 130.

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A journey through biblical and patristic tradition points, therefore, to priestly holiness as gift and as personal answer; movements of ecclesiastical reformation, new Orders and Institutes, and spiritual masters are constantly giving advices along the same lines. Vatican II and posterior documents until the last "Year of the Priest" unanimously work with the same intention. The Council specially focuses on the three aspects of the priestly ministry as sources and exigencies of holiness. This is somehow new and maybe the intention was to distinguish the active sanctification of a minister from the contemplative life of a monk. We tried to explain this threefold aspect in our study without forgetting the contemplative source and final goal of Christian life.

In a specific way, the Council stresses the responsibility of bishops for the sanctification of priests.

> Their priests (…) should be the objects of their particular affection. They should regard [them] as sons and friends. They should always be ready to listen to them; in an atmosphere of mutual trust (…). Bishops should be solicitous for the welfare—spiritual, intellectual and material—of their priests, so that they live holy and pious lives and exercise a faithful and fruitful ministry.[62]

Finally, we added some theological reflections from the three aspects of the Christ's grace according to St. Thomas. That gave us a basic analogy to understand the holiness of the priest in his being, in his acting and in his shining, and helped us to understand the possible failures in the morality of priests.

We stressed at the end the horizon of the call to the mystical summits of the Christian life and we would like now to stress the particular application of this aspect in the Asian context.

In a continent in which the spiritual experience of meditation has been culturally widespread for centuries,[63] the credibility of Christianity

[62]*Christus Dominus* 16.

[63]See the short but clear synthesis about Asian values of *Ecclesia in Asia* 6:

> The people of Asia take pride in their religious and cultural values, such as love of silence and contemplation, simplicity, harmony, detachment,

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is somehow linked with the witness of a real grace of communion with God through his Son Jesus in the Spirit. Even if this aspect of Christianity especially shines in contemplative Orders, the priest in his life and pastoral ministry should give a true witness of his spiritual experience and his capacity to lead the faithful to these Christian summits of spiritual life. That should be the Asian Pastoral Charity which is the general purpose of priestly formation and life.

Appendix

We present some readings about the Priest in the Filipino context to complete our priestly panorama and reflection.

Psychological Approach

Rafael T. Cruz, *Priests and Ex-priests: Differences of Personality* (Manila: J.A. Jocson Publications Services, 2003), 132 p.

The author presents a survey of 38 active priests and 38 ex-priests, and samples of married males. He focuses on three psychological aspects: autonomy, narcissism and self-esteem. He compares the two categories of priests and draws some conclusions. Finally, he gives some recommendations. It is a very technical book and quotations of experts in psychology are especially abundant. The work is readable and the comparisons become interesting. We realize, for example, that among ex-priests many had been minor seminarians. Ex-priests appear to a great extent autonomous; both categories seem narcissistic with nuances, but active priests show better levels of self-esteem.

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non-violence, the spirit of hard work, discipline, frugal living, the thirst for learning and philosophical enquiry. They hold dear the values of respect for life, compassion for all beings, closeness to nature, filial piety towards parents, elders and ancestors, and a highly developed sense of community. In particular, they hold the family to be a vital source of strength, a closely knit community with a powerful sense of solidarity.

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The book does not pretend to be theological or spiritual, but only psychological. Only the human dimension is taken into consideration. Nevertheless, there is a mystery of "grace and sin" in vocation and its fidelity.

There is another similar study written by Emmanuel R. Fernandez, *Leaving the Priesthood: A Close Reading of Priestly Departures* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2001), 279 p. In the United States, Dean R. Hoge wrote yet another complete survey of priests, *The First Five Years of the Priesthood: A Study of Newly Ordained Catholic Priests* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2005), 186 p., with nuanced results and interpretation, including theological and spiritual commentaries.

These are some contributions from psychology and sociology which may help us understand the priestly situation today.

Personal Approach

Daniel B. Santa Maria, *A Day in the Life of a Parish Priest* (Manila: The Catholic Book Center, 2004), 127 p.

We have a very different approach in this book. Following the flow of a priestly day, the author gives a very personal witness of his own life as a diocesan priest. This book combines a double perspective. The events of every day give Fr. Daniel B. Santa Maria the occasion to make many autobiographical digressions and personal reflections. The reader thus enters into contact with his vocational vicissitudes. In fact, the protagonist is a late vocation to the priesthood, coming from a highly placed family with studies in Chemical Engineering and Business Administration, partly in Santo Tomas University and partly in the United States (Chicago). His decision for priesthood and his formation were not without difficulties. He studied in San Carlos and in San Jose Seminaries. But the aim of the book is, above all, pastoral. All the aspects of celebrations, communication with lay people, ministerial actions and human needs, including meals and rest, are present in this book. Its reading is always encouraging. Fr. Daniel often gives spiritual considerations, but he also speaks of his concerns for the poor and for education, the problems of organization, the

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movements, the traditions, and the relationship with his own family, as well as the ministry of different sacraments, especially marriage. Maybe the core of the book is to be found in the sixth chapter: "Why Am I a Priest?" We quote his simple statement: "As a priest, I gather people. They are not my people; they are God's people. I do not put up nor allow them putting up my own fans' club" (49). In short, the work is a nice testimony of "a day in the life of a parish priest" that can help many other pastors in their daily ministerial duties. A similar American publication is the book of Francis P. Friedl and Rex Reynolds, *Extraordinary Lives: Thirty-four Priests Tell Their Stories* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1997), 270 p.

Spiritual Approach

Lastly, we present the book of Bishop Teodoro C. Bacani, *A Spirituality For Ministry* (Manila: Gift of God Publications, 2006), 127 p.

The contents of the work of Bishop Bacani reflect his theological preparation. Here we find in order all the main aspects of the Catholic ministry seen from a spiritual point of view. The frequent biblical references and quotations from different authors of spirituality and modern witnesses of faith reflect the quality of the author, his culture and his teaching, and his pastoral sensitivity. But it is not a technical work. Bishop Bacani constantly inserts personal experiences and reflections that make the reading easy and fruitful. Among his topics we underline the existential theme of "the dark side of the ministry," and also the effort to give "models" of ministry, pointing finally to pastoral love as its very "soul." Social aspects are not lacking—"Preferential love for the poor"—as also the interior disposition that supports all priestly action—"humility." The theological point of view reappears in the key chapter about the Paschal Mystery, but the Bishop does not forget the importance of prayer and its deep relationship with the ministry. We also stress the purpose of "communion" that reaches its summit in the Eucharistic celebration. The considerations about the Holy Spirit are very suitable in our time from someone who has worked extensively with charismatic movements. Finally, the secret of fruitfulness, according to Bishop Bacani, lies in faithfulness. He focuses again and

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again on the purpose of Pope John Paul II, the "new evangelization." In short, a very stimulating book from and for Filipino ministers that we can compare, for example, with the book of Cardinal Justin Rigali, archbishop of Philadelphia, *I Call You Friends: The Priesthood: Merciful Love* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2004), 194 p.

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