

**The Representation of Christ by the Priest:
A Study of the Antecedents of *in persona Christi* Theology in Ancient Christian Tradition**

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To my parents:

Donald George Ingram († 1978)
and
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Abbreviations

Abbreviations for the **Latin(-ized) titles of patristic works** are drawn from Siegmar Döpp and Wilhelm Geerlings, eds., *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature* (New York: Crossroad, 2000), supplemented when necessary by those given in G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961–68) and in Albert Blaise, *Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens*, rev. Henri Chirat (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954). However, sentence-style capitalization will be used for all abbreviated titles of patristic works, in accordance with *The Chicago Manual of Style* (16th ed.), 11.59 and 14.261.

Here and throughout the dissertation, two different conventions will be followed for the representation of **Latin semi-vowels**. In the case of *ancient* texts and their titles, for the sake of consistency and conformity to contemporary philological standards, an uppercase I/i will be used in place of J/j; V will be used in place of U; and u will be used in place of v. In the case of *medieval and modern* works and their titles, the use of J/j, U, and v will be retained.

The **names of patristic authors** will be anglicized according to their respective entries in the above-cited *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature*.

Traditional abbreviations will be used for the **titles of biblical books**, as given in *The Chicago Manual of Style* (16th ed.), 10.48-50. These are not listed below.

I. Liturgical Sources

<i>Apostolic Constitutions</i>	A.C.
<i>Apostolic Tradition</i>	<i>Trad. ap.</i>
<i>Canons of Hippolytus</i>	<i>Can.</i>
<i>Didache</i>	<i>Did.</i>
<i>Didascalia</i>	<i>Didasc.</i>
<i>Euchologion Barberinus graecus 336</i>	<i>Euch.</i>
<i>Gregorian Sacramentary of the Hadrianum Type</i>	<i>Ha.</i>
<i>Liber ordinum</i>	<i>L. Ord.</i>
<i>Missale Francorum</i>	<i>M.F.</i>
<i>Old Gelasian Sacramentary</i>	<i>Ge. V.</i>
<i>Ordo Romanus 34</i>	<i>O.R. 34</i>
<i>Statuta Ecclesiae antiqua</i>	<i>S.E.A.</i>
<i>Testamentum Domini</i>	<i>T. Dom.</i>
<i>Verona libelli</i>	<i>Ve.</i>

II. Theological Sources

Ambrose of Milan	<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
	<i>In psalm.</i>	<i>Explanatio XII psalmorum</i>
	<i>In psalm. 118</i>	<i>Expositio psalmi CXVIII</i>
	<i>Myst.</i>	<i>De misteriis</i>
	<i>Off.</i>	<i>De officiis ministrorum</i>
	<i>Paenit.</i>	<i>De paenitentia</i>
	<i>Patr.</i>	<i>De patriarchis</i>
	<i>Sacr.</i>	<i>De sacramentis libri sex</i>
	<i>Spir.</i>	<i>De Spiritu Sancto</i>
	Ambrosiaster	<i>Comm.</i>
Augustine	<i>Quaest. test.</i>	<i>Quaestiones ueteris et noui testamenti</i>
	<i>Bapt.</i>	<i>De baptismo contra Donatistas</i>
	<i>Ciu.</i>	<i>De ciuitate Dei</i>
	<i>Conf.</i>	<i>Confessiones</i>
	<i>En. Ps.</i>	<i>Enarrationes in Psalmos</i>
	<i>Io. eu. tr.</i>	<i>In Iohannis euangelium tractatus</i>
	<i>S. Caes. eccl.</i>	<i>Sermo ad Caesariensis ecclesiae plebem</i>
	<i>S. Dolbeau</i>	<i>Sermones Dolbeau</i>
Bede the Venerable	<i>Exp. Act.</i>	<i>Expositio super Acta apostolorum</i>
	<i>Exp. Apoc.</i>	<i>Expositio Apocalypseos</i>
	<i>Tab.</i>	<i>De tabernaculo</i>
Clement of Rome	<i>1 Clem.</i>	<i>Epistula Clementis ad Corinthios</i>
Cyprian of Carthage	<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
	<i>Vnit. eccl.</i>	<i>De ecclesiae catholicae unitate</i>
Cyril of Jerusalem	<i>Catech. myst.</i>	<i>Catecheses mystagogicae</i>
Dionysius the Areopagite	<i>E. h.</i>	<i>De ecclesiastica hierarchia</i>
Gregory of Nazianzus	<i>Or.</i>	<i>Orationes</i>
Gregory the Great	<i>Dial.</i>	<i>Dialogi</i>
	<i>Past.</i>	<i>Regula pastoralis</i>
Ignatius of Antioch	<i>Eph.</i>	<i>Epistula ad Ephesios</i>
	<i>Magn.</i>	<i>Epistula ad Magnesios</i>
	<i>Philad.</i>	<i>Epistula ad Philadelphios</i>
	<i>Smyrn.</i>	<i>Epistula ad Smyrnaeos</i>
	<i>Trall.</i>	<i>Epistula ad Trallianos</i>
Isidore of Seville	<i>Eccl. off.</i>	<i>De ecclesiasticis officiis</i>
John Chrysostom	<i>Catech. 1</i>	<i>Catecheses ad illuminandos, Series prima</i>
	<i>Catech. 3</i>	<i>Catecheses ad illuminandos, Series tertia</i>
	<i>Hom. in 1 Cor.</i>	<i>Homiliae in epistulam I ad Corinthios</i>
	<i>Hom. in 2 Tim.</i>	<i>Homiliae in epistulam II ad Timotheum</i>
	<i>Hom. in Io.</i>	<i>Homiliae in Iohannem</i>
	<i>Hom. in Mt.</i>	<i>Homiliae in Matthaeum</i>
	<i>Prod. Iud.</i>	<i>De proditione Iudae</i>

	<i>Sac.</i>	<i>De sacerdotio</i>
John Damascene	<i>F. o.</i>	<i>De fide orthodoxa</i>
Justin Martyr	<i>1 apol.</i>	<i>Apologia I</i>
	<i>Dial.</i>	<i>Dialogus cum Tryphone Iudaeo</i>
Maximus the Confessor	<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
	<i>Myst.</i>	<i>Mystagogia</i>
Narses of Edessa	<i>Hom.</i>	<i>Homiliae</i>
Origen	<i>Cels.</i>	<i>Contra Celsum</i>
	<i>Comm. in Mt.</i>	<i>Commentarium in euangelium Matthaei</i>
	<i>Hom. in Ier.</i>	<i>Homiliae in Ieremiam</i>
	<i>Hom. in Ios.</i>	<i>Homiliae in Iesu Naue</i>
	<i>Hom. in Leu.</i>	<i>Homiliae in Leuiticum</i>
	<i>Hom. in Num.</i>	<i>Homiliae in Numeros</i>
	<i>Io.</i>	<i>Commentarii in euangelium Iohannis</i>
	<i>Or.</i>	<i>De oratione</i>
Pacian	<i>Bapt.</i>	<i>Sermo de baptismo</i>
	<i>Ep. 1-3</i>	<i>Epistulae 1-3 ad Sympronianum</i>
	<i>Paraen.</i>	<i>Paraenesis siue exhortatorius libellus ad paenitentiam</i>
Prosper Tiro of Aquitania	<i>Psal.</i>	<i>Expositio in psalmos 100-150</i>
Severus of Antioch	<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
Tertullian	<i>Adu. Iud.</i>	<i>Aduersus Iudaeos</i>
	<i>Adu. Marc.</i>	<i>Aduersus Marcionem</i>
	<i>Adu. Prax.</i>	<i>Aduersus Praxean</i>
	<i>Apol.</i>	<i>Apologeticum</i>
	<i>Bapt.</i>	<i>De baptismo</i>
	<i>Castit.</i>	<i>De exhortatione castitatis</i>
	<i>Monog.</i>	<i>De monogamia</i>
	<i>Orat.</i>	<i>De oratione</i>
	<i>Praescr.</i>	<i>De praescriptione haereticorum</i>
	<i>Pudic.</i>	<i>De pudicitia</i>
	<i>Virg. uel.</i>	<i>De uirginibus uelandis</i>
Theodore of Mopsuestia	<i>Hom. cat.</i>	<i>Homiliae catecheticae</i>

III. Medieval and Modern Works

<i>DEC 1, 2</i>	<i>Documents of the Ecumenical Councils, vol. 1 or 2</i>
<i>MD</i>	<i>Mediator Dei</i>
<i>PDV</i>	<i>Pastores dabo vobis</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Summa theologiae</i>

IV. Documents of the Second Vatican Council

AG	<i>Ad gentes</i>
DV	<i>Dei Verbum</i>
LG	<i>Lumen gentium</i>
OpT	<i>Optatam totius</i>
PO	<i>Presbyterorum Ordinis</i>
SC	<i>Sacrosanctum concilium</i>

V. Other Abbreviations and Acronyms

ARCIC	Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission
BEM	<i>Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry</i>
can.	canon
CDF	Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith
ET	English Translation
FT	French Translation
Gk.	Greek
Lat.	Latin
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
PG	Patrologia graeca [Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca]
PL	Patrologia latina [Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina]
RSV	Revised Standard Version

INTRODUCTION

1 Contemporary Context

Any survey of the contemporary ecclesial landscape would reveal that a considerable number of the challenges facing the Christian churches at the dawn of the third millennium have to do with ordained ministry. While these challenges cut across denominational boundaries, they have been felt most acutely in the Roman Catholic Church. Beginning in the mid-twentieth century, a sharp decline in the number of presbyters¹ and seminarians in Western industrialized societies has not only put enormous strain on existing institutions, but generated vigorous discussion of the sustainability of the traditional model of presbyteral life and ministry, including the discipline of lifelong celibacy for the Latin Church. Partly in response to the vocations crisis, and partly in response to the call of the Second Vatican Council for all Catholics to live out their baptismal vocation more fully, local communities virtually everywhere in the world have seen an explosive growth of lay ministries. Moreover, Paul VI's restoration of the permanent diaconate in 1972 has required an additional redistribution of ministerial roles. As lay people and permanent deacons have taken on many of the tasks previously reserved to them, presbyters have engaged in much soul-searching regarding their specific "identity" within the church.² In North America and Western Europe, the post-conciliar period has

¹For the sake of clarity, this dissertation will use the English word "presbyter" as a ministerial title (= πρεσβύτερος, *presbyter*) and the word "priest" as a theological title (= ἱερεὺς, *sacerdos*) which can apply to bishops, presbyters, or both orders taken together. Likewise, "presbyterate" = *presbyterium* and "priesthood" = *sacerdotium*. In quoted text, translations of these titles will be modified if necessary to maintain the desired precision; such clarifications will always be enclosed in brackets.

²"There is no question that the priestly office and the priest's own understanding of his office are in a period of great transition. The Tridentine image still survives, of course, but it is no longer taken for granted and, indeed, is even challenged by many. Yet no new image has acquired clear enough outlines to take its place." M. Edmund Hussey, "What Is a Priest?" in *American Catholic Identity* (Kansas City, Mo.: Sheed & Ward, 1994), 100.

been marked by increasing calls for greater participation by lay persons in the exercise of ecclesial governance. Rome has found itself increasingly isolated in the midst of ongoing debates among and within the churches on the question of the ordination of women. Finally, at the turn of the millennium, the sexual abuse crisis has shaken to its foundations the credibility of the hierarchy in many parts of the world.

Although social and cultural forces are frequently pointed to as the underlying causes of the challenges enumerated above, it should not be forgotten that intense theological debates have followed, accompanied, or in some cases contributed to them.³ Disappointingly, these debates have led to an increasing degree of polarization, to the point that consensus on the theology of ministry—both within the Catholic Church and ecumenically—seems today more elusive than ever. It is particularly evident that there is a wide gulf between the pronouncements of the Roman magisterium on the ministerial priesthood and the directions taken by the academic theological community.

2 Statement of the Problem

One of the focal points of contemporary theological controversy has been the implications of using the Latin phrase *in persona Christi* ("in the person of Christ") to characterize the role of ordained priests. From the thirteenth century onward, and most importantly in the theology of Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274 CE), this phrase has acquired a specific meaning. To say that a priest consecrates the Eucharist *in persona Christi* means that Christ is the principal agent of the action, while the priest acts as a voluntary instrument

³ "Priesthood and ministry have been a focus of concern and debate in the Roman Catholic Church more or less continuously since Vatican II (1962–65)." Daniel Donovan, *What Are They Saying About the Ministerial Priesthood?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 1.

of Christ. In order to become substantially present in the consecrated bread and wine, Christ must be represented by an ordained priest—a bishop or presbyter—who recites the words of the institution narrative (taken from the Last Supper accounts in the New Testament). Priestly ordination is the only means by which a person can acquire the capacity to act *in persona Christi*; and in Thomistic theology this capacity is seen as the very essence of priesthood. The concept of *in persona Christi* constitutes a powerful theological justification for the distinction between clergy and laity, and thus for the existence of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

As will be explained in more detail below (Chapter 1), the Roman magisterium has appealed to *in persona Christi* theology⁴ with increasing frequency and forcefulness in order to address the post-conciliar crisis in priestly identity, and to fend off any perceived attacks upon the classic doctrine of priesthood.⁵ In employing this strategy, the magisterium has used *in persona Christi* axiomatically, with little concern to show the basis of this theology in the ancient tradition of the church. When appeal is made at all to the fathers of the church on this point in magisterial documents, it is usually implied that there existed a *consensus patrum* ("consensus of the fathers [of the church]"),⁶ but this is not demonstrated.

⁴The expression "*in persona Christi* theology" will be used in the present dissertation to refer to the Roman Catholic doctrine that some actions of ordained priests can be directly attributed to Christ as their principal agent. (Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1348.)

⁵The term "classic" will be used as a neutral way of designating what came to be considered, in the wake of the Council of Trent, as most distinctively *Roman Catholic* in the theology inherited from the medieval Western church.

⁶The concept of the *consensus patrum* as a normative hermeneutical principle was established at the Council of Trent, Session IV (8 Apr. 1546), "Second Decree: Acceptance of the Latin Vulgate Edition of the Bible; Rule on the Manner of Interpreting Sacred Scripture etc.," in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 2, *Trent to Vatican II* (Washington, D.C.: Sheed & Ward; Georgetown University Press, 1990), 664; see also First Vatican Council, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith," in *DEC* 2, 806.

Almost in direct proportion to its use by the magisterium, *in persona Christi* theology has come under sustained criticism by theologians and other scholars in the second half of the twentieth century, along with other elements of the manual Scholasticism that held sway in Catholic academic institutions before the Second Vatican Council. One of the recurring assumptions of the critics is that *in persona Christi* is a scholastic innovation, unknown in the first millennium; therefore, it does not belong to the great tradition of the church and may be relegated to the status of a theologoumenon.

Both defenders and critics of *in persona Christi* theology, then, are relying on unverified historical assumptions, which can only diminish the credibility of their arguments. To label *in persona Christi* theology as either "traditional" or "non-traditional," one would need first to establish, on historical grounds, whether antecedents to it can be found in the documentary sources of the patristic era. To date, however, the required research has not been carried out.

Although earlier historical research (to be discussed below, in Chapter 2) has shown that the phrase *in persona Christi* itself did not acquire its strong, sacramental meaning (with respect to the eucharistic consecration) until the thirteenth century,⁷ it has not demonstrated that the *idea* expressed by that phrase was absent from the earlier tradition. Could there have been antecedents to this theology in the patristic period? Despite the prodigious volume of research on the history and theology of ordained ministry in the last century, this specific question remains largely unexplored.

⁷Marliangeas ascribes the decisive innovation to the thirteenth-century Dominican, Gueric de Saint-Quentin, a teacher of Albert the Great. Bernard-Dominique Marliangeas, *Clés pour une théologie du ministère: In persona Christi, in persona Ecclesiae*, *Théologie historique* 51 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1978), 68–69.

3 Objectives

The goal of the present dissertation is to provide a thorough answer to the question of the existence of historical antecedents to *in persona Christi* theology. By "antecedent" is meant an idea that bears enough similarity in content with its later counterpart (while admitting differences in formulation) that the latter may be considered a logical development of the former. In our case the essential content of *in persona Christi* theology is sacerdotal representation-of-Christ: that is, the belief that ordained priests of the church have the capacity to make the living Christ present in unique ways. The identification of a plurality of antecedents—from a significant variety of time periods and cultural contexts—would sufficiently disprove the claim made by critics of *in persona Christi* that it is a scholastic innovation with no firm basis in ancient Christian tradition. Conversely though, the lack of total consensus among the ancient sources, or the presence of alternative theologies of representation, would make it more problematic for the magisterium to continue to use *in persona Christi* language axiomatically.

4 Research Hypothesis

It is expected that the research will yield substantial evidence in the ancient tradition for the notion of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ; not enough, though, to warrant the status of a *consensus patrum*. For those who accept the authoritative status of patristic writings for theology today,⁸ the existence of such evidence would suggest that the

⁸Second Vatican Council, "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*," in Walter J. Abbott, gen. ed., Joseph Gallagher, ed. and trans., *The Documents of Vatican II* (Piscataway, NJ: New Century, 1966), hereafter cited as DV, no. 8; cf. no. 23. "The fathers are thus witnesses and guarantors of an authentic Catholic tradition, and hence their authority in theological questions has been very great and always remains so. When it has been necessary to denounce the deviation of certain schools of thought, the church

presuppositions of many current theological perspectives on the nature of the ordained ministry may need to be re-evaluated. It is hoped that uncovering this evidence will make a modest contribution toward renewing the terms of the dialogue between the magisterium and the theological community, and open up fresh avenues for ecumenical discussion regarding the ministries of the church.

5 Methodological Approach

The fundamental methodological stance of this dissertation will be what Lonergan calls "critical history."⁹ By "critical" is meant the quality of being open to the inversion of previous assumptions, should the weight of evidence require it. (Such inversion would be the case if, for instance, a preponderant number of documentary sources were found to be completely silent on the question of the relation of the priest to Christ.) The term "history" signifies that established principles of historical research will be followed, including attentiveness to the original context of primary source material. It also means that the study will proceed diachronically, with a view to retracing the emergence of Christian thought on sacerdotal representation-of-Christ. Placing individual sources in conversation with those that preceded and followed them will bring out more clearly their unique insights and contributions. Moreover, this approach will make it easier for the reader to detect possible influences of patristic authors on one another.

has always referred to the fathers as a guarantee of truth." Congregation for Catholic Education, "Instruction on the Study of the Fathers of the Church in the Formation of Priests," *Origins* 19, no. 34 (25 January 1990): 554.

⁹Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 185-196.

The chosen methodological approach will require prescinding from a priori judgments concerning the relative value of a given source's contribution. All sources will be approached as having equal value, and will be treated as dispassionately as possible. It will also require prescinding from the issue of the legitimacy of particular *appropriations* of the patristic witness by later authors, whether medieval or modern. To avoid the danger of reading later interpretations back into the early sources, precise hermeneutical criteria will have to be elaborated. This will be done in Chapter 2.

6 Structure of the Dissertation

In Chapter 1, an examination of the recent use of *in persona Christi* in Roman Catholic teaching and theology will be carried out. The claim made above—that the twentieth-century magisterium has used *in persona Christi* in an axiomatic way—will be substantiated by means of an analysis of selected official documents authored by Pius XI, Pius XII, the Second Vatican Council, the Synod of Bishops, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and John Paul II. The main contemporary critiques of *in persona Christi* will be outlined, and grouped into four typical positions.

After an overview of the state of the question in contemporary scholarship, Chapter 2 will establish precise methodological criteria. As this is an historical study, it will be necessary to begin by determining its chronological boundaries: Only sources that originated in the period from 200 CE to 750 CE will be included; but the necessity of excluding earlier sources will be explained. Some general criteria for selecting sources will be given, followed by lexicographical parameters, that is, the specific Greek and Latin keywords that will be used to locate pertinent passages in the literature. The chapter

concludes with a presentation of the three analytical criteria which will be used to arrive at a theological judgment of whether a given source contains antecedents to *in persona Christi* theology.

The analysis of primary sources begins in Chapter 3, with liturgical texts pertaining to the ordained ministry. The body of literature known as the ancient church orders is treated first, followed by the rites of ordination from Egypt, Rome, Gaul, Spain, Byzantium, and Georgia. It will be seen that, with a few exceptions, the liturgical sources are largely silent on the question of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ.

In Chapter 4 the focus of the study shifts to the theological sources, namely, a series of nineteen patristic authors ranging from Tertullian to John Damascene. These authors' writings contain a rich and varied theology of priesthood and priestly representation, including genuine antecedents of *in persona Christi* theology. An attempt will be made to discern patterns and currents of thought among these authors.

The concluding chapter summarizes the findings of Chapters 3 and 4; answers the outstanding question of which patristic authors may have had an immediate influence on Thomas Aquinas's theology of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ; responds to the four critical positions identified in Chapter 1 on the basis of the patristic evidence; reviews the magisterium's use of use of *in persona Christi* language; and suggests avenues for further study.

CHAPTER 1 THE USE OF "IN PERSONA CHRISTI" IN CATHOLIC TEACHING AND THEOLOGY

1 Representation of Christ as a Feature of the Theology of Ministry in General

The idea of *representation of Christ* is a prominent feature in the construction of most theologies of ordained ministry.¹ It is closely related to the themes of *election* and *mission*, as it is natural to assume that one who is chosen and sent to accomplish such an important task as bringing in the harvest of the Reign of God will in some way resemble or share some qualities with the "Lord of the harvest" (Matt. 9:38 RSV).² Much of the language used by New Testament authors to express the nature of Christian ministry strongly suggests that ministers represent God or Christ in a unique and specific way. For example, Paul asserts that he and his co-workers "are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us" (2 Cor. 5:20). There exists a concurrence, or even a relation of identity, between the words and actions of ministers and those of God/Christ: "whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 18:18).

It is important to note from the outset that representation, in this strong theological sense, implies something more than artistic depiction. The church's ministers are not merely reminders or signposts of the Risen Lord; rather, he is in some way making *himself* and his own ministry *positively present* to believers, in and through those ministers: "we are the

¹ "As Christ chose and sent the apostles, Christ continues through the Holy Spirit to choose and call persons into the ordained ministry. As heralds and ambassadors, ordained ministers are representatives of Jesus Christ to the community, and proclaim his message of reconciliation." Faith and Order, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper no. 111 (Geneva: WCC, 1982), 21.

² All subsequent scriptural quotations in English are taken from the Revised Standard Version.

aroma of Christ for God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing" (2 Cor. 2:15).

Although every authentic act of ministry in the church may arguably be said to "represent Christ," the Western Christian tradition has come to focus on the sacramental actions of ordained ministers—and especially the act of presiding³ over the Eucharist⁴—as pre-eminent instances of such representation. In a similar development, Christians came to adopt *sacerdotal terminology* to interpret the ministry of those who "offer to [God] the holy gifts of [God's] church."⁵ By the fourth century, sacerdotal titles were used universally for both bishops and presbyters.⁶

As stated above (Introduction), the subject of this dissertation is *sacerdotal representation-of-Christ*, i.e. the unique and specific symbolic capacity which, according to catholic tradition, is actively exercised in the church by bishops and presbyters. That deacons and other ordained or unordained ministers such as abbots and abbesses, as well as secular rulers, are excluded from consideration is not meant to suggest that these were

³ "The president" is the earliest title for the leader of eucharistic worship, used by Justin Martyr in *I Apol.* 65.1. Charles Munier, ed. and trans., *Saint Justin: Apologie pour les chrétiens: Édition et traduction*, Paradosis 39 (Fribourg: Éditions universitaires, 1995). Subsequent citations of *I Apol.* refer to this edition. See also Ronald C. D. Jasper and Geoffrey J. Cuming, eds. and trans., *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*, 3d rev. ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 26.

⁴ The earliest occurrence of the substantive εὐχαριστία as a designation for the Lord's Supper is in the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch: *Philad.* 4.1; *Smyrn.* 7.1; 8.1; in Michael W. Holmes, ed. and trans., *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, updated ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1999). Subsequent citations of the original refer to this edition. See also *Lettres; Martyre de Polycarpe*, 4th ed., ed. and trans. Pierre-Thomas Camelot, Sources chrétiennes 10 (Paris: Cerf, 1969), 122n4.

⁵ "offer[unt] dona sancta ecclesiae tuae." *Trad. ap.* 69.12-13, in Erik Tidner, ed., *Didascaliae apostolorum, Canonum ecclesiasticorum, Traditionis apostolicae versiones latinae*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der alchristlichen Literatur, vol. 75 (Berlin: Akademie, 1963). Subsequent citations of the Latin version of *Trad. ap.* refer to this edition.

⁶ Hervé Legrand, "Sacerdoce ministériel," in *Dictionnaire critique de théologie*, gen. ed. Jean-Yves Lacoste (Paris: PUF, 1998), 1040.

not also considered in Christian literature to "represent Christ," in their own specific way.⁷ But in the Roman Catholic doctrinal tradition, a distinction is made between the "ministerial priesthood" of bishops and presbyters, on the one hand, and the "common priesthood" of all the faithful, on the other. The Second Vatican Council teaches in *Lumen gentium* 10 that these two modes of participation in the one priesthood of Christ "differ in essence and not only in degree."⁸ Each of these two distinct forms of sharing in Christ's priesthood, then, gives rise to a distinctive form of representation-of-Christ.

2 The Use of the Phrase *in persona Christi* in Roman Catholic Theology

In recent centuries, official Roman Catholic theology has used the phrase *in persona Christi* as a succinct formulation and summary of the idea of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 875; 1348; 1548).⁹ This phrase is generally associated with Thomistic theology, since Thomas Aquinas was its most systematic and influential proponent.¹⁰ In the context of Thomas's sacramental theology, acting *in persona Christi* is the highest form of representation, as well as the most intimate form of

⁷The Rule of Benedict (chap. 2 and 63) says that the abbot "holds the place of Christ" (*vices Christi agere creditur*) in the monastery. Feminine versions of the Rule composed in the medieval period simply substitute "abbatissa" for "abbas."

⁸"essentia et non gradu tantum differant." The expression originated with Pius XII, in his "Allocution *Magnificate Dominum* to the Cardinals and Bishops Gathered for the Proclamation of the New Liturgical Feast of Mary Queen of Heaven and Earth by the Sovereign Pontiff in the Vatican Basilica (2 Nov. 1954)," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 46 (1954): 669. For a lucid, basic explanation of its meaning, see Aloys Grillmeier, "Chapter II: The People of God," trans. Kevin Smyth, in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 1, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy; Decree on the instruments of social communication; Dogmatic Constitution on the Church; Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches* (Freiburg: Herder & Herder, 1967), 158.

⁹Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Ottawa: CCCB, 2000), 346–47.

¹⁰His clearest definition is given in *ST*, III^a q. 82 a. 1 co.: "Such is the dignity of [the Eucharist] that it is effected only as in the person of Christ. Now whoever performs an act in another's stead [*in persona alterius*] must do so through the power of that other. As a baptized person is granted by Christ the power of receiving this sacrament, so on a priest at his ordination is conferred the power of consecrating in the person of Christ [*in persona Christi*]." In *Holy Communion* (3a. 79–83), vol. 59 of *Summa Theologiae*, ed. and trans. Thomas Gilby (Cambridge, U.K.: Blackfriars, 1975). Subsequent citations of *ST* refer to the Blackfriars edition.

instrumentality. Thomas used the concept of *in persona Christi* to signify that it is Christ in person, and not the priest as a merely human agent, who brings the sacrament of the Eucharist into being.¹¹ It is in this sense that the phrase was adopted by the Catholic magisterium, as can be seen in this assertion of the Council of Florence (1439): "The form of this sacrament [i.e. the Eucharist] [is] the words of the Saviour with which he effected this sacrament. A priest speaking in the person of Christ effects this sacrament."¹²

In persona Christi theology belongs to a constellation of principles that undergirded the medieval Western sacramental system. However, that specific *phrase* has never entered into the formulation of any dogmatic definition.¹³ Nor, to this author's knowledge, has it ever been incorporated verbatim into a liturgical text—up to and including the documents of the current Roman rites of ordination, even though these make explicit reference to the key teachings of the Second Vatican Council on the ordained ministry.¹⁴

In the teachings of the twentieth-century popes, and that of the Second Vatican Council, *in persona Christi* theology has been treated as axiomatic—by which term is

¹¹ Hervé Legrand, "Les ministères de l'Église locale," in *Dogmatique 2*, vol. 3 of *Initiation à la pratique de la théologie*, ed. Bernard Lauret and François Refoulé (Paris: Cerf, 1983), 240.

¹² "Forma huius sacramenti [Eucharistiæ] sunt verba Salvatoris, quibus hoc confecit sacramentum; sacerdos enim in persona Christi loquens hoc conficit sacramentum." Council of Florence, "Bull *Exsultate Deo* on Union with the Armenians [22 Nov. 1439]," in Norman P. Tanner, ed. and trans., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1 (hereafter cited as *DEC 1*), *Nicaea I to Lateran V* (Washington, D.C.: Sheed & Ward; Georgetown University Press, 1990), 546.

¹³ "To affirm that the priests of the New Covenant act 'in the Person of Christ' is part of the Church's ordinary Magisterium." *Our Sunday Visitor's Encyclopedia of Catholic Doctrine*, s.v. "In persona Christi capitis."

¹⁴ The current (*editio typica altera*, 1990) Roman rites of ordination do include ample use of representational language to characterize the relationship of priests (the bishop and his presbyters) to the person of Christ. Most of this language, however, is contained in the newly composed homilies that precede the ordination proper, e.g.: "In the Bishop surrounded by his [presbyters], our Lord Jesus Christ himself, having become High Priest for ever, is present among you. For, through the ministry of the Bishop, Christ himself never fails to proclaim the Gospel and to administer the sacraments of faith to those who believe." Catholic Church, *Rites of Ordination of a Bishop, of Priests, and of Deacons* (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2003), 17.

meant that very rarely, if at all, do these magisterial documents attempt to justify the use of *in persona Christi* language by citations of previous councils, popes, theologians—or even of Thomas Aquinas. To demonstrate this axiomatic status of *in persona Christi*, we will now follow the thread of *in persona Christi* and related expressions (e.g. *Christi personam gerere, vices gerere*) in successive official documents pertaining to the priesthood. The main landmarks of this doctrinal development are to be found in the documents of Pius XI, Pius XII, the Second Vatican Council, the Synod of Bishops (1971), the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (*Inter insigniores*) and John Paul II.

2.1 Pius XI

In Pius XI's encyclical *Ad Catholici sacerdotii*,¹⁵ whose main preoccupation is to stress the need for serious moral and spiritual formation in seminarians in a historical context marked by increasing secularization, the priesthood of ordained ministers is explicated entirely in relation to Christ.¹⁶ The expression *gerere personam [Christi]* is used to support and explain the expression *alter Christus*¹⁷—a traditional, but ambiguous, priestly title. The ambiguity comes from the fact that this expression's extension is not restricted to actions that require ordination; for instance, the pope uses it also in contexts where priests are being exhorted to lead holy lives,¹⁸ in which case there is no reason to

¹⁵ Pius XI, "Encyclical Letter *Ad catholici Sacerdotii* (20 Dec. 1935)," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 28 (1936): 5–53. ET in Pierre Veuillot, ed., *The Catholic Priesthood According to the Teaching of the Church*, vol. 1, *Papal documents from Pius X to Pius XII*, trans. John A. O'Flynn (Dublin: M.H. Gill, 1957), 198–246.

¹⁶ "[I]l discorso arriva al sacerdozio cristiano e lo spiega unicamente e totalmente con il riferimento a Gesù Cristo: il sacerdote è ministro di Cristo." Giuseppe Rambaldi, "'Alter-Christus,' 'in persona Christi,' 'personam Christi gerere': tali e simili espressioni nel magistero da Pio XI al Vaticano II e il loro riferimento al carattere," in *Carisma Permanente del Sacerdocio Ministerial*, Teología del sacerdocio 5 (Burgos: Ediciones Aldecoa, 1973), 218–19.

¹⁷ "[T]he priest is, as we are accustomed to say with good reason, 'another Christ,' because in some way he represents the person of Christ [*cum eius gerat personam*]: 'As the Father hath sent me, I also send you.'" Pius XI, "Ad catholici sacerdotii," in Veuillot, *Catholic Priesthood*, 1:204.

¹⁸ Rambaldi, "Alter-Christus, in persona Christi," 220n14.

suppose that the same kind of representation-of-Christ could not be ascribed to any holy Christian. The former expression is more precise, in that it qualifies actions that are properly priestly. The pope's use of *gerere personam* certainly suggests that the actions of a priest engage Christ and his authority more than do the actions of other members of the Church.

But it is to be observed that Pius XI does not consider his assertion—that the priest represents the person of Christ—as requiring any kind of demonstration: a single scriptural locus, John 20:21, is cited; there follows an extended citation of the Council of Trent's doctrine on the sacrifice of the Mass, according to which it is the same Victim who offers himself now in the Mass—through the ministry of priests—who once offered himself on the cross.¹⁹ Neither the gospel verse cited nor the Tridentine text, however, actually use the expression in question. These authorities do provide warrant for the idea that Christ is present through the actions of his ministers, but they cannot, on their own, resolve the issue of the *specific mode* of that presence.

2.2 Pius XII

Pius XII's landmark encyclical *Mediator Dei*²⁰ is the first papal document devoted entirely to the liturgy. It is clearly meant as an official response to the growing influence of the Liturgical Movement. The leading figures of this movement were dissatisfied with

¹⁹ "Una enim eademque est hostia, idem nunc offerens sacerdotum ministerio, qui se ipsum tunc in cruce obtulit, sola offerendi ratione diversa." Council of Trent, Session 22 (17 Sept. 1562), "Teaching and Canons on the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass," ch. 2, in Norman P. Tanner, ed. and trans., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 2 (hereafter cited as *DEC 2*), *Trent to Vatican II* (Washington, D.C.: Sheed & Ward; Georgetown University Press, 1990), 733.

²⁰ Pius XII, "Encyclical Letter *Mediator Dei* on the Sacred Liturgy (20 Nov. 1947)," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 39 (1947): 521–95. Subsequent citations refer to the ET in Gerald Ellard, ed., *On the Sacred Liturgy: Encyclical Letter Mediator Dei (Nov. 20, 1947) of Pope Pius XII*, Rev. ed., trans. John A. O'Flynn (New York: America Press, 1961), hereafter cited as MD followed by the paragraph number.

the centuries-old understanding that the celebration of the Roman liturgy—and in particular of the Mass—was an action of the priest alone at which the laity assisted as non-essential, purely passive spectators. The more ancient idea that the liturgy was an action of the *whole* Ecclesia was brought forward by theologians and liturgical scholars of the early twentieth century as representing a much fuller and pastorally fruitful understanding of the nature of the liturgy. This proposal was embraced by Pius XII in his famous definition of the liturgy: "The sacred liturgy is (...) in short, the worship rendered by the Mystical Body of Christ in the entirety of its Head and members."²¹

The lay members of the Mystical Body are not passive spectators; they are agents of the liturgy in their own right. The pope readily endorses and even champions the idea that the people "cooperate" with the priest in the liturgical action, *including* the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice. He quotes from Innocent III and Robert Bellarmine to support this idea.²²

However, in making this argument Pius XII has in mind a specific moment in the liturgy of the Mass, the "oblation" of Christ to God that follows the consecration. In the Roman Canon this act is expressed in the first person plural: *offerimus*, which suggests a collective subject of the offering. However, as for the "immolation," that is, the prior act by which Christ is made present upon the altar in a victimal state, this is performed by the priest alone, because in reciting the words of Christ at the Last Supper he takes on the *persona* of Christ: "The unbloody immolation at the words of consecration, when Christ is made present upon the altar in the state of a victim, is performed by the priest and by him

²¹MD 20.

²²MD 86.

alone, as the representative of Christ [*prout Christi personam sustinet*] and not as the representative of the faithful."²³ At the consecration, then, the priest acts as a representative of Christ²⁴ and *does not* act as a representative of the church.

The teaching that the priest acts solely in the person of Christ at the consecration is supported by a reference to Thomas Aquinas's explanation of how the sacrifice of the Mass can legitimately be considered identical to the sacrifice of Calvary: "The priest is the same, Jesus Christ, whose sacred Person His minister represents [*cuius quidem sacram personam eius administer gerit*]. Now the minister, by reason of the sacerdotal consecration which he has received, is made like to the High Priest and possesses the power of performing actions in virtue of Christ's very person [*persona ipsius Christi*]."²⁵ Pius follows this with a lone reference to John Chrysostom: "Wherefore in his priestly activity he in a certain manner 'lends his tongue, and gives his hand' to Christ."²⁶ Although the pope acknowledges multiple modes of Christ's presence in the liturgy, he sees the confection of the Eucharist and the sacrifice of the Mass as having an absolutely incomparable and irreducible efficacy by

²³ MD 92.

²⁴ A variety of verbs are used in combination with *persona* in Pius XII's writings on the subject of priesthood: *sustinere, agere, gerere*. Occasionally two verbs are combined in a kind of hendiadys, to stress more emphatically the uniqueness of the priest's role, e.g. "personam sustinere et agere" or "personam sustinere et gerere." The actual expression *in persona Christi* is relatively infrequent in these writings (only two instances), as is *alter Christus*: "'*In persona Christi*' nei documenti che studiamo non è usato se non due volte, delle quali una è una citazione da S. R. Bellarmino. '*Alter Christus*' una sola volta." Rambaldi, "Alter-Christus, in persona Christi," 232.

²⁵ MD 69. Here the pope cites Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, III^a q. 22 a. 4.

²⁶ MD 69. The pope's citation is to John Chrysostom, *Hom. in Io.* 86. However, the latter text does not present the priest as a unique representative of Christ, but rather as an instrument of the three divine Persons, just as the angels are: "Yet why do I mention merely priests [ἱερείς]? Not even an angel, or an archangel, can effect anything with regard to what is given by God, but Father and Son and Holy Spirit direct everything. The priest simply lends his tongue and furnishes his hand." In *Commentary on Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist: Homilies 48–88*, trans. Sr. Thomas Aquinas Goggin, Fathers of the Church 41 (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1960).

reason of their being "actions of Christ" in a sense that is more immediate than the other ways in which Christ acts through the Church, his Body.²⁷

Pius XII warns that there should be no suggestion that the priest is merely a delegate of the people. It is because the priest *first* represents Christ—the sole Mediator—that he can be said to represent the people before God. His priesthood does not arise out of the Christian community; it is conferred solely by the laying on of hands that comes from the apostles.²⁸ This point is made even more forcefully later in the encyclical, supported by a quotation from Robert Bellarmine that speaks of the priest as "inferior to Christ but superior to the people."²⁹ Sacerdotal status (*ius*) can in no way be attributed to the *populus* as such.³⁰ Contrary to what the pope considers a gravely erroneous view being propagated by theologians of his time, the presence and ratification of the lay faithful are not required for a valid Eucharistic celebration: "[I]t is in no wise required that the people ratify what the sacred minister has done."³¹

In a 1954 address in the Vatican,³² Pius XII sees the need once again (as he did earlier in *Mediator Dei*) to refute the idea that the Eucharistic sacrifice is a "concelebration"

²⁷ "Il valore che deriva al sacramento dall'intervento personale di chi lo amministra e di chi lo riceve non può confondersi con l'ex opere operato, il quale è posseduto dal sacramento e dal sacrificio perché 'actio Christi'." Rambaldi, "Alter-Christus, in persona Christi," 242.

²⁸ "Only to the apostles, and thenceforth to those on whom their successors have imposed hands, is granted the power of the priesthood, in virtue of which they represent the person of Jesus Christ [*Iesu Christi personam sustinent*] before their people, acting at the same time as representatives of their people [*ipsius populi personam gerunt*] before God. This priesthood is not transmitted by heredity or human descent. It does not emanate from the Christian community. It is not a delegation from the people. Prior to acting as representative of the community before the throne of God, the priest is the ambassador of the divine Redeemer." MD 40.

²⁹ MD 84.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ MD 96.

³² Pius XII, "Magnificate Dominum". Subsequent citations refer to the ET in Pierre Veuillot, ed., *The Catholic Priesthood According to the Teaching of the Church*, vol. 2, *The papal documents of Pius XII (1954–1958)*, trans. John A. O'Flynn (Dublin: M.H. Gill, 1964).

between the priest and the people, to such a degree that the priest *could not* validly offer the sacrifice alone, apart from the people (such as in a private Mass). Here the pope repeatedly and insistently defends the teaching that the central act of the eucharistic celebration, i.e. the performance of the sacrifice of the New Covenant, is the act of Christ himself, mediated *solely* by the ministry of the priest celebrant.

To support this teaching, Pius XII refers to the definition of the Council of Trent³³ (also cited by Pius XI³⁴), according to which Christ now offers himself *by the ministry of priests* in an unbloody manner. He concludes from this that only the priest celebrant may properly be said to perform the act of sacrifice: "And so the priest who celebrates, acting as representative of Christ [*personam Christi gerens*], offers sacrifice and he alone; it is not the people, it is not the clerics, it is not even priests who piously and religiously serve him who performs the sacred rites; though all of these can and do have a certain active part in the sacrifice."³⁵ It follows that neither the participation nor even the presence of the faithful is absolutely necessary. If the priest alone sacrifices, then the priest can sacrifice alone.

In this address the pope also rejects as erroneous the theological opinion that the value of a single Mass at which a hundred priests piously and religiously assist is identical to the value of one hundred separate Masses offered by those same priests.³⁶ To the contrary, he argues, there are as many actions of Christ the High Priest as there are priest-celebrants. Those who merely "hear" Mass, no matter how pious their dispositions may be,

³³ Council of Trent, Session 22 (17 Sept. 1562), "Teaching and Canons on the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass," ch. 2, in *DEC* 2, 733.

³⁴ Pius XI, "Ad Catholici Sacerdotii," 10–11.

³⁵ *Catholic Priesthood*, 2:22.

³⁶ "[T]he assertion nowadays made and given currency not only by some laity, but even by some theologians and priests, must be rejected as erroneous, the assertion namely that the celebration of one Mass at which one hundred priests assist with religious piety is equivalent to one hundred Masses celebrated by one hundred priests." *Catholic Priesthood*, 2:23.

in no way bear and enact the role of the self-sacrificing Christ; their role is comparable to that of the lay faithful.³⁷ Therefore, priests who do not actually celebrate (i.e. consecrate) the Eucharist do nothing essentially different from the lay faithful.

The lay faithful do possess a priestly quality, as taught by the apostle Peter himself (1 Pet. 2:9); however, it is a completely different kind (*essentia*) of priesthood from that of the ordained minister who has the *potestas* to accomplish, in the person of Christ the High Priest, the sacrifice of Christ himself: "[I]t must be firmly held that this 'priesthood' common to all the faithful, profound and mysterious as it surely is, differs not only in degree but in essence from the priesthood genuinely and properly so-called, which consists in the power of enacting the sacrifice of Christ himself, by one who represents Christ the sovereign priest [*cum persona Summi Sacerdotis Christi geratur*]."³⁸

Christ's becoming present and offering himself to the Father are effected through the words of consecration, which only the priest can pronounce in the person of Christ. Having become present and *offered himself*, the Victim can then—in a second, distinct moment—*be offered* by the entire assembly (including both faithful and priests). These two successive offerings must be clearly and sharply distinguished from each other, according to Pius XII, since the first is on the level of the *opus operato*, whereas the second is on the level of the *opus operantis*.

³⁷ "In relation to the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice, there are as many actions of Christ the sovereign priest, as there are priests who celebrate, but not at all as many actions as there are priests who piously hear the Mass of the bishop or celebrating priest; for such priests, when they are present at the Mass, do not at all represent and act in the person of Christ [*nequaquam Christi sacrificantis personam sustinent et agunt*], but are to be compared with the faithful laity who are present at the sacrifice." *Catholic Priesthood*, 2:23.

³⁸ *Catholic Priesthood*, 2:24. The above passage is referred to in a footnote of the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium* (LG) 10, although the conciliar document does not so sharply refer to the ordained priesthood as the only one that is "genuinely and properly so called."

In a 1956 address to participants in a congress of pastoral liturgy held in Assisi,³⁹ Pius XII repeats even more emphatically his previous teaching on the two distinct moments of the Eucharistic sacrifice, which must not be confused with each other: the first is the consecration, during which Christ sacrifices and offers himself through the priest who bears and carries out his role; the second is the offering of Christ by the assembly (priests and people acting together).⁴⁰ For the first moment, the words of the Institution Narrative are absolutely essential, because action in the person of Christ cannot be a purely interior matter; it cannot be confined to the priest's intention; it must be manifested exteriorly by concrete actions and words.⁴¹ It is true that in the second moment the priest acts in the person of the faithful, acts in the name of the Church or represents the Church; but in the first moment, he acts only in the person of Christ the head. The consecration cannot be attributed in the same mode or the same sense to both Christ the Head and the Church his Body.⁴²

The use of representational terminology by Pius XII has the cumulative effect of signifying that through ordination a priest acquires a likeness to Christ the High Priest that is not granted by the sacraments of Christian initiation.⁴³ This unique likeness to Christ is

³⁹ Pius XII, "Allocution *Vous nous avez* to the Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops and other Prelates, Priests, and Religious Gathered for the International Congress of Pastoral Liturgy in Assisi (22 Sept. 1956)," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 48 (1956): 711–25. English translation in *Catholic Priesthood*, 2:130–48.

⁴⁰ "Quand la consécration est achevée, l'*oblatio hostiae super altare positae*' peut être faite et est faite par le prêtre célébrant, par l'Église, par les autres prêtres, par chaque fidèle. Mais cette action n'est pas '*actio ipsius Christi per sacerdotem ipsius personam sustinentem et gerentem*'. En réalité l'action du prêtre consacrant est celle même du Christ, qui agit par son ministre." Pius XII, "Vous nous avez," 717.

⁴¹ "[L]a question décisive (pour la concélébration, comme pour la Messe d'un prêtre unique) n'est pas de savoir quel fruit l'âme en retire, mais quelle est la nature de l'acte qui est posé: le prêtre, comme ministre du Christ, fait-il ou non l'*actio Christi se ipsum sacrificantis et offerentis*'. (...) Cela ne se vérifie pas, quand le prêtre ne prononce pas sur le pain et le vin les paroles du Seigneur: 'Ceci est mon Corps', 'Ceci est mon Sang'." Pius XII, "Vous nous avez," 718.

⁴² Rambaldi, "Alter-Christus, in persona Christi," 245.

⁴³ Rambaldi, "Alter-Christus, in persona Christi," 251.

expressed with various terms taken from the classic doctrine of character: priests are "quasi imago," "veluti instrumentum" of Christ, "conformatos" or "assimilatur" to Christ.⁴⁴ Along with the priestly character is granted power, the "potestas proprie sacerdotalis," which enables the minister to bring about the sacraments and offer the Eucharistic sacrifice in such a way that these actions can be attributed directly and exclusively to Christ, the Head of the Mystical Body.

This classic doctrine of the priesthood, which originated with the Scholastics (above all in the writings of Thomas Aquinas) and was enshrined in the doctrinal chapters and canons of the Tridentine decrees, constitutes in the mind of Pius XII a kind of dogmatic "line in the sand" that may never be crossed, no matter how nostalgic *Ressourcement* theologians or others might be for more ancient views of the liturgy and the sacraments. The uniqueness of the priest's mediating role in the consecration of the Eucharist—*personam Christi gerens*—is a benchmark for judging any new perspectives arising out of contemporary theological reflection. The pope sees no need to justify the notion of sacerdotal representation by appealing to the writings of the church fathers; for him the combined authority of the *Doctor Communis* and the Council of Trent are more than sufficient to refute any contrary opinion.

2.3 The Second Vatican Council

Turning next to the documents of the Second Vatican Council, one observes that the council fathers consciously chose to adopt language taken from the Bible and from the modern human sciences in preference to the conceptual framework of neoscholasticism, seen as less suited to the urgent pastoral task of engaging the concerns of contemporary men

⁴⁴ Rambaldi, "Alter-Christus, in persona Christi," 250.

and women. This choice is particularly evident in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*,⁴⁵ which opens with a rich synthesis of biblical-patristic metaphors for the mystery of the Church. Wishing to acknowledge and incorporate as much as possible the insights stemming from the renewal of biblical and patristic studies in the Catholic world in the postwar period, the redactors of the conciliar documents provide an abundance of citations from both the Bible and church fathers to support important theological affirmations. (By contrast, the doctrinal chapters of Trent's *Decree on the Sacrament of Order* [Session 23], contain only fourteen distinct scriptural citations.)

This shift in theological method is evident for all the Council's "rediscoveries" in the area of priesthood and ministry: the dignity of the common or royal priesthood (LG 10); the grounding of the episcopal ministry in the threefold office of Christ (LG 20); the sacramentality of episcopal ordination (LG 21); the collegiality of the episcopate (LG 22); the collegiality of the presbyterate and the concept of the *presbyterium* (LG 28); the participation of the laity in the threefold office of Christ (LG 34–36). These sections contain a remarkable abundance of biblical and patristic citations, which serve as far more than mere proof texts to be used in apologetics: they are the fruit of serious study of the sources and, at the same time, an invitation to dialogue with other Christians who would recognize their own origin in those sources.

When it comes to *in persona Christi* language, it is to be noted first of all that the Council does not use the expression *alter Christus*, despite its prominence in preconciliar

⁴⁵ Second Vatican Council, "Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium* on the Church," in Abbott and Gallagher, *Documents of Vatican II*, hereafter cited as LG followed by the paragraph number.

works of theology and spirituality.⁴⁶ Some commentators see this as a noteworthy instance of *aggiornamento*.⁴⁷ Be that as it may, the conciliar documents frequently and consistently use the formula *in persona Christi*, or related expressions (*personam gerere* etc.) to signify the specificity of the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood.⁴⁸

After asserting what unites the common and the ordained priesthood (they are both modes of participation in the one priesthood of Christ), *Lumen gentium* recalls what is proper to the ordained priest: "Acting in the person of Christ, he brings about the Eucharistic Sacrifice [*sacrificium eucharisticum in persona Christi conficit*], and offers it to God in the name of all the people."⁴⁹ The footnotes to this section of the conciliar text refer to the teachings of Pius XI⁵⁰ and Pius XII.⁵¹ The sharp distinction in the text between what the priest does "in the person of Christ" (confecting) and what he does "in the name of the people" (offering) reveals a desire to mark a theological boundary, to set a limit on the extension of the concept of the common priesthood of the faithful. Nonetheless, in affirming the specificity of the ordained priesthood in relation to the common/baptismal priesthood, the document does not express the relation of the first to the second in terms of

⁴⁶ "[N]otiamo che l'espressione 'alter Christus' nel Vaticano II non si trova, né per la Chiesa né per il sacerdote. La espressione 'in persona Christi' la troviamo, ma usata in sensi diversi." Rambaldi, "Alter-Christus, in persona Christi," 255.

⁴⁷ See Henri Le Sourd, "Un Aggiornamento Spirituel?" in *Les Prêtres: décrets "Presbyterorum Ordinis" et "Optatam totius,"* ed. Jean Frisque and Yves-M.-J. Congar, Unam Sanctam 68 (Paris: Cerf, 1968), 295–99.

⁴⁸ "[T]he very frequency with which the Council utilized [the technical formula *in persona Christi*] shows the importance it attributed to it for understanding the specific nature of the ministerial priesthood." Aimé-Georges Martimort, "The Value of a Theological Formula 'in Persona Christi'," in *The Order of Priesthood: Nine Commentaries on the Vatican Decree Inter Insigniores*, OSV Source Book (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1978), 87.

⁴⁹ LG 10. This and all subsequent English translations of Vatican II documents are taken from the Abbott-Gallagher edition.

⁵⁰ "Encyclical Letter *Miserentissimus Redemptor* (8 May 1928)," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 20 (1928), 171-172.

⁵¹ Pius XII, "Magnificate Dominum," 669; Pius XII, "Encyclical Letter *Mediator Dei* on the Sacred Liturgy (20 Nov. 1947)," 555; Pius XII, "Vous nous avez," 714.

superiority, as Pius XII (quoting Robert Bellarmine) had done. It only speaks of a "difference." Since the Council, the meaning of this difference has generated much discussion among theologians.⁵²

A broadening of perspective is perceptible in the third chapter of the document, where classic *in persona Christi* language is framed by the newer language of the *tria munera*: "Bishops in an eminent and visible way undertake Christ's own role as Teacher, Shepherd, and High Priest, and (...) they act in His person [*ipsius Christi Magistri, Pastoris et Pontificis partes sustineant et in Eius persona agant*]."⁵³ Clearly we are dealing here with a broader meaning of acting *in persona Christi* than in *Lumen gentium* 10, since this qualification is applied not only to the specifically cultic or sacramental actions of the bishop, but also to his teaching and pastoral office. The language of *munus, munera* allows a stronger connection between the bishop's relation to Christ and his ministry within the Church than did the more classic language of *sacra potestas*.⁵⁴

It is to be noted that *Lumen gentium* 21 is the only instance in the documents of Vatican II where *in persona Christi* language is supported by patristic citations. The footnote cites passages from the writings of six fathers of the Church: Cyprian, John Chrysostom, Ambrose, Ambrosiaster, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Hesychius of

⁵² Donovan, *What Are They Saying..?* 7–8. For one such discussion, see Peter E. Fink, "The Priesthood of Jesus Christ in the Ministry and Life of the Ordained," in *Priests: Identity and Ministry*, ed. Robert J. Wister (Wilmington, Del: Michael Glazier, 1990), 71–91.

⁵³ LG 21.

⁵⁴ "Ce vocabulaire [*munus*] marque aussi un déplacement par rapport au terme classique de pouvoir." Bernard Sesboué, "Le déplacement des catégories du ministère apostolique à Vatican II et sa répercussion sur le dialogue œcuménique," in *Pour une théologie œcuménique* (Paris: Cerf, 1990), 352. "L'intérêt de son emploi récurrent à Vatican II est de permettre une articulation entre la personne du Christ et le mystère de l'Église." *Ibid.*, 353.

Jerusalem.⁵⁵ The footnote strongly suggests that *in persona Christi* is a notion that is just as firmly anchored in the ancient tradition as the notion that episcopal consecration imparts the "high priesthood," the "apex of the sacred ministry," on which point the text expressly appeals to the authority of the "Church's liturgical practice" and the "language of the holy Fathers of the Church."⁵⁶

The new language of the *tria munera* is used in similar fashion in *Lumen gentium* 28, when the document addresses the ministry of presbyters. Preaching, shepherding, and celebrating divine worship are all presented as flowing out of the configuration to Christ that results from priestly ordination, although the synaxis is the "maximal" exercise of presbyters' *munus*: "They exercise this sacred function of Christ most of all in the Eucharistic liturgy or synaxis. There, acting in the person of Christ [*in persona Christi agentes*], and proclaiming His mystery, they join the offering of the faithful to the sacrifice of their Head."⁵⁷ In support of the use of *in persona Christi* language here, the footnote cites the Council of Trent's Decree on the Sacrifice of the Mass,⁵⁸ as well as *Mediator Dei*.⁵⁹ The council fathers do not feel the need, in this context, to appeal to ancient tradition.⁶⁰

Alongside *in persona Christi* language, the Vatican II documents also used the verb *repraesentare* to express the relationship of priests to Christ. This term is found for example

⁵⁵ The last footnote to LG 21 (no. 95 in the Abbott ed.) reads as follows: "St. Cyprian, 'Epist.,' 63, 14: PL 4, 386 (Hartel, III B, p. 713): 'Sacerdos uice Christi uere fungitur' ['The priest truly acts in the place of Christ']; St. John Chrysostom, 'In 2 Tim.,' Hom. 2, 4: PG 62, 612: The priest is the 'symbolon' of Christ; St. Ambrose, 'In Ps.,' 38, 25-6: PL 14, 1051-52 (CSEL 64, 203-4); Ambrosiaster, 'In 1 Tim.,' 5, 19: PL 17, 479 C and 'In Eph.,' 4, 11-2: PL 17, 387 C; Theodore of Mopsuestia, 'Hom. Catech.' XV, 21 and 24: ed. Tonneau, pp. 497 and 503; and Hesychius of Jerusalem, 'In Lev.,' L. 2, 9, 23: PG 93, 894B."

⁵⁶ LG 21.

⁵⁷ LG 28.

⁵⁸ Council of Trent, Session 22 (17 Sept. 1562), "Teaching and Canons on the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass," ch. 2, in *DEC 2*, 733-34.

⁵⁹ MD 84.

⁶⁰ Or perhaps the redactors of the document were aware that it would be harder to find support in patristic texts for the attribution of representation-of-Christ to *presbyters*.

in *Lumen gentium* 37: "With ready Christian obedience, [laypersons] as well as all disciples of Christ should accept whatever their sacred pastors, as representatives of Christ [*utpote Christum repraesentantes*], decree in their role as teachers and rulers in the Church" not long after the phrase "those who by reason of their sacred office represent the person of Christ [*personam Christi gerunt*]." In this context, it is clear that "representing Christ" is to be understood in the strong, sacramental sense: priests "make Christ present" in a permanent, objective way. The same sense is intended in *Sacrosanctum concilium* 7 when the person of the minister is identified as one of the multiple modes of Christ's presence in the Church's liturgical celebrations.⁶¹ When the expression "to represent Christ before [human beings]" is used in the Decree on Priestly Formation *Optatam totius*,⁶² however, it must be understood as having a weaker sense, because representing Christ is something that seminarians are supposed to *learn* to do as part of their pastoral training, rather than something flowing out of the character imprinted by the sacrament of orders.

The teaching of *Lumen gentium* is carried forward in subsequent conciliar texts, which refer back to it. This is the case in the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Presbyters *Presbyterorum Ordinis*,⁶³ where *Lumen gentium* 10 is the only reference used to support the use of *in persona Christi* language. In *Presbyterorum Ordinis* 2, as in *Lumen gentium* 21, the framework of the *tria munera* sets the classic teaching in a broader context, and action

⁶¹ Second Vatican Council, "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum concilium*," in Abbott and Gallagher, *Documents of Vatican II* (hereafter cited as SC), no. 7.

⁶² Second Vatican Council, "Decree on Priestly Formation *Optatam totius*," in Abbott and Gallagher, *Documents of Vatican II* (hereafter cited as OpT), no. 4.

⁶³ Second Vatican Council, "Decree on the Ministry and Life of Presbyters *Presbyterorum Ordinis*," in Abbott and Gallagher, *Documents of Vatican II* (hereafter cited as PO).

in persona Christi is not restricted exclusively to the cultic aspect of presbyteral ministry.⁶⁴ The assertion in *Presbyterorum Ordinis* 13 that presbyters act *in persona Christi* "especially" (*praesertim*) in the Eucharistic sacrifice implies that they do so, albeit to a lesser degree, in the other aspects of their ministry as well. A similar idea is found in the Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *Ad gentes*,⁶⁵ citing *Lumen gentium* 28: "[Presbyters] represent Christ [*Presbyteri personam Christi gerunt*], and are collaborators with the order of bishops in that threefold sacred task which by its very nature bears on the mission of the Church."⁶⁶

To conclude this rapid survey of the use of *in persona Christi* language in the documents of Vatican II, it may be said that the various expressions used to express the relation of priests (i.e. bishops or presbyters) to Christ do not always have the same meaning. Sometimes they are used more strictly, to express the uniqueness of the priest's role in the Eucharistic consecration. In other contexts they are used more broadly, in a way that encompasses the *tria munera*. The Council's intention is clearly to widen the theological scope of priestly ministry beyond the realm of cultic activity, while maintaining the connection among all three *munera*, and their rootedness in the sacrament of Order. But from the standpoint of Catholic tradition, what it means for a bishop to teach or to govern *in persona Christi* is not as immediately obvious as what it means for him to recite the words of consecration *in persona Christi*. Since the Council of Trent, *in persona Christi*

⁶⁴ "Con queste formule appare che 'in persona Christi' non è usato solo con riferimento alla consecrazione eucaristica e ai sacramenti, ma al triplice 'munus' e pertanto appaiono connessi con il sacramento anche gli altri due 'munera'." Rambaldi, "Alter-Christus, in persona Christi," 260.

⁶⁵ Second Vatican Council, "Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *Ad gentes*," in Abbott and Gallagher, *Documents of Vatican II* (hereafter cited as AG).

⁶⁶ AG 39.

language had been used primarily—if not exclusively—to explain the priest's role in the Eucharistic consecration. A single footnote, in *Lumen gentium* 21, attempts to ground *in persona Christi* theology in the writings of the fathers; the traditional status of this theology is taken for granted. There is no indication that it is in any way subject to dispute.

2.4 The 1971 Synod of Bishops

Two minor developments in terminology are to be noted in *Ultimis temporibus*, the document of the 1971 Synod of Bishops on the ordained priesthood.⁶⁷ In this text the priestly ministry of the New Testament is said to perpetuate the essential work of the apostles and to make Christ present: "it makes Christ, the head of the community, present in the exercise of His work of redeeming [humankind] and glorifying God perfectly."⁶⁸ All the priestly *munera* are included in this representation, beginning with the effective proclamation of the gospel, but preeminence is attached to the Eucharistic celebration; it is in this liturgical and sacramental act that the priest "especially" (*praesertim*) represents Christ. Further on in the same section, the adjective "sacramentally" is added to "makes Christ present."⁶⁹ A second development is the inclusion of the liturgical notion of presidency in the description of the priest's action *in persona Christi* in the Eucharistic celebration: "Only a priest is able to act in the person of Christ [*in persona Christi agere valet*] in presiding over and effecting the sacrificial banquet wherein the People of God are

⁶⁷ Synod of Bishops, "De sacerdotio ministeriale (30 Nov. 1971)," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 63 (1971): 898–922. Subsequent citations refer to the English translation in Synod of Bishops, *The Synodal Document on the Ministerial Priesthood, November, 1971* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1971).

⁶⁸ *Synodal Document*, 12.

⁶⁹ "The priest (...) makes Christ, the Savior of all [people], sacramentally present among his brothers and sisters, in both their personal and social lives." *Synodal Document*, 13. It is unclear from the context whether this form of representation refers to the priest's role in celebrating the sacraments, or whether it is priestly activity in general that is considered "sacramental"; but the latter appears more likely.

associated with Christ's offering (cf. LG 28).⁷⁰ The latter citation of *Lumen gentium* is the only support provided for the use of *in persona Christi* language in *Ultimis temporibus*, although the use of *praesertim* echoes *Presbyterorum Ordinis* 13, and the mention of "presiding" recalls the language of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 33.⁷¹

2.5 *Inter insigniores* and Commentaries

A few short years after the Synod, in a climate of rapid social change in the area of women's rights, increasingly insistent calls were being made within many Christian churches for the ordination of women. In this context there was open discussion among Catholic theologians regarding the question of whether this issue might perhaps be only a matter of ecclesiastical discipline, something that would be included in the power that the Church considers itself to have over the sacraments, "provided their essentials [remain] intact."⁷² The Catholic Church's first official response took the form of a Declaration from the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1976, *Inter insigniores*.⁷³ This document rests the normative authority of its conclusion upon the example of Christ as interpreted by the constant practice of the Church. Clearly distinguished from this argument

⁷⁰ *Synodal Document*, 13.

⁷¹ "Moreover, the prayers addressed to God by the priest who presides over the assembly in the person of Christ [*qui coetui in persona Christi praeest*] are said in the name of the entire holy people as well as of all present." SC 33.

⁷² "The council further declares that the church always had the power in administering the sacraments of making dispositions and changes it judged expedient for the well-being of recipients, or for the reverence due to the sacraments themselves, provided their essentials remained intact [*salva illorum substantia*], in view of changing affairs, times and places." Council of Trent, Session 21 (16 July 1562), "Teaching on Communion Under Both Kinds and of Children," ch. 2, in *DEC* 2, 726.

⁷³ Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Declaratio *Inter insigniores* circa quaestionem admissionis mulierum ad sacerdotium ministeriale [15 Oct. 1976]," in *Documenta inde a Concilio Vaticano Secundo expleto edita* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1985), 120–36. Subsequent citations refer to the English translation in *Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood* (Ottawa, ON: CCCB Publications Service, 1977), hereafter cited as *Inter insigniores*.

from Scripture and Tradition is a subsequent series of arguments *ex convenientia*,⁷⁴ based upon the *analogia fidei*.⁷⁵

The first premise of all the illustrative arguments based on the "fittingness" of reserving priestly ordination to males is the notion of *in persona Christi*, which is introduced as the constant doctrine of the Church, recently repeated and clarified by Vatican II: "The Church's constant teaching, repeated and clarified by the Second Vatican Council and again recalled by the 1971 Synod of Bishops (...) declares that the bishop or the priest, in the exercise of his ministry, does not act in his own name, *in persona propria*: he represents Christ [*Christum repraesentare*], who acts through him."⁷⁶ Considering the sustained criticism that the CDF acknowledges had been directed against the classic doctrine of the priesthood, and considering the importance of *in persona Christi* as the foundation of all its arguments based on fittingness, one might have expected the document to support its claim that *in persona Christi* belongs to the Church's "constant teaching" by providing a considerable selection of substantive patristic citations.⁷⁷ However, the document only provides a single quote from Cyprian: "'the priest truly acts in the place of Christ,' as Saint Cyprian already wrote in the third century."⁷⁸ The assertion that Cyprian

⁷⁴ "Having recalled the Church's norm and the basis thereof, it seems useful and opportune to illustrate this norm by showing the profound fittingness that theological reflection discovers." *Inter Insigniores*, 12.

⁷⁵ "It is not a question here of bringing forward a demonstrative argument, but of clarifying this teaching by the analogy of faith." *Inter Insigniores*, 12.

⁷⁶ *Inter Insigniores*, 12.

⁷⁷ "We should note at the start that it would be quite unreasonable to expect a document like *Inter insigniores* to present a full patristic argument. That would require extensive citations from every period of patristic teaching and would exceed the unavoidable limits of such a document. However, one could reasonably expect that the citations offered would be among the best and most telling that are available." John H. Wright, "Patristic Testimony on Women's Ordination in *Inter Insigniores*," *Theological Studies* 58 (1997): 517.

⁷⁸ *Inter Insigniores*, 12. The reference is to Cyprian of Carthage, *Ep.* 63.14, the very same passage cited in LG 21.

was "already" writing this in the third century is meant to imply that at least all subsequent church fathers and ecclesiastical writers taught essentially the same thing. That the writers of *Inter insigniores* would give only a single patristic citation to support such a major premise of their argument certainly suggests an assumption on their part that it would be easy enough to demonstrate the traditional status of *in persona Christi*. What it would have been even more important to demonstrate, however, is that the church fathers saw priestly representation of Christ as a role that required maleness—and not simply ordination—as a prerequisite. In other words, it must be asked whether the argument from "fittingness" is itself traditional: was *in persona Christi* ever used "backwards," so to speak?⁷⁹

Next the document tries to find a scriptural basis for the priest's ability to represent Christ. It does so by citing two Pauline texts, 2 Cor. 5:20 and Gal. 4:14. The first speaks of the apostle as an ambassador for God in the work of reconciliation. That God speaks through messengers of the gospel is undoubtedly a form of representation, but is this all that *in persona Christi* means in Catholic theology? The second text speaks of the charitable reception the Galatians gave to Paul: they received him "as Christ Jesus." But many sayings of Jesus exhort his disciples to treat one another as they would treat him (cf. Matt. 25:40). Furthermore, neither of the scriptural citations relates to the Eucharist, even though the document goes on to speak of how the Eucharistic celebration is the "supreme expression" of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ; when he recites the words of consecration, the priest takes the role of Christ to the point of being his very image: "taking the role of Christ, to

⁷⁹ The logical difficulties raised by the CDF's arguments on women's incapacity to represent Christ as head and bridegroom of the church, as pointed out in the numerous critical responses to *Inter insigniores*, may account for the absence of such arguments in John Paul II's Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio sacerdotalis*.

the point of being his very image, when he pronounces the words of consecration."⁸⁰ The citation of Thomas Aquinas (*ST*, III^a q. 83 a. 1 ad 3) here is much more apposite than the scriptural citations. The logical gap between the representational theology contained in the New Testament and that of Aquinas would need to be filled by a critical, methodical study of the intervening centuries of historical development.

The official commentary on *Inter insigniores*, penned by an anonymous "theologian-expert," expressly downplays the need for a thorough investigation of the traditional status of *in persona Christi*. "That the priest performs the Eucharist and reconciles sinners in the name and place of Christ is affirmed repeatedly by the Magisterium and constantly taught by Fathers and theologians. It would not appear to serve any useful purpose to give a multitude of quotations to show this."⁸¹ The author does provide one additional ancient reference, from Theodore the Studite (759–826 CE), and suggests that the Latin formula *in persona Christi* is equivalent in meaning to the Greek expression μίμημα Χριστοῦ—i.e., representation in the artistic sense.⁸²

Another commentary published in *L'Osservatore Romano* in defence of *Inter insigniores*, by Aimé-Georges Martimort, similarly takes for granted that the formula at issue is firmly anchored in the ancient tradition: "It is hardly necessary to stress how traditional [the formula] is. We find it already in Cyprian, in connection with the Eucharistic celebration, which must obey Christ's institution strictly: [Epist. 63.14; ed.

⁸⁰ *Inter Insigniores*, 12–13.

⁸¹ "Commentary Prepared at the Congregation's Request by a Theologian Expert," in *The Order of Priesthood: Nine Commentaries on the Vatican Decree Inter Insigniores*, OSV Source Book (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1978), 39 (hereafter cited as "Official Commentary").

⁸² "Official Commentary," 40.

Hartel (CSEL 3), p. 713)].⁸³ This is the patristic locus already used in *Inter insigniores* itself. But Martimort goes on to cite a few more examples from patristic authors. He begins with a handful of references to the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch (*Magn.* 6; *Trall.* 2; 3), but is forced to admit that "his 'typology' is very vague and will transmit its uncertain character to the Oriental treatises on ecclesiastical discipline that succeed one another until the end of the 4th century."⁸⁴ In other words, this is not a promising trail. "St. John Chrysostom, on the other hand, gave his teaching a more solid foundation by basing it on the Second Letter to the Corinthians [*Hom. in 2 Cor.* 5.20; in PG 61.477-478]."⁸⁵ But the latter passage only affirms and amplifies the import of Paul's statement that through the apostles, both Christ and God are entreating Christians to be reconciled to God; there is no discussion of the specific mode of Christ's presence through the actions of ordained ministers.

One can only gather from Martimort's discussion that the true starting-point of *in persona Christi* theology is Ambrose's theory of verbal consecration.⁸⁶ The idea that it is Christ's own words in the institution narrative that produce the sacrament⁸⁷ inevitably leads to the conclusion that Christ is speaking through the priest, when the latter recites the words of institution. Although this theory became traditional in the Western Church, it is well known that the Eastern Church was less concerned with a causal explanation for the

⁸³ Aimé-Georges Martimort, "The Value of a Theological Formula 'in Persona Christi'," in *The Order of Priesthood: Nine Commentaries on the Vatican Decree Inter Insigniores*, OSV Source Book (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1978), 88.

⁸⁴ Martimort, "Value of a Formula," 89.

⁸⁵ Martimort, "Value of a Formula," 89.

⁸⁶ Martimort, "Value of a Formula," 90.

⁸⁷ Ambrose of Milan, *Sacram.* 4.14, in *Des sacrements; Des mystères; Explication du Symbole*, 2nd ed., ed. and trans. Bernard Botte, reprint, 1961, Sources chrétiennes 25bis (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1994). Subsequent citations, both in the original and in French translation, refer to this edition.

consecration, and attached more theological weight to the epiclesis.⁸⁸ If *in persona Christi* theology originated and developed only (or primarily) in the Western tradition, claims about its being the "constant teaching of the Church" are inevitably weakened.

2.6 John Paul II

The postconciliar period saw the emergence of what many have termed a priestly "identity crisis." Throughout his pontificate, John Paul II continually sought to address the crisis by insisting upon the ontological foundation of the priesthood, and warning against a purely "functional" understanding of presbyteral ministry. Although many of his ideas were developed in the annual Holy Thursday Letters to Priests, his most extended discussion of the subject is found in the Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis*,⁸⁹ on the formation of presbyters. The most frequently recurring leitmotiv of this document is the traditional doctrine of character, but expressed not so much with the language of *potestas* as with the language of *configuratio ad Christum*.⁹⁰

John Paul II's teaching in *Pastores dabo vobis* on the nature of the ordained priesthood is in seamless continuity with earlier twentieth-century magisterial teaching. The originality of *Pastores dabo vobis* lies first of all in the insistence with which the ontological relation of the priest to the person of Christ is asserted;⁹¹ secondly, in the

⁸⁸ See John H. McKenna, *The Eucharistic Epiclesis: A Detailed History from the Patristic to the Modern Era*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, Ill.: Hillenbrand, 2009).

⁸⁹ John Paul II, "Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis* on the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day [25 Mar. 1992]," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 84 (1992): 657–804. Subsequent citations refer to the English translation in J. Michael Miller, ed., *The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations of John Paul II* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1998), hereafter cited as PDV, followed by the paragraph number.

⁹⁰ Both expressions are Thomistic; see John P. McIntyre, "In persona Christi Capitis: A Commentary on Canon 1008," *Studia canonica* 30, no. 2 (1996): 379. McIntyre counts at least fifteen occurrences of configuration-language in *Pastores dabo vobis*.

⁹¹ E.g.: "The priest finds the full truth of his identity in being a derivation, a specific participation in and continuation of Christ himself, the one High Priest of the New and Eternal Covenant. The priest is a living and transparent image of Christ the Priest." PDV 12.4.

frequency with which Christ is described as "Head and Shepherd" of the Church (twenty-two times);⁹² and thirdly, in the application of the image of Christ as Spouse/Bridegroom of the Church, particularly in the context of the law of celibacy.⁹³ The main occurrences of *in persona Christi* language (PDV 15; 16; 21) are supported only by citations of the documents of Vatican II, along with the "propositions" made by the participants at the 1990 Synod. John Paul II chooses not to respond to the numerous contemporary challenges to *in persona Christi* theology (of which he cannot have been unaware). For him, it appears that the matter is closed.

2.7 Other Recent Uses of *in persona Christi* Language by the Magisterium

During the post-conciliar period, *in persona Christi* language has become a commonplace in documents of the Roman Catholic magisterium dealing with ordained ministry. Most notably, it has been used to explain the "fittingness" of the Catholic Church's exclusion of women from the ordained priesthood;⁹⁴ to defend the necessity of a validly ordained priest for valid eucharistic consecration;⁹⁵ and to justify a sharp theoretical and practical differentiation between clergy and laity.⁹⁶ It was enshrined in the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* (can. 899§2; 900; 1008⁹⁷) and the 1990 *Code of Canons of the Oriental*

⁹² E.g.: "In the Church and on behalf of the Church, priests are a sacramental representation of Jesus Christ, the Head and Shepherd (...). In a word, priests exist and act in order to proclaim the Gospel to the world and to build up the Church in the name and person of Christ the Head and Shepherd." PDV 15.4.

⁹³ See PDV 29.4.

⁹⁴ *Inter Insigniores*.

⁹⁵ Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Epistola *Sacerdotium ministeriale* ad Ecclesiae Catholicae Episcopos de quibusdam quaestionibus ad Eucharistiae ministrum spectantibus [6 Aug. 1983]," in *Documenta inde a Concilio Vaticano Secundo expleto edita* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1985), 238–45.

⁹⁶ Roman Curia, *Instruction Ecclesiae de Mysterio on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priest* [15 Aug. 1997] (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997).

⁹⁷ The latter canon, together with 1009, was recently modified by Benedict XVI in order to make clearer the distinction between the diaconate and the other orders: only bishops and presbyters, who share in the ordained priesthood, act *in persona Christi*: "Those who are constituted in the order of the episcopate or

Churches (can. 698). Moreover, the Holy See has repeatedly insisted on the importance of *in persona Christi* theology in responses to bilateral ecumenical statements on Eucharist and ministry, such as ARCIC I.⁹⁸ It should be noted, however, that many ecumenical statements—including the Dombes Document,⁹⁹ ARCIC itself,¹⁰⁰ the Lutheran–Roman Catholic text on "Ministry in the Church,"¹⁰¹ and the Lima Document (BEM)¹⁰²—are quite sympathetic to the idea that the presider of the liturgical assembly represents Christ in a unique way, even though they do not use the specific phrase *in persona Christi*.

the presbyterate receive the mission and capacity to act in the person of Christ the Head [*in persona Christi Capitis*], whereas deacons are empowered to serve the People of God in the ministries of the liturgy, the word and charity." "Apostolic Letter *motu proprio Omnium in mentem*," 26 Oct. 2009, *The Holy See*, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_letters/documents/hf_ben-xvi_apl_20091026_codex-iuris-canonici_en.html.

⁹⁸ Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Animadversiones super enuntiatis ultimis Commissionis vulgo 'ARCIC' cognominatae [27 Mar. 1982]," in *Documenta inde a Concilio Vaticano Secundo expleto edita* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1985), 208–22.

⁹⁹ The Dombes Document presents a highly christological interpretation of the pastoral ministry: "Le propre du ministère pastoral est d'assurer et de signifier la dépendance de l'Église envers le Christ, source de sa mission et fondement de son unité." Groupe des Dombes, *Pour une réconciliation des ministères: Éléments d'accord entre catholiques et protestants* (Taizé: Presses de Taizé, 1973), no. 20. In nos. 26–31, each of the ordained minister's essential functions in the church is presented as an action of Christ in the present. See also Catherine E. Clifford, *The Groupe Des Dombes: A Dialogue of Conversion*, American University Studies, Theology and Religion 231 Series 7 (New York, N.Y.: P. Lang, 2005), 152–53.

¹⁰⁰ "Because the eucharist is the memorial of the sacrifice of Christ, the action of the presiding minister in reciting again the words of Christ at the last supper (...) is seen to stand in a sacramental relation to what Christ himself did in offering his own sacrifice." ARCIC, "Ministry and Ordination," in *The Final Report: Windsor, September 1981* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Forward Movement Publications, 1982), no. 13.

¹⁰¹ Among the "common observations" in the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Statement is the acknowledgment that "the Ministry stands with the people of God under Christ but also speaks in the name of Christ to his people." "Eucharist and Ministry: A Lutheran-Roman Catholic Statement," in *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV*, ed. Paul C. Empie and T. Austin Murphy (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1970), 11.

¹⁰² The Lima Document refers to the presidency of an ordained minister as a sign of the invisible presidency of Christ: "It is Christ who invites to the meal and who presides at it. He is the shepherd who leads the people of God, the prophet who announces the Word of God, the priest who celebrates the mystery of God. In most churches, this presidency is signified by an ordained minister. The one who presides at the eucharistic celebration in the name of Christ makes clear that the rite is not the assemblies' own creation or possession." *BEM*, E29, cf. M14.

3 Contemporary Critiques of *in persona Christi*

In the theological arena, the classic Catholic theology of priesthood has sustained increasing criticism in recent decades from the combined perspectives of biblical hermeneutics,¹⁰³ socio-historical research,¹⁰⁴ and feminist historical reconstruction.¹⁰⁵ Perhaps because Vatican II left some "unfinished business" in this area (while opening up fresh perspectives¹⁰⁶), there has also been a lively debate among Catholic theologians regarding the specific identity of the ordained person in relation to the laity, who are also believed to "image" Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18) and to share in his priesthood, by virtue of their baptism (LG 10).¹⁰⁷

In the context of these contemporary debates, *in persona Christi* theology has been critiqued from many different angles. Four typical positions, ranging from mild to severe criticism, are summarized below.

One school of thought, represented by Congar, Schillebeeckx, and Power, contrasts the scholastic theology of priesthood unfavourably with the vision of the patristic era and

¹⁰³ A helpful and succinct presentation of current understandings of the NT witness is provided by Donald Senior, "Biblical Foundations for the Theology of Priesthood," in *Priests: Identity and Ministry*, ed. Robert J. Wister (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1990), 11–29. For a highly polemical treatment of these issues, see Herbert Haag, *Upstairs, Downstairs: Did Jesus Want a Two-Class Church?* (New York: Crossroad, 1998).

¹⁰⁴ See, *inter alia*, Edward Schillebeeckx, *Ministry: Leadership in the Community of Jesus* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), which is to be read in light of his later and more nuanced work, *The Church with a Human Face: A New and Expanded Theology of Ministry* (New York: Crossroad, 1985).

¹⁰⁵ The classic study is Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York, N.Y.: Crossroad, 1983). See also Karen Jo Torjesen, *When Women were Priests: Women's Leadership in the Early Church and the Scandal of their Subordination in the Rise of Christianity* (San Francisco, Cal.: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995); Ute E. Eisen, *Women Officeholders in Early Christianity: Epigraphical and Literary Studies* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2000).

¹⁰⁶ Sesboüé, "Déplacement des catégories."

¹⁰⁷ The participation of the baptized in the "common priesthood" is affirmed in the words accompanying the post-baptismal anointing on the head, in the *Rite of Baptism for Children*: "God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed you into his holy people. He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as members of his body, sharing everlasting life." CCCB edition, no. 63, p. 31.

of the Eastern tradition. The latter perspective, it is argued, integrates the ordained minister within the *ecclesia*, so that his action *in persona Christi* can be properly situated within the *in persona ecclesiae*, and not the reverse; moreover, the role of the Holy Spirit in sacramental efficacy is more fully acknowledged.¹⁰⁸ The danger of a "direct" or "immediate" christological basis for ministry is that it ties the action of the Spirit too strongly to the institution of the priesthood, and tends to downplay (or even render superfluous) the role of the *church* as embodied in the liturgical assembly.¹⁰⁹ A more pneumatologically oriented theology is able to show "that it is the transforming power of the Spirit that weds Christ and faithful together into one body, as it is the Spirit who turns the prayer and ritual of the body into a life-giving action."¹¹⁰ In other words, although *in persona Christi* is not an *erroneous* way of qualifying the ministry of the liturgical/pastoral leader, it is *incomplete*, and open to misunderstanding when combined with the language of *potestas*.¹¹¹

A second approach, which we find reflected in the writings of Kilmartin, takes the critique one step further. While acknowledging the traditional and even scriptural basis for *in persona Christi*,¹¹² it argues that the latter is only a *secondary* qualification of the

¹⁰⁸ Yves-M.-J. Congar, *Je crois en l'Esprit Saint*, vol. 3, *Théologies* (Paris: Cerf, 1980), 306–7. A similar, but more radical, position is taken by Schillebeeckx in *Ministry*: "[T]he first Christian millennium—above all in the pre-Nicene period—expressed its view of the ministry chiefly in ecclesial and pneumatological terms, or better pneuma-christologically, whereas the second Christian millennium gave the ministry a directly christological basis and shifted the mediation of the church into the background. In this way a theology of the ministry developed without an ecclesiology" (p. 66).

¹⁰⁹ Schillebeeckx, *Church with a Human Face*, 206.

¹¹⁰ David N. Power, "Representing Christ in Community and Sacrament," in *Being a Priest Today*, ed. Donald J. Goergen (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 103.

¹¹¹ Cf. the remarks of Yves Congar: "La perspective purement christologique de l'*in persona Christi* ne rend pas compte de tous les éléments qui entrent dans une théologie et une pratique complètes de l'ordination." Foreword to Marliangeas, *Clés pour une théologie du ministère*, 11.

¹¹² "Paul understands that he represents God the Father in preaching the message of reconciliation and so acts in the place of Christ, *in persona Christi*." Edward J. Kilmartin, "Apostolic Office: Sacrament of Christ," *Theological Studies* 36 (1975): 244.

ordained minister, derived from his primary function as a representative of the church, acting *in persona Ecclesiae*.¹¹³ An immediate representation of Christ runs the risk of obviating the necessary role of the church's *faith* in mediating the presence of the Risen Christ. "A direct representation of Christ through the ministry of the Church would be possible only if there existed a ministry which could operate independently of the faith of the Church."¹¹⁴ As evidenced by the theological conclusions the author draws from it,¹¹⁵ this line of reasoning leads to an outright contradiction of the argument of *Mediator Dei*¹¹⁶ and *Inter insigniores*¹¹⁷ that the priest represents the church only because he first represents Christ, the head of the church.

A third, highly original approach—advanced most recently by Dennis Ferrara in an exchange of articles with Sara Butler—is to establish a contrast between the authentic teaching of Thomas Aquinas on *in persona Christi* (seen as still relevant and helpful for today) and the "dangerous myth of representationalism"¹¹⁸ espoused by the contemporary magisterium. Properly understood, action *in persona Christi* is instrumentality in its purest form, but has nothing to do with representation. In fact, a positive representation of Christ by the priest would obscure Christ's action in the eucharistic consecration and reduce his presence in the elements to a mere symbol. Thomas himself, it is proposed, conceived of

¹¹³ This position is also taken in Gino Mattheeuws, "Presiding at the Eucharist: Sacrament of the Ecclesial Christ," *Questions liturgiques* 81, no. 3–4 (2000): 227–35.

¹¹⁴ Kilmartin, "Apostolic Office," 260.

¹¹⁵ Kilmartin, "Apostolic Office," 261–63. See also Edward J. Kilmartin, "Bishop and Presbyter as Representatives of the Church and Christ," in *Women Priests* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), 295–302.

¹¹⁶ "The priest acts for the people only because he represents Jesus Christ, who is Head of all His members and offers Himself in their stead." MD 84.

¹¹⁷ It is true that the priest represents the Church, which is the Body of Christ. But if he does so, it is precisely because he first represents Christ himself, who is the Head and Shepherd of the Church." *Inter Insigniores*, 15.

¹¹⁸ Dennis Michael Ferrara, "In Persona Christi: Towards a Second Naiveté," *Theological Studies* 57 (March 1996): 65; Dennis Michael Ferrara, "Representation or Self-Effacement: The Axiom in Persona Christi in St. Thomas and the Magisterium," *Theological Studies* 55 (1994): 195–224.

the priest's action *in persona Christi* as purely instrumental, ministerial, and self-effacing—neither requiring nor producing any unique likeness of the priest to Christ. "Apart from this fundamental self-effacement ('which is in the highest degree the case of the Eucharist'), all talk of 'representation' is a sinful usurpation and self-arrogation of the power and authority of Christ, the sole Bridegroom, Head, and Shepherd of the Church."¹¹⁹

The fourth and most radical critical approach is from the perspective of theological anthropology, exemplified in the work of feminist scholars such as Johnson, Wijngaards, Jensen, Doyle, et al.¹²⁰ This approach contends that *in persona Christi* theology—as it has been appropriated by the kyriarchy—constitutes in the first place a denial of the equal dignity of women, created in the divine image and redeemed in Christ, and secondly, a denial of the fundamental equality of all the baptized, both male and female (Gal. 3:28 being the ubiquitous proof text for this argument). Against the argument from "fittingness" advanced by *Inter insigniores*, this school of thought argues that there can be no inherent difference between the representation of Christ by males and females: "The image of Christ lies not in sexual similarity to the human man Jesus but in coherence with the narrative shape of his compassionate, liberating life in the world, through the power of the Spirit. (...) Theologically, the capacity of women and men to be *sym-morphos* to the *eikōn* of Christ

¹¹⁹ Ferrara, "Representation or Self-Effacement," 222. Ferrara fails to disprove that a "representationalist" view of the priesthood can legitimately find support in the writings of Thomas Aquinas. He avoids discussing the very passage of the *Summa* cited by *Inter insigniores*, in which Thomas asserts that "The priest also bears Christ's image, in whose person and by whose power he pronounces the words of consecration (...). And so in a measure the priest and the victim are the same." *ST*, III^a q. 83 a. 1 ad 3. This statement clearly contradicts Ferrara's claim that Thomas stresses "the dissimilarity and nonidentity of the consecrating priest with Christ." Ferrara, "Representation or Self-Effacement," 207.

¹²⁰ Numerous articles by these and other authors are provided on the womenpriests.org web site.

is identical."¹²¹ In a similar vein, the recent Cyprus Statement by the International Anglican–Orthodox Dialogue states that gender is not integral to the symbolism of the priesthood; humanity is the only possible prerequisite, as it was in the Incarnation: "What is significant in Christ's humanity, and what is symbolised by the humanity of the ordained priest, is the human condition which the Son assumes in order to save."¹²² The use of *in persona Christi* theology by the Roman Catholic magisterium is nothing but a thinly disguised justification for the clergy's claim to superiority over the laity:

Isn't our common vocation "to put on Christ" downplayed by the claim that only ordained ministers are able "to act in persona Christi?" Such a jarring dichotomy between the elite, clerical class and the plebian [*sic*] non-ordained "others" belies the common priesthood we are called to celebrate. Where is the recognition of our call to wash each other's feet in a communion of equal members gifted by the Spirit?¹²³

Despite their differences, the above-cited interpretive approaches are in agreement that the use of *in persona Christi* language by the twentieth-century magisterium is not entirely consistent with the New Testament and the best of Christian tradition. Moreover, they suggest that such usage is difficult to reconcile with the renewed ecclesiology embodied in the documents of Vatican II.¹²⁴ Finally, they share a common concern to

¹²¹ Elizabeth A. Johnson, "Imaging God, Embodying Christ: Women as a Sign of the Times," in *The Church Women Want: Catholic Women in Dialogue*, ed. Elizabeth A. Johnson (New York: Crossroad, 2002), 56.

¹²² International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue, *The Church of the Triune God: The Cyprus Agreed Statement of the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue, 2006* (London: Anglican Communion Office, 2006), 56.

¹²³ Simone Demers, "Pope John Paul's Holy Thursday Letter Presents Problems," *Catholic New Times*, 4 July 2004, http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0MKY/is_12_28/ai_n6102288.

¹²⁴ The difficulty in reconciling an older and a newer theology of priesthood is reflected in the ambiguity, in *Sacrosanctum concilium* and the products of the postconciliar liturgical reform, that surrounds the subject of liturgical "celebration." Given that it is the entire *ecclesia* that "celebrates" the eucharistic liturgy (SC 6; 102-109), can the *assembly* as such be properly said to "celebrate" as well, or is it only the "celebrant" (priest) who does so, albeit with the "presence" and "active participation" of the faithful (SC 14; 27; 30)? See the seminal article by Yves-M.-J. Congar, "L' 'Ecclesia' ou communauté chrétienne, sujet intégral de l' action liturgique," in *La liturgie après Vatican II: Bilans, études, prospective*, ed. Jean-Pierre Jossua and Yves-M.-J. Congar, *Unam sanctam* 66 (Paris: Cerf, 1967), 241-282.

challenge any theology that would undermine the fundamental equality of all believers (cf. LG 32) by creating unnecessary distinctions in status between the baptized and the ordained. On this view, magisterial *in persona Christi* theology is problematic inasmuch as it tends to support a closed, clericalist, hierarchicalist ideology.

The magisterial position is not without its sincere and capable defenders. However, these often exhibit a tendency to treat the idea that the priest acts *in persona Christi* as such a self-evident proposition that it scarcely needs any historical justification;¹²⁵ or else, when they do treat the question from a historical perspective, do not always succeed in avoiding the dangers of anachronism and eisegesis. For instance, Aidan Nichols claims that "the Twelve enjoy, *in the Synoptics*, a threefold *office*: cultic celebration; the proclamation of the Word of God; and the government of the community of Jesus' followers (...). These three tasks correspond, *of course*, to the three offices ascribed in Church tradition to Christ himself."¹²⁶ In conscious opposition to the "hermeneutic of suspicion," this group of authors practises a "hermeneutic of recognition," which means that "we who share the developed consciousness of the later Church come to the evidences of the earliest Church *in positive expectation of finding* the seeds from which the great tree of the *Catholica* has grown."¹²⁷ Granted that there is no such thing as a value-free investigation of historical evidence, it would seem, however, that respect for the sources requires one to make a distinction

¹²⁵ For example, Thomas McGovern, "Priestly Identity: Other Christs," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 92 (1992): 21–29.

¹²⁶ Aidan Nichols, *Holy Order: Apostolic Priesthood from the New Testament to the Second Vatican Council*, Oscott 5 (Dublin: Veritas, 1990), 8 (italics added). Nichols has no difficulty in attributing an explicit *in persona Christi* theology to Augustine: "This conviction that the ordained, in performing their priestly office, are simply instruments of Christ the Head, acting in his *persona*, playing his part so that he may act through their instrumentality, would become a permanent acquisition of Catholic teaching." Nichols, *Holy Order*, 60. (Nichols cites no primary texts to support this claim.)

¹²⁷ Nichols, *Holy Order*, 4.

between the recognition of a structure or pattern that is intrinsic to the text and the imposition of a completely extrinsic structure (e.g. the *tria munera*), borrowed from a much later period in the history of theology, on otherwise unconnected data.

It is important to note that what is objectionable or controversial about *in persona Christi* theology in contemporary debates is not what it says about the agency of Christ in the sacraments, or even about the *instrumentality* of the minister, but rather, what it says about the *person* and *status* of the minister. Here we reach the crux of the matter: Must we speak only of a ministry of "transparency" and "self-effacement," or is it legitimate to speak of the priesthood as a positive, quasi-sacramental *re-presentation* of Christ? And how is such a representation "essentially" different, then, from the effects of baptism?

When contemporary critics of *in persona Christi* theology attempt to explain how and why the Western theology of priesthood allegedly deviated from the New Testament and early Christian praxis, they adduce a wide range of possible factors: (1) the emergence of the clergy as a privileged social class;¹²⁸ (2) The Vulgate's mistranslation of 2 Cor. 2:10;¹²⁹ (3) the proliferation of absolute ordinations and the resultant clericalization of the eucharistic liturgy;¹³⁰ (4) a Christocentric shift in medieval piety, fuelled by monastic

¹²⁸ Schillebeeckx, *Church with a Human Face*, 204–5.

¹²⁹ The Vulgate renders this verse as follows: "Cui autem aliquid donatis et ego nam et ego quod donavi si quid donavi propter uos in persona Christi" (Stuttgart ed.). But the Greek text has "ἐν προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ," which would have been more accurately translated as "coram Christo" (in the presence of Christ). See Power, "Representing Christ," 98. The version of the Pauline epistles in the Vulgate was a slight revision of the Vetus Latina (by persons unknown), not a new translation, so the mistranslation of ἐν προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ is quite early. It had become the predominant reading of that verse by the early fourth century. See Marliangeas, *Clés pour une théologie du ministère*, 42–46. Despite the numerous subsequent revisions of the Vulgate, up to and including the Nova Vulgata (1979), this phrase has remained unchanged. It is to be surmised that its survival is due in large part to its use in support of a representational theology of ministry, from the patristic era onwards.

¹³⁰ Kilmartin speaks of the "gradual reduction of the laity, in theory and practice, to the state of passive bystanders" in the "early Middle Ages." Edward J. Kilmartin, *Theology*, vol. 1 of *Christian Liturgy: Theology and Practice* (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1988), 290.

spirituality;¹³¹ (5) the spread of a juridical mentality (particularly from the twelfth century onward) which separated the *potestas ordinis* from the *potestas iurisdictionis*;¹³² (6) the Neoplatonic influence of Pseudo-Dionysius;¹³³ and (7) psychological factors among clerics themselves.¹³⁴ The critics strongly suggest that the medieval theology of priesthood was shaped more decisively by such extrinsic factors—social, cultural, intellectual—than by the received tradition of the first millennium, or even by a properly theological process of reflection.

Without denying the influence of all or any of the above factors in shaping medieval theologies of ordained ministry in general, it is possible to question whether they do justice to the development of the theology of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ. There are some scholars today who are willing to concede that the Christic identification of the liturgical leader may, in fact, have a firm basis in the ancient tradition. Thomas Rausch observes: "The concept of the bishops and priests acting *in persona Christi* is an ancient one, based on the bishop's role as leader of the local church. Its roots lie much deeper in the tradition than some scholars are willing to admit."¹³⁵ According to Bernard Cooke, it is possible to find in the great fathers such as Ambrose, Augustine, John Chrysostom, and Theodore of

¹³¹ Jean Leclercq, *Regards monastiques sur le Christ au moyen âge*, Jésus et Jésus-Christ 56 (Paris: Desclée, 1993).

¹³² Kilmartin, "Apostolic Office," 260; "Bishop and Presbyter," 299.

¹³³ Power, "Representing Christ," 99.

¹³⁴ "Living apart from the general run of people, wearing identifying clothing, remaining unmarried, acceptance into a group which had only lifelong commitment allowable to it, tonsured, exempt from civil and military service, untouched by civil taxation, and out of the reach of civil courts—all this clearly led to a 'group apart,' a separated caste, which is endorsed by the very etymology of the word 'kleros'." Kenan B. Osborne, *Priesthood: A History of Ordained Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church* (New York: Paulist, 1989), 148.

¹³⁵ Thomas P. Rausch, "Priestly Identity: Priority of Representation and the Iconic Argument," *Worship* 73, no. 2 (1999): 171. Cf. André de Halleux's view: "L'idée de la représentation du Christ par ses ministres a des racines néotestamentaires et patristiques incontestables, mais rien n'oblige à l'expliquer à partir des pré-supposés du 'système' néothomiste." "Ministère et sacerdoce," *Revue théologique de Louvain* 18 (1987): 436.

Mopsuestia the groundwork for a christological interpretation of ordained ministry; and "[t]hrough Leo I, Gregory I, Isidore of Seville, and Damascene the doctrine passes into medieval thought."¹³⁶ More pertinently, Cooke raises the question of "the wide range of symbolic representation, the celebrant exemplifying Christ, or God the Father, or the first apostles, and of this representation being merely pedagogical or extending beyond that to sacramental efficacy. (...) Already in Ignatius this sacramental function of the *episkopos* is mentioned, and we find it suggested in Clement of Rome, Irenaeus, Origen, Cyprian, the *Apostolic Tradition*, and the *Didascalia*."¹³⁷

Before we proceed to a careful examination of the ancient sources, it will be important to establish the hermeneutical criteria that will allow the identification of antecedents to *in persona Christi* theology. It is to this subject that we will turn in Chapter 2.

¹³⁶ Bernard Cooke, *Ministry to Word and Sacraments: History and Theology* (Philadelphia, Penn.: Fortress Press, 1976), 560.

¹³⁷ Cooke, *Ministry to Word and Sacraments*, 547.

CHAPTER 2 CRITERIA FOR A STUDY OF THE EARLY SOURCES

The objective of this dissertation is to arrive at a judgment, on purely historical and logical grounds, about whether there are elements in ancient Christian tradition which may legitimately be considered antecedents to the classic Western teaching on sacerdotal representation-of-Christ. Before proceeding with our study, the lacunae in current scholarship will be reviewed. These lacunae are primarily of a methodological nature. The tendency of scholars, when discussing the history of *in persona Christi* theology, has been to provide no more than a few strings of patristic citations. Moreover, they have tended to concentrate their attention on the phrase *in persona Christi* to the exclusion of other possible formulations of representation-of-Christ.

After the *status quaestionis*, we will begin to establish methodological criteria for a more comprehensive, inclusive study of the patristic evidence. The first task will be to delimit the *terminus a quo* in such a way as to minimize the risk of anachronistic comparisons between the inchoate ministerial roles of the primitive church and the well-defined clerical system of the medieval church. An admittedly arbitrary *terminus ad quem* will be chosen, largely for the sake of keeping the volume of sources within manageable limits. General criteria for selecting sources will be discussed, with a view to ensuring sufficient diversity. Several pages will be devoted to identifying the specific Greek and Latin lexemes that may reliably be used to recognize instances of sacerdotal language. Finally, three analytical criteria will be presented. These will form the lens through which every primary source will be viewed in Chapters 3 and 4, to arrive at a definite judgment regarding the presence or absence of genuine antecedents to *in persona Christi* theology.

1 Status Quaestionis

There is at present no monograph that offers a complete overview of the historical development of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ before the scholastic period and the emergence of the classic Western theology of priesthood. The definitive study on the phrases *in persona Christi* and *in persona Ecclesiae* was published in 1978 by Bernard-Dominique Marliangeas.¹ He is frequently cited as the authority on the subject, and no subsequent author has ever questioned the validity of his findings and conclusions.² However, it is important to recognize the methodological constraints of this work (as the author himself does at every turn). In the first place, he is exclusively interested in the history of the two *phrases* identified in the title. While he does not deny the possibility that *alternative expressions* of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ might well be found in early sources, his narrow focus on *in persona Christi* leads him to cite only a few interesting examples of those,³ and move on. His examples include the famous phrase from Cyprian's *Ep.* 63.14 (cited by *Lumen gentium* 21 and *Inter insigniores*): "sacerdos uice Christi uere fungitur," and a statement by the early post-patristic author Florus of Lyons that "[Christ] speaks every day through his priests."⁴ Because these expressions do not use the precise words *in persona Christi*, they are glossed over, despite their close resemblance—and possible antecedence—to *in persona Christi* theology.

¹ Marliangeas, *Clés pour une théologie du ministère*.

² Reviews of B.-D. Marliangeas, *Clés pour une théologie du ministère: In persona Christi, in persona Ecclesiae*: J. Chênevert, *Science et Esprit* 31 (October-December 1979): 407-8; G. González, *Ciencia Tomista* 107 (July-September 1980): 456; Edward J. Kilmartin, *Theological Studies* 40, no. 3 (1979): 540-41; Achiel Peelman, *Église et Théologie* 10 (1979): 421-22; Giuseppe Rambaldi, *Gregorianum* 61, no. 2 (1980): 379-82; F. Ruello, *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 68 (January-March 1980): 111-56.

³ Marliangeas, *Clés pour une théologie du ministère*, 47–48, 51.

⁴ "Ille [Christus] in suis sacerdotibus quotidie loquitur." *Expositio missae* 60.3, in Paul Duc, ed., *Etude sur l'Expositio missae de Florus de Lyon, suivie d'une édition critique du texte* (Belley: Imprimerie Chaduc, 1937).

Secondly, even for his two chosen phrases the author makes no claim at exhaustivity for the patristic period,⁵ or for the medieval period before the thirteenth century. Here again, Marliangeas is content to cite interesting examples⁶ and move on. The central focus of his study is scholastic theology, and above all the teaching of Thomas Aquinas. As for subsequent developments, he concludes, "les théologiens postérieurs n'ont rien apporté de vraiment nouveau quant aux perceptions fondamentales exprimées ainsi par le Docteur Angélique."⁷

Given the methodological limitations just stated, it would be a serious mistake to take Marliangeas's work as the "last word" on sacerdotal representation-of-Christ theology as a whole. This could lead to the erroneous impression that no one before the advent of scholasticism attributed a strong, quasi-sacramental representativity to the priest. It is true that for seven centuries now, sacerdotal representation-of-Christ theology has been conveniently summarized and specified by the phrase *in persona Christi*. But this phrase alone does not exhaust the meaning of that theology, which must be understood to embrace a cluster of related notions and expressions found in the tradition—whether after or before

⁵ The patristic usage of these expressions consistently manifests itself in the context of biblical exegesis, and specifically in the pursuit of a non-literal meaning through the attribution of a certain assertion (e.g. a prophecy) to a subject *other than* the speaker. The technique can be used to resolve obscurities, or to avoid theological difficulties, as when Athanasius claims that the cry of Jesus from the cross was spoken "in our person": "ἐκ προσώπου ἡμετέρου λέγει." Athanasius, *De incarnatione Verbi*, in PG 26.988C.

⁶ The most notable of these is a passage from a letter by Severus of Antioch (ca. 465–538), which states that the priest pronounces the words of Eucharistic consecration "as in the person of Christ." In *The Sixth Book of the Select Letters of Severus Patriarch of Antioch in the Syriac Version of Athanasius of Nisibis*, vol. 2, (*Translation*) Part I, ed. and trans. Ernest Walter Brooks, reprint, 1903, Text and Translation Society (Farnborough, UK: Gregg International Publishers, 1969), 238. On p. 48 Marliangeas claims that such a formulation would not recur in theological literature until the thirteenth century; but later on he admits that he has not actually verified this: "Faute de compétence, nous n'avons pas pu effectuer de recherches suivies dans la théologie orientale postérieure à l'âge patristique. Sans doute d'ailleurs son développement fut-il sans grande influence sur la théologie latine en général et sur la théologie scolastique en particulier." *Clés pour une théologie du ministère*, 69.

⁷ Marliangeas, *Clés pour une théologie du ministère*, 228.

the scholastic period. These include affirmations both about the priest or priestly action (e.g.: *alter Christus, personam Christi gerere, uicarius Christi, uice(m) Christi agere*⁸), and about Christ and his action in the church's worship (e.g. *Sacerdos uerus, unicus, or inuisibilis*⁹). Surely, when a pre-scholastic author like Peter Damian asserts that the sacrificial ministry of Christ, the "true priest," is carried out through the "visible priest" as his agent, and that all the forms of priesthood in the church are derived from Christ's sacerdotal office (*Serm. 72 [PL 144.911]*),¹⁰ we are in the realm of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ.

2 The *Terminus a quo*

According to the classic Western teaching, those who are designated as priests (*sacerdotes*) within the church act *in persona Christi* by virtue of their ordination.¹¹ When assessing the existence of historical precedent for this belief, it is necessary to acknowledge from the outset that a fully developed concept of an ordained priesthood is absent from the earliest Christian literature—including the New Testament. This concept is the result of a historical development. Moreover, it is well-known that in the first two centuries, there was considerable diversity in the structuring of Christian ministries, as well as fluctuation in the

⁸ See Rambaldi, "Alter-Christus, in persona Christi."

⁹ Yves-M.-J. Congar, *L'Écclésiologie du Haut Moyen Âge: de saint Grégoire le Grand à la désunion entre Byzance et Rome*, Histoire des doctrines ecclésiologiques (Paris: Cerf, 1968), 109.

¹⁰ Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Growth of Medieval Theology (600–1300)*, vol. 3 of *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 137.

¹¹ See PO 2: "Inasmuch as it is connected with the episcopal order, the [presbyteral] office shares in the authority by which Christ Himself builds up, sanctifies, and rules His Body. Therefore, while it indeed presupposes the sacraments of Christian initiation, the sacerdotal office of [presbyters] is conferred by that special sacrament through which [presbyters], by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are marked with a special character and are so configured to Christ the Priest that they can act in the person of Christ the Head [*ut in persona Christi capitis agere valeant*]."

terminology applied to various roles and functions within local churches.¹² Consequently, any diachronic comparison is exposed to the danger of anachronism.¹³ It would be uncritical, for instance, to treat twelfth-century Western *presbyteri* as successors of the lone *πρεσβύτερος* of 2 John 1 and 3 John 1. When establishing a comparison between scholastic and ancient models of ministry, the avoidance of anachronism requires a minimal degree of perceptible historical continuity, not merely in the titles given to ministers, but in both (a) their relationship to concrete ecclesial communities and other ministers, and (b) the theological content of their titles.

It will be appropriate, then, when examining the earliest sources, to restrict our inquiry to texts in which (a) a local, hierarchically ordered, ritually transmissible ministry is attested, in continuity with the ministry of the apostles; and (b) this ministry is denoted by sacerdotal titles. The use of a theological title (e.g. [ἀρχ-]ἱερεὺς) as a synonym for a ministerial title (e.g. ἐπίσκοπος, πρεσβύτερος) is the most probative indication that the application of sacerdotal themes and imagery to Christian ministers has moved beyond the level of a metaphor, and that a formal concept of priesthood is operative.¹⁴

¹² "Il faut sans doute compter avec un processus concomitant de fixation de la titulature et de spécification des ministères, à partir d'une situation initiale où des noms différents avaient pu désigner une même fonction et où un même nom avait pu recouvrir des fonctions multiples." de Halleux, "Ministère et sacerdoce," 293. Cf. Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy*, 2nd ed. (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2002), 192–210.

¹³ Osborne, *Priesthood*, 90–91.

¹⁴ "C'est métaphoriquement, pour exprimer la recherche d'un statut, qu'a d'abord été utilisé le vocabulaire sacerdotal. [...] Au iii^e siècle, les stades métaphorique et analogique seront dépassés. À l'épiscopat est attribué en propre une fonction sacerdotale et cette fonction représente un pouvoir, une prérogative par rapport au reste des fidèles." Alexandre Faivre, *Ordonner la fraternité: pouvoir d'innover et retour à l'ordre dans l'Église ancienne* (Paris: Cerf, 1992), 83.

A survey of the extant literature reveals that no textual sources meet both above-mentioned criteria until the end of the second century CE.¹⁵ It is unanimously acknowledged among scholars that Tertullian is the first author to use a sacerdotal title (*sacerdos*) to designate a bishop.¹⁶ Any sources earlier than 200 CE, therefore, will be excluded from our study; but for purposes of verification, five "test cases" of excluded sources will be examined briefly below, both because they are frequently cited today in discussions of the origins of a Christian priesthood, and because of their intrinsic authority for subsequent ancient authors.

2.1 Excluded First- and Second- Century Sources

(A) The New Testament

The writings of the New Testament give ample evidence of the emergence of *local* (i.e. non-itinerant) ministries of leadership within the earliest Christian communities. Explicit references are found in the Pauline letters (1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Cor. 16:15-16; Phil. 1:1; Rom. 16:1); the Acts of the Apostles (11:30; 14:23; 15:2.6.22; 20:17.28; 21:18); the Catholic letters (James 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1-4); the Pastoral Letters (1 Tim. 3; 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:2; Titus 1:5); and Hebrews (13:17).¹⁷

What is not as clear in the New Testament is the *hierarchical relations* that may have existed among local ministries. Titles and functions fluctuate widely from one text or

¹⁵ See the careful study by Noll of the use of sacerdotal/cultic terminology in the apostolic fathers: Ray Robert Noll, *Christian Ministerial Priesthood: A Search for Its Beginnings in the Primary Documents of the Apostolic Fathers* (San Francisco: Catholic Scholars Press, 1993).

¹⁶ Faivre expresses this consensus: "Aucun texte, avant la fin du II^e siècle, n'applique directement le vocabulaire sacerdotal (ἱερεὺς, *sacerdos*) aux ministères chrétiens. C'est dans la *Tradition apostolique* et dans les œuvres de Tertullien que, pour la première fois, l'évêque est qualifié de grand-prêtre ou de prêtre, et cela, dans un contexte cultuel." Faivre, *Ordonner la fraternité*, 80.

¹⁷ Implicit references may be found throughout the gospels, and perhaps in Revelation (if the "angels" of the seven churches are meant to signify their presiding elders).

cultural setting to another. For instance, in his authentic writings Paul never mentions Christian πρεσβύτεροι (presbyters/elders), whereas Acts contains numerous references to them—although Luke appears to assimilate them with ἐπίσκοποι (overseers) in Acts 20:17.28. Certainly, in the Pastorals there is a greater sense of stability, but in these writings too there is a lack of clear differentiation between the episcopate and the presbyterate (cf. Titus 1:7 and 1:5). Furthermore, the *ritual transmission* of local ministries is not explicitly described in the New Testament, besides a handful of references to the practice of laying on of hands in the Pastorals: 1 Tim. 4:14; 5:22; 2 Tim. 1:6.¹⁸

Regarding the second criterion enunciated above, there is a notable scarcity of sacerdotal language in the New Testament in contrast to the Septuagint: if one excludes references to Jewish and pagan priests, there are only twenty-four occurrences in total.¹⁹ Of these, the *only* instance in which a sacerdotal term is applied to a Christian minister is Paul's use of the verb ἱερούργεω in Rom. 15:16 to characterize his service of the gospel (cf. also 1 Cor. 9:13-14); and it is not even certain that this verb is to be taken in a sacerdotal sense here, because in contemporary Jewish literature it is also used to refer to sacrificial activity by non-priests, such as Abraham or Saul.²⁰ Although it is hazardous to deduce anything from silence, it certainly seems as though the first Christians deliberately avoided terms that

¹⁸ Luke may be intending to model the institution of the Seven (Acts 6:1-6) on the process used for instituting local ministers in his own community. However, this is not explicit in the text; and despite their being ostensibly chosen to solve a local problem in the Jerusalem community, the Seven function as a *non-local* group of ministers in the subsequent narrative of Acts.

¹⁹ Albert Vanhoye, *Prêtres anciens, prêtre nouveau: selon le Nouveau Testament*, Parole de Dieu 20 (Paris: Seuil, 1980), 80.

²⁰ Vanhoye, *Prêtres anciens, prêtre nouveau*, 300–301.

might have implied a direct continuity between the ministries of the Church and the cultic system of Judaism.²¹

In the rest of the New Testament the idea of a Christian priesthood is restricted to *Christ* (Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-15; 5:5-6; 5:10; 6:20; 7:15-17; 7:21.26; 8:1.3; 9:11; 10:21²²), to the *Christian people* (ἱεράτευμα in 1 Pet. 2:5.9; ἱερεῖς in Rev. 1:6; 5:10), and to a future subset of Christians, the *martyrs* who will take part in the millennial reign of Christ (the ἱερεῖς in Rev. 20:6). But it must be said that the designation of Christians as a "priesthood" or as "priests"—despite the massive exegetical interest generated by the handful of verses in which it occurs—is infrequent enough to be considered a peripheral element of New Testament ecclesiology.²³

This limited use of sacerdotal terminology in the New Testament leaves unanswered the important question, among others, of what theological connection may exist between the one ἱερεὺς (Christ) of Hebrews and the many ἱερεῖς (Christians) of 1 Peter and Revelation. From a twenty-first-century perspective, it is tempting to explain the latter

²¹ "L'absence de titre sacerdotal manifeste assurément qu'à l'origine, les ministères chrétiens n'ont pas été compris comme une continuation du sacerdoce ancien. Le premier aspect perçu a été celui de la différence, et cet aspect ne doit jamais être nié ni perdu de vue." Vanhoye, *Prêtres anciens, prêtre nouveau*, 345.

²² "En fin de compte, on demeurera surtout sensible au fait qu'en dehors de l'épître aux Hébreux, aucune mention explicite n'est faite du sacerdoce du Christ. Certains rapprochements peuvent sembler intéressants, comme par exemple la connotation sacerdotale de la bénédiction de Jésus en Lc xxiv, 50-51 [...], ou encore la robe sans couture de Jésus en Jn xix, 23 rappelant la robe du grand prêtre. Mais ici pas plus qu'ailleurs, la mention explicite d'un sacerdoce de Jésus ne se fait." Pierre-Marie Beaude, "Sacerdoce: IV. Nouveau Testament," in *Dictionnaire de la Bible: Supplément*, vol. 10, ed. L. Pirot, et al. (Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1985), col. 1314.

²³ "En bref, le motif du sacerdoce dit commun, hérité du pharisaïsme en particulier, est bien présent dans le cadre des Églises surtout judéo-chrétiennes (non-pauliniennes) et par le jeu des citations implicites, sans prendre cependant une importance cardinale." Charles Perrot, *Après Jésus: le ministère chez les premiers chrétiens*, Vivre, Croire, Célébrer (Paris: Éditions de l'Atelier/Éditions Ouvrières, 2000), 199.

designation by the notion of "participation" of the baptized in the one priesthood of Christ; but this explanation is not given in the texts.²⁴

(B) The *Didache*

The *Didache* comes close to meeting the first criterion for inclusion in our study, inasmuch as it witnesses to the emergence of stable local ministries;²⁵ but it fails to meet the second criterion. One category of persons within the Didachist's community, the "prophets," is singled out for special privileges, including the receiving of firstfruits from the faithful.²⁶ In this context it is asserted that "they are your high priests."²⁷ This explicit attribution of sacerdotal terminology to Christian ministers is noteworthy; and prophecy is by definition a representational ministry. But the prophetic charism is not transmissible in a predictable, institutionalized manner; it remains a freely given grace from God. So the *Didache's* prophets can only be seen as precursors of ordained local ministers in the temporal sense. Moreover, as intriguing as this early sacerdotal designation may be, it is not the prophetic ministry per se that is qualified as priestly: rather, the author establishes a purely formal *equivalence* between the Levitical priests (or, more precisely, "high priests," ἀρχιερεῖς) and the prophets of his own community, in order to provide scriptural warrant for the practice of providing material support for the latter.²⁸

²⁴ That being said, it should be noted that the author of Revelation does present the priesthood of Christians as the work of Christ, and as one of the effects of his sacrifice (1:5). Likewise, in 1 Pet. 2:5, the sacrifices offered by the royal priesthood are "acceptable to God [only] through Jesus Christ."

²⁵ Joseph T. Lienhard, ed., *Ministry*, Message of the Fathers of the Church 8 (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1984), 14.

²⁶ "Actually the prophet in the didachist's community appears to be ever so much more of a monarch than any such claims for the *episkopos* in the Ignatian letters." Noll, *Christian Ministerial Priesthood*, 322.

²⁷ "αὐτοὶ γὰρ εἰσὶν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς ὑμῶν." *Did.* 13.3, in Willy Rordorf and André Tuilier, eds. and trans., *La Doctrine Des Douze Apôtres (Didachè)*, 2nd ed., Sources chrétiennes 248bis (Paris: Cerf, 1998).

²⁸ "The description of the prophets as ἀρχιερεῖς in v.3 does not necessarily envisage a liturgical function. It can be just a simple implicit, purely formal, comparison: in the same way that the first fruits were due to the priests, so this same commandment (13:5, 13:7) of the Old Testament or, perhaps, an evangelical

(C) First Clement

Clement of Rome's *First Epistle to the Corinthians* meets the first criterion (as the presbyterate is a long-standing institution in Corinth), but not the second. While *I Clement* 43–44²⁹ establishes a clear *parallel* between the Levitical priesthood and the ministry exercised by bishops, it does not explicitly transfer sacerdotal titles to Christian ministers: "chez Clément la comparaison avec le vocabulaire cultuel vétérotestamentaire semble ne pas être encore plus qu'une comparaison; ἀρχιερεύς et ἱερεύς ne s'appliquent pas encore d'une manière propre à l'évêque et au prêtre chrétien."³⁰ The term ἀρχιερεύς is used to refer to the Jewish high priest in 40.5 and 41.2; and, as in Hebrews, it is Jesus Christ who is the ἀρχιερεύς of Christians: "the high priest of our offerings" (36.1);³¹ "the high priest and benefactor of our souls" (61.3);³² "our high priest and benefactor" (64).³³ As for the term ἱερεύς, it refers to pagan priests in 25.5, to Levitical priests in 32.2 and 40.5, but not to any Christian office.³⁴

That being said, there is a certain rhetorical force to the parallel that is established in 43–44 between the internal factions over the priesthood resolved by Moses and the strife

ordinance (cf. 1 Cor 9:14), demands of Christians that they give them to their prophets." André de Halleux, "Ministers in the *Didache*," in *The Didache in Modern Research*, ed. Jonathan A. Draper, Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums, 37 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 312.

²⁹ In Clement of Rome, *Épître aux Corinthiens*, rev. ed., ed. and trans. Annie Jaubert, Sources chrétiennes 167 (Paris: Cerf, 2000). All citations of the original refer to this edition. English translations are taken from Bart Ehrman, ed. and trans., *The Apostolic Fathers: I Clement, II Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Didache*, Loeb Classical Library 24 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

³⁰ Pierre-Marie Gy, "Remarques sur le vocabulaire antique du sacerdoce chrétien," in *Études sur le sacrement de l'ordre*, Lex orandi 22 (1957), 142–43.

³¹ "τὸν ἀρχιερέα τῶν προσφορῶν ἡμῶν."

³² "τοῦ ἀρχιερέως καὶ προστάτου τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν."

³³ "τοῦ ἀρχιερέως καὶ προστάτου ἡμῶν."

³⁴ "Clement does not go so far as to confer upon the ministers of the Christian community the specific priesthood of the ministers of the Levitical order." Jean-Marie-Roger Tillard, "What Priesthood Has the Ministry?" *One in Christ* 9, no. 3 (1973): 260.

over the office of the bishop resolved by the apostles. That Clement should even establish such a parallel suggests that he saw at least a functional correspondence between the Levitical priests of the Old Covenant and the presbyter-bishops of the New: "jamais le ch. 40 ni aucun autre passage de la lettre ne qualifient de prêtres les chefs de l'Église, mais la *Ia Clementis* estime que ces chefs sont à l'Église ce que les prêtres et lévites étaient au peuple de Dieu."³⁵

Furthermore, *I Clement* does use sacrificial language to characterize the "episcopal" ministry of the deposed Corinthian presbyters (44); most notably, the term λειτουργία ("ministry," four times)³⁶ and the expression προσενεγκόντας τὰ δῶρα ("those who offer the gifts"). These terms belong to the cultic, sacrificial vocabulary of the Septuagint, and the author uses identical terms when describing the ordered arrangement of the cult in the Jerusalem temple (40.2,4; 41.2).

It would not be a great logical leap from the use of cultic language for Christian ministry to the use of sacerdotal titles for the church's ministers.³⁷ "L'expression 'présenter les dons' était déjà cultuelle et vétéro-testamentaire. Si donc les offrandes [...] de la communauté sont décrites avec des termes qui rappellent les oblations de l'Ancien

³⁵ Maurice Jourjon, "Remarques sur le vocabulaire sacerdotal dans la *Ia Clementis*," in *Epektasis: mélanges patristiques offerts au Cardinal Jean Daniélou*, ed. Jacques Fontaine and Charles Kannengiesser (Paris: Beauchesne, 1972), 109.

³⁶ Raymond E. Brown and John P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity* [New York: Paulist Press, 1983], 171) believes that here λειτουργία should not be translated simply as "ministry," because it is being used in a cultic sense; he renders it as "liturgical ministry." But other scholars contest this interpretation. Cf. Barbara Ellen Bowe, *A Church in Crisis: Ecclesiology and Paraenesis in Clement of Rome* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1988), 151.

³⁷ So suggests Pierre Grelot, "Le ministère chrétien dans sa dimension sacerdotale," *Nouvelle Revue théologique* 112 (1990): 173.

Testament, on comprend la tendance à comparer aussi les ministres de ces offrandes."³⁸
Nevertheless, *1 Clement* itself, like the New Testament, does not take that step.³⁹

A distinct but important question that arises upon reading *1 Clement* 44 is whether it contains any explicit reference to the Eucharist. Although a number of modern scholars are eager to answer that question in the affirmative (generally for apologetical reasons),⁴⁰ there is nothing in the immediate context, nor in the rest of the epistle, that would prove that those terms refer directly and exclusively to a concrete ritual meal, or even to a cultic action.⁴¹ It would be equally plausible to interpret the "gifts" of 44.4—which are presumably to be identified with the "offerings" (36.1) of which Christ is the high priest—as comprising the "sacrifices of praise" constituted by the prayers and good works of Christians (35.12–36.1; 52; cf. Heb. 13:15-16), or even monetary offerings.⁴² This would be consistent with the (contemporary) usage of the New Testament writers.

³⁸ Annie Jaubert, "Introduction," in *Épître aux Corinthiens*, 83.

³⁹ An opposing view on this point is that of Gregory Dix, who unhesitatingly concludes the following from Clement's use of the expressions "oblations and liturgies" and "offering of the gifts": "For Clement at the end of the first century, as for Hippolytus at the end of the second, the episcopate is the Christian *high-priesthood*." Gregory Dix, *Jurisdiction in the Early Church, Episcopal and Papal* (London: Faith House, 1975), 36 (italics added). But this is hermeneutical inflation, and may in fact be contradicting the text of *1 Clem.*, which repeatedly ascribes the role in question to Christ.

⁴⁰ Cf. Georges Blond, "Clément de Rome," in *L'Eucharistie des premiers chrétiens*, Le Point théologique 17 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1976), 29–51; Henri Crouzel, "Le ministère dans l'Église: Réflexions à propos d'un ouvrage récent. II. Témoignages de l'Église ancienne," *Nouvelle Revue théologique* 104 (1982): 743; Roch A. Kereszty, *Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eucharistic Theology from a Historical, Biblical, and Systematic Perspective* (Chicago/Mundelein, IL: Hillenbrand Books, 2004), 92–93

⁴¹ Maurice Jourjon rightly points out that the adverbs that immediately qualify the "offering" of the gifts in 44.4, namely "ἀμέμπτως καὶ ὁσίως" (in a blameless and holy way), have a non-cultic, moral meaning in various passages of the Septuagint and 1 Thess. 2.10. It is the moral rectitude of the deposed presbyters that is being upheld, rather than their ritual purity or correctness: Jourjon, "Remarques," 109. This is made more explicit in 44.6: the Corinthians deposed presbyters who "καλῶς πολιτευομένους" (had been conducting themselves well).

⁴² Annie Jaubert, *Épître aux Corinthiens*, 173n4.

To conclude, then, although *I Clement* does give evidence of a nascent sacerdotalization of Christian ministry, it does not yet manifest a sufficiently explicit notion of an ordained priesthood to be included in our study.

(D) Ignatius of Antioch

Ignatius is well-known as an early witness and enthusiastic proponent of a hierarchical model of ministry, centered on the single bishop; so the first criterion is indisputably met. Moreover, intriguingly, Ignatius draws on an array of different typological comparisons to express the connection between the Christian hierarchy and the divine realm (God, Christ, the apostolic college, etc.).⁴³ In *Ephesians*, he declares that "Jesus Christ, our inseparable life, is the mind of the Father, just as the bishops appointed throughout the world are in the mind of Christ."⁴⁴ If sharing the "mind of Christ" is the result of appointment as a bishop, independently of individual gifts, learning, or holiness, then we are dealing with an *objective* kind of representation—and one which looks remarkably similar to later *in persona Christi* theology. Moreover, Ignatius's statement strongly implies that episcopal appointment is a more-than-human affair (see also *Eph.* 1.3).⁴⁵

Later in the same letter, Ignatius appeals to an explicit theology of representation to encourage respect for the person of the bishop: "For everyone whom the Master of the house sends to manage his own house we must welcome as we would the one who sent him.

⁴³ This is an example of what Kenan Osborne calls the "theologizing of ministerial rank." Osborne, *Priesthood*, 111.

⁴⁴ "καὶ γὰρ Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, τὸ ἀδιάκριτον ἡμῶν ζῆν, τοῦ πατρὸς ἡ γνώμη, ὡς καὶ οἱ ἐπίσκοποι οἱ κατὰ τὰ πέρατα ὀρισθέντες ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ γνώμη εἰσίν." *Eph.* 3.2. The English translations of the Ignatian letters are taken from the facing page in the Holmes edition.

⁴⁵ Incidentally, bishop Onesimus also serves as a representative of the *church community* in *Eph.* 1.3.

It is obvious, therefore, that we must regard the bishop as the Lord himself."⁴⁶ In *Magnesians* the presidency of the bishop and his presbyters is representational: "the bishop presiding in the place of God and the presbyters in the place of the Council of the apostles."⁴⁷ In *Trallians*, the bishop (2.1)—or, alternatively, the deacon (3.1)—is to be revered "as" Jesus Christ.⁴⁸ Finally, in *Smyrnians*, the faithful are told: "You must all follow the bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and follow the presbytery as you would the apostles; respect the deacons as the commandment of God."⁴⁹ Clearly, the purpose of all such statements is to exhort the Christians of Asia Minor to achieve ecclesial unity through subordination to the earthly hierarchy, which is believed to reflect the heavenly hierarchy.

Ignatius's so-called "iconic" theology is worthy of note, and it can be shown to have influenced—both directly and indirectly—the subsequent development of the theology of ministry.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, it fails to meet the second criterion for inclusion in our study, because Ignatius does not link sacerdotal language to any specific ministry within the churches.⁵¹ Even if this were the case, moreover, his writings could not be considered an

⁴⁶ "πάντα γὰρ ὃν πέμπει ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης εἰς ἰδίαν οἰκονομίαν, ὅπως δεῖ ἡμᾶς αὐτὸν δέχεσθαι, ὡς αὐτὸν τὸν πέμψαντα τὸν οὖν ἐπίσκοπον δηλονότι ὡς αὐτὸν τὸν κύριον δεῖ προσβλέπειν." *Eph.* 6.1.

⁴⁷ "προκαθημένου τοῦ ἐπισκόπου εἰς τόπον θεοῦ καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων εἰς τόπον συνεδρίου τῶν ἀποστόλων." *Magn.* 6.1.

⁴⁸ "ὡς Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ" *Trall.* 2.1; "ὡς Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν" *Trall.* 3.1.

⁴⁹ "πάντες τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ ἀκολουθεῖτε, ὡς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς τῷ πατρὶ, καὶ τῷ πρεσβυτερίῳ ὡς τοῖς ἀποστόλοις· τοὺς δὲ διακόνους ἐντρέπεσθε ὡς θεοῦ ἐντολήν." *Smyrn.* 8.1.

⁵⁰ The influence of the Ignatian texts cited is perceptible in *Didasc.* 9, and, derivatively, in *A.C.* 2.26 (see the discussion of these church orders below, in chapter 2). Curiously, the idea of the bishop as an image of the Father has found its way into the current Roman rite of ordination of a bishop, alongside sacerdotal representation-of-Christ language: "Keep watch over the whole flock, in which the Holy Spirit appoints you to govern the Church of God: in the name of the Father whose image you represent in the Church; and in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, whose office of Teacher, Priest, and Shepherd you will discharge; and in the name of the Holy Spirit (...)." Catholic Church, *Rites of Ordination*, 18.

⁵¹ "Although the imagery in the Ignatian letters is often sacral-cultic, we cannot show from these writings the presence of a separate priestly class within the Christian communities known to Ignatius." Noll, *Christian Ministerial Priesthood*, 318.

antecedent of *in persona Christi* theology—or at least not in the strict sense—because his comparisons are not consistently Christic: It is not always the same minister who is said to represent Christ. His typology is fluid, and it serves a rhetorical purpose rather than expressing a fixed doctrine of the ministry.

(E) Justin Martyr

Justin carries forward the New Testament theology of Christians' being priests in his *Dialogue with Trypho*. After referring to Christ as the priest prefigured by the prophets (i.e. Zechariah), he asserts that those who have come to believe in Christ have become a "high-priestly race," as prophesied by Malachi: "We are the true high-priestly race of God, just as God himself testifies, saying that 'in every place among the Gentiles acceptable and pure sacrifices are offered.' Now God does not receive sacrifices from anyone, except by means of his priests."⁵² These "acceptable and pure sacrifices" are those which Jesus himself prescribed, that is, the "Eucharist of the bread and the cup" that Christians offer.⁵³ This collective offering of the eucharistic sacrifice would seem to preclude any distinctly priestly function for the minister referred to as the "president" (προεστώς) in *I Apol.*⁵⁴ Hence Justin, too, fails to meet the second criterion identified above.

Synopsis

The above considerations point to the year 200 CE for the *terminus a quo* of our inquiry. By that point both the monoepiscopacy and the tripartite structure of ministry

⁵² "ἀρχιερατικὸν τὸ ἀληθινὸν γένος ἔσμεν τοῦ θεοῦ, ὡς καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς μαρτυρεῖ, εἰπὼν ὅτι ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ ἐν ταῖς ἔθνεσι θυσίας εὐαρέστους αὐτῷ καὶ καθαρὰς προσφέρουσιν οὐ δέχεται δὲ παρ' οὐδενὸς θυσίας ὁ θεός, εἰ μὴ διὰ τῶν ἱερέων αὐτοῦ." *Dial.* 116, in Miroslav Marcovich, ed., *Iustini Martyris Dialogus cum Tryphone*, Patristische Texte und Studien 47 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1997), 270. The English translation given above is my own.

⁵³ Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 117, in Marcovich, *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, 271; see also *Dial.* 41.

⁵⁴ Justin Martyr, *I Apol.* 65.3,5; 67 passim.

(bishop-presbyter-deacon)—in other words the ministerial model that would endure in both East and West until the Reformation—were already firmly established throughout the Christian world.⁵⁵ Tertullian is an important witness for the existence of the ministerial triad at that point (*Praescr.* 41.8).⁵⁶

2.2 The *Terminus ad quem*

There is no universal agreement concerning the end of the patristic era, especially for the Latin fathers; but since there is more consensus regarding John Damascene (ca. 660—ca. 750 CE) as the last of the Greek fathers, the year 750 CE will be a suitable *terminus ad quem*. Western developments in liturgy, theology, and ecclesiastical polity in the late eighth and ninth centuries—stemming from the Carolingian reform—represent a point of divergence, both from the culture of Eastern Christendom and from the patristic heritage. Consequently, these late developments do not have nearly the same theological or ecumenical importance as what came before them, even though they are still situated within the first millennium (the so-called "undivided Church").

3 Selection of Sources

3.1 Geographical Provenance

The dissertation seeks to marshal evidence not only diachronically across its 550-year timespan, but also *synchronically*. To qualify as an "antecedent," a source must be shown to be more than an isolated anecdote; it must have entered into the wider stream of

⁵⁵ Bradshaw, *Search for the Origins*, 200–201. Hence the present dissertation will leave out of consideration the historical problems surrounding the origins of an "apostolic ministry" in the NT as well as the issue of apostolic succession. For a superb though succinct treatment of this subject, see Jean-Marie-Roger Tillard, "The Apostolic Foundations of Christian Ministry," *Worship* 63, no. 4 (1989): 290–300.

⁵⁶ Cooke, *Ministry to Word and Sacraments*, 61.

tradition. For this reason, an attempt will be made to examine sources from a wide variety of geographical, social, and cultural settings, while paying particular attention to those that were determinative in shaping the development of the Western tradition.

3.2 Influence

While exhaustivity is neither achievable nor necessary in order to verify the existence of antecedents to *in persona Christi* theology in the ancient tradition, some degree of thoroughness is required. To this end, patristic sources that receive more than a passing citation in major, recent diachronic studies of the rites of ordination and of ordained ministry,⁵⁷ will be included in our study.

3.3 Genres

Since this dissertation will be evaluating the "traditional" status of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ, it is essential to clarify what precise concept of tradition is operative here. It cannot be restricted to conciliar decrees or other official ecclesiastical pronouncements. As the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation affirms, apostolic tradition "includes everything which contributes to the holiness of life, and the increase in faith of the People of God; and so the Church, in her teaching, life, and worship, perpetuates and hands on to all generations all that she herself is, all that she believes" (DV 8). Tradition is a process inherent in the everyday life of the church community, as expressed in Bede's memorable phrase, "Day by day the church gives birth to the church."⁵⁸ Because the church grows and develops through time in a manner

⁵⁷ Cooke, *Ministry to Word and Sacraments*; Paul De Clerck, "Ordination, ordre," in *Catholicisme: hier, aujourd'hui, demain*, vol. 10, ed. G. Mathon, et al. (Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1985), col. 162–206; Osborne, *Priesthood*.

⁵⁸ "Ecclesia cotidie gignit ecclesiam." Bede, *Exp. Apoc.* 19.66-67, in *Expositio Apocalypseos*, ed. Roger Gryson, Corpus Christianorum: Series latina 121A (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001).

analogous to a living organism, it is to be expected that genuine developments in the *intellectus fidei* should at times involve tension between differing points of view and schools of thought:

Tradition (...), as it was known and lived by the fathers, is not like a monolithic, immovable and sclerotic block, but a multiform organism pulsating with life. It is a practice of life and doctrine that experiences, on the one hand, even uncertainties, tensions, research made by trial and hesitancy and, on the other, timely and courageous decisions of great originality and decisive importance.⁵⁹

It is clear that in order to achieve its stated objectives, this dissertation will need to examine different *genres* of sources: not only formal theological treatises, but also liturgical, exegetical, catechetical, and canonical materials. No single voice may be taken as the "last word." It is in the comparison and contrast of a plurality of sources that it may be seen whether sacerdotal representation-of-Christ demonstrably belongs to the church's tradition.

3.4 Method of Citation

In the first two chapters of the dissertation, quotations from primary sources will be given in English in the body of the text, while the Latin or Greek original will be cited only parenthetically or in footnotes, if the precise term or phrase used by the author is required for the sake of clarity. In chapters three and four, however, in which primary sources are more central to the discussion, citations will be made in the original language if it is Greek or Latin; and a scholarly English or French translation will be provided in the footnotes. Primary sources in other ancient languages will be cited only in translation.

⁵⁹ Congregation for Catholic Education, "Study of the Fathers," 554.

4 Lexicographical Parameters

Since the stated focus of this enquiry is *sacerdotal* representation-of-Christ, it will be important to use adequate heuristics to identify propositions as "sacerdotal" in the literature. When looking for an explicit concept of priesthood, it is clear that inherently polyvalent or otherwise ambiguous terms should be excluded.

4.1 Greek Lexemes

In Koine Greek, one ambiguous lexeme is λειτουργ-: it can have an entirely secular meaning (denoting public service or assistance in general) as well as a religious one (denoting cultic/priestly ministry).⁶⁰ Whereas the Septuagint uses the word-group in an almost exclusively cultic sense, in relation to the ministry of priests and Levites in the Temple, both meanings occur in the New Testament.⁶¹ The context sometimes makes it clear that a non-cultic (Phil. 2:25.30; Heb. 1:7), or else a cultic (Rom. 15:16; Heb. 8:2.6; 10:11) meaning is intended. However, in some cases the context does not sufficiently clarify the sense (Rom. 15:27; 2 Cor. 9:12), giving rise to divergent interpretations.⁶² For instance, the inherent polysemy of λειτουργ- has led to differences of opinion among scholars concerning the degree to which the earliest Christian literature (e.g. *1 Clement* 44; see above) manifests a cultic understanding of Christian ministry. Consequently, for the

⁶⁰ Geoffrey William Hugo Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961–68), 795–96; Henry George Liddell, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Rev. and augm. throughout (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 1036.

⁶¹ The terms λειτουργέω and λειτουργία are listed both under the semantic subdomain "Serve" (Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Introduction and Domains*, vol. 1 of *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* [New York: United Bible Societies, 1988], 461) and the subdomain "Religious Practice" (Ibid., 533).

⁶² K. Hess, "Λειτουργέω," in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 4 vol., gen. ed. Colin Brown (Exeter, UK: Paternoster Press, 1986), 3:551–53.

purposes of the present study, words belonging to the λειτουργ- group will not be taken as sacerdotal references in the absence of accompanying evidence.

Likewise, the various terms pertaining to sacrifice (e.g. ἀναφέρω, ἀπαρχή, θύω, θυσία, προσφορά⁶³) are not probative indicators of a theology of priesthood, for several reasons. Firstly, in the ancient Near East in general, the practice of sacrifice was not the exclusive prerogative of priests.⁶⁴ Second Temple Judaism is an obvious exception, and the Hebrew Scriptures do contain a number of cautionary tales about divine punishment being visited upon non-Levites and even non-Aaronic Levites who presume to perform priestly tasks: most famously and graphically, the story of Korah, Dathan and Abiram in Numbers 16–17 (recalled in Deut. 11:6 and Ps. 106:17). However, those same Scriptures—even the Deuteronomistic History—continued to attest to a variety of sacrificial practices *not* associated with a priesthood or a sanctuary.⁶⁵ "The patriarchs built their own altars and offered sacrifice without recourse to priesthood: Noah (Gen. 8:20); Abraham (Gen. 12:6 ff.; 13:18; 22:9); Isaac (Gen. 26:25); Jacob (Gen. 33:20; 35:1-7); Moses (Exod. 17:15)."⁶⁶ The anointed king David, clearly a non-Levite, is presented in 2 Samuel 6:13.17 as personally offering an impressive number of sacrifices to welcome the Ark to his new capital, and there is no indication in the text that any Levitical priests were involved (cf. 1 Kings 8:5).

⁶³ See Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 534–35.

⁶⁴ "A sacrifice did not necessarily have to be offered by a priest. The head of the family could carry out the family sacrifice, the chief of the tribe the tribal sacrifice, and the magistrate the sacrifice for the city." H. Seebass and Colin Brown, "Holy, Consecrate, Sanctify, Saints, Devout," in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 4 vol., gen. ed. Colin Brown (Exeter, UK: Paternoster Press, 1986), 2:234.

⁶⁵ Aelred Cody, "Priests and High Priest," in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993), 609.

⁶⁶ H.-G. Link, C. Brown, and F. Thiele, "Sacrifice, First Fruits, Altar, Offering," in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 4 vol., gen. ed. Colin Brown (Exeter, UK: Paternoster Press, 1986), 418.

In 1 Kings 18 the prophet Elijah builds an altar on Mount Carmel and prepares a holocaust on it, in clear violation of Deuteronomy 12:6.13-14 (et al.);⁶⁷ but YHWH obviously accepts his sacrifice.

Secondly, even in the centralized cult of the Jerusalem Temple, many forms of sacrifice involved the participation of the faithful, who would provide the material (animal, grain, etc.) for the sacrifice, slaughter the victim, etc., and who were therefore said to be "offering" the sacrifice (e.g. Deut. 18:3).⁶⁸ Only in Ezekiel's vision of a future, idealized Temple is the slaughtering of sacrificial victims restricted to the Levites (Ezek. 44:11). In Leviticus 1:5.11, by contrast, it is assumed that any male Israelite may slaughter the victim; what is reserved to the priests is handling the blood.

Thirdly, in Hellenistic Judaism and in the Qumran community⁶⁹ (and even to some extent already in the Psalms and prophets) the notion of sacrifice itself underwent a process of *spiritualization*. Acts of praise, thanksgiving, observance of Torah, etc., as well as ritual acts performed by ordinary believers, came to be described as sacrifices (at least) equivalent in value to the material sacrifices offered by priests in the Jerusalem Temple.

Fourthly, sacrifice was never the sole function of Jewish priests, who also served as intercessors and interpreters of the divine will (cf. Deut. 33:8-11).⁷⁰

⁶⁷ "[T]he rebuilding of the altar on Mt. Carmel by so devoted a Yahwist as Elijah shows that the author of this story did not share the strict Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic standpoint that there should be only one sanctuary in the land." James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson, eds., *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003), 262.

⁶⁸ This usage carries over into early Jewish Christianity. For example, in Acts 24:17 Paul, a Jewish layman, says that he came to Jerusalem to make "offerings" (προσφοράς). See Link, Brown, and Thiele, "Sacrifice," 431.

⁶⁹ Alfred Marx and Christian Grappe, "Sacrifice," in *Dictionnaire critique de théologie*, gen. ed. Jean-Yves Lacoste (Paris: PUF, 1998), 1048.

⁷⁰ "The task of the priest in Israel was originally not sacrificial service, but oracular divination (cf. Jdg. 17:5; 18:5 f.; 1 Sam. 14:36-42) and instruction in the Torah (Deut. 27:9 f.; 31:4 ff.). The head of every family could offer sacrifice (cf. Gen. 8:20; 31:54)." J. Baehr, "Priest, High Priest," in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 4 vol., gen. ed. Colin Brown (Exeter, UK: Paternoster Press,

In the context of early Christianity, finally, the lack of strict correlation between sacrifice and priesthood is confirmed by the fact that the Pauline letters do not contain any reference to Christians as "priests," even though Paul does speak of believers' offering "sacrifices" (Rom. 12:1; Phil. 2:17; 4:18). In fact, Paul has no concept that *Christ* was a priest, even though he often interprets his death on the cross as a sacrifice (e.g. 1 Cor. 5:7). Likewise, the earliest Christian text to refer explicitly to the Eucharist as a sacrifice, *Didache* ch. 10,⁷¹ does not mention any corresponding priesthood. On the other hand, Justin Martyr (see above) does see a strong correlation between the sacrifice that Christians offer, that is, the Eucharist, and their priesthood. But given such variations in the literature, it is doubtful (despite the opinion of many respected scholars⁷²) that the adoption of sacerdotal terminology for bishops and presbyters can be explained in a simple deductive way, that is, as the logical consequence of an increasing emphasis on the sacrificial character of the Eucharist. The "sacerdotalization" of ordained ministry is more plausibly explained by a combination of factors—political, theological, cultural—that contributed to Christians' coming to understand themselves as an alternate society, a distinct culture within the Roman Empire.⁷³ To sum up, Tillard's assertion is entirely substantiated by the historical evidence: "The sacrificial is more comprehensive than the sacerdotal."⁷⁴

1986), 33.

⁷¹ Jasper and Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 21–22.

⁷² For example: "[L]es textes nous montrent clairement que la notion de sacerdoce s'est développée en même temps que celle de sacrifice et en liaison directe avec elle." Gy, "Vocabulaire antique," 143.

⁷³ The historical factors involved in this development are elucidated in a careful study by Bryan Alan Stewart, "‘Priests of My People’: Levitical Paradigms for Christian Ministers in the Third and Fourth Century Church," *Dissertations & Theses: Full Text [Database on-Line]* (2006) University of Virginia, Ph.D. Diss., Available from <http://www.proquest.com> (publication number AAT 3225067; accessed October 21, 2009).

⁷⁴ Tillard, "What Priesthood?" 248.

There is, fortunately, a word-group that does denote the notion of priesthood unambiguously, whether in Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible or in contemporary pagan literature, and this comprises the terms derived from the *ἱερ-* lexeme, namely: *ἱερεὺς*, *ἀρχιερεὺς*, *ἀρχιερατικός*, *ἱερωσύνη*, *ἱερατεία*, *ἱεράτευμα*, *ἱερατεύω*, *ἱεροργέω*.⁷⁵ This word-group will be used as the principal vehicle for locating pertinent material in Christian textual sources composed in Greek.

4.2 Latin Lexemes

Regarding the Latin word *minister*, remarks can be made similar to those above regarding the Greek word *λειτουργός* (which it often translates in the New Testament), namely that it is not always possible to distinguish the specifically religious meaning from the general meaning of "assistant" or "helper." In some cases the term refers to specific offices within the Christian community—e.g. deacons, or presbyters and deacons taken together—in *contradistinction to* others—e.g. bishops.⁷⁶ Hence the term is not useful as a heuristic tool. Neither is the word *antistes*, which had both a religious and a secular sense; and even in its religious sense its meaning was quite broad: "religious leader," "temple overseer."⁷⁷

The usual Latin translation for the *ἱερ-* word-group is *sacerdos* (+ cognates), which has an equivalent range of meaning.⁷⁸ An additional term, which has its origin in a specifically Roman religious institution, is *pontifex*, which from the third/second century

⁷⁵ These terms are grouped together (53.85-90) under the domain "Religious Activities" and the subdomain "Roles and Functions" in Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 544.

⁷⁶ Albert Blaise, *Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens*, rev. Henri Chirat (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954), 531 (hereafter cited as DLFAC).

⁷⁷ See Blaise, DLFAC, 87; Charlton Thomas Lewis, et al., *A Latin Dictionary, Founded on Andrews' Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary*, reprint, 1879 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 133.

⁷⁸ Blaise, DLFAC, 729.

BCE on was used, along with the more ponderous-sounding expression *summus sacerdos*, to translate ἄρχιερεὺς.⁷⁹

It is noteworthy that in Greek and Latin, there is both a lexical and a semantic connection between the terms that commonly denote the priesthood and those denoting the sphere of what is "innately holy"⁸⁰ (*sacer*, ἱερός) by reason of direct contact with divinity. Both within Judaism and in other ancient societies, the basic concept of the priest, then, is of an individual who was divinely authorized to mediate his/her fellow citizens' relations with the realm of the holy.⁸¹

5 Analytical Criteria

What is at issue is the traditional status of the proposition that *priests (i.e. bishops and presbyters), when performing certain acts proper to their ministry, represent the person of Christ in a unique manner*. The structure of this proposition suggests a three-pronged approach to the sources. It must be asked whether each selected source (1) possesses a *theology of priesthood* in which Christ is the primary point of reference; (2) expresses the connection between the minister and Christ explicitly in terms of *representation*; and (3) attaches this representation-of-Christ to acts that are proper to the ordained ministry. These three criteria will now be explained in detail.

⁷⁹ Seebass and Brown, "Holy," 2:234.

⁸⁰ "*hieros* is that which is determined, filled or consecrated by divine power. In contrast to *hagios*, holy, *hosios*, devout, pious, and *semnos*, revered, august [...], all of which contain an ethical element, *hieros* denotes what is holy in and of itself, quite apart from any ethical judgment." Seebass and Brown, "Holy," 2:232.

⁸¹ Throughout the time-span of the Hebrew Bible, "the fundamental principle remained that the highest degree of holiness among human beings was that of priests, and that only they could rightly enter the spaces whose degree of spatial holiness was the highest." Cody, "Priests and High Priest," 609.

5.1 The Theology of Priesthood

In the mature thought of Aquinas, and in the classic Western theology he inaugurated, the notion of priesthood is interpreted in thoroughly Christological terms, and *in persona Christi* is a central element of this interpretation. In fact, it is the ability to act *in persona Christi* which *defines* the priesthood of the new covenant, and sets it apart from the priesthood of the Mosaic Law: "Christ is the fountain-head of the entire priesthood: for the priest of the Old Law was a figure of Him; while the priest of the New Law works in His person, according to 2 Cor. 2:10: 'For what I have pardoned, if I have pardoned anything, for your sakes have I done it in the person of Christ.'"⁸² Priests are able to represent Christ because the "priesthood" that they have received through (presbyteral) ordination is of an entirely derivative nature; it is nothing but a participation in the priestly character of Christ. This radically Christic concept of priesthood is central to Aquinas' view, not only of the ordained ministry, but of the efficacy of the sacraments.⁸³

It is of capital importance for Thomas to maintain the identity of the sacrifice of the Mass with the sacrifice of Calvary, both in terms of what is offered (the "victim") and in terms of the offerer (the "priest"). Transubstantiation is the conceptual tool that enables Thomas to assert that the *victim* of both the Mass and Calvary is one and the same; *in persona Christi* is the conceptual tool which allows him to assert that the *priest* is the

⁸² "Christus autem est fons totius sacerdotii, nam sacerdos legalis erat figura ipsius; sacerdos autem novae legis in persona ipsius operatur, secundum illud II Cor. II, *nam et ego, quod donavi, si quid donavi, propter vos, in persona Christi.*" *ST*, III^a q. 22 a. 4 co.

⁸³ "In order to be a genuinely sacramental act, one which confers the saving grace of Christ, the priest's act depends entirely on Christ's own agency (...). This is true of all the sacraments, but is uniquely clear in the case of the Eucharist." Bruce D. Marshall, "The Whole Mystery of Our Salvation: Saint Thomas Aquinas on the Eucharist as Sacrifice," in *Rediscovering Aquinas and the Sacraments*, ed. Matthew Levering and Michael Dauphinais (Chicago, Ill.: Hillenbrand, 2006), 59.

same.⁸⁴ "The priest also bears Christ's image, in whose person and by whose power he pronounces the words of consecration (...). And so in a measure the priest and the victim are the same."⁸⁵ The church has no other atoning sacrifice to offer than the once-for-all⁸⁶ self-offering of Christ, and likewise the church's ministers have no other priesthood than his.⁸⁷ If this were not the case, if the Mass were the offering of a different victim by a different priest, it would not be a sacrifice acceptable to God.⁸⁸ Thomas understands that to conceive of the church's priesthood as numerically distinct from Christ's own would be to negate the teaching of the New Testament that Christ is the *one* high priest of the new covenant (Heb.), the sole mediator between God and humankind (1 Tim.), just as to conceive of the Eucharist as something "alongside" or "added to" Christ's sacrifice on the Cross would be a denial of the latter's sufficiency for salvation.

Without an explicitly Christic interpretation of the concept of priesthood, to speak of ordained ministers as "priests" of the new covenant is at best ambiguous, and at worst a denial of the salvific role of Christ himself. With the coming of Christ, in Aquinas' view, all other priesthoods—including the Aaronic priesthood that prefigured his and even mediated his saving grace by anticipation—have been fulfilled, and consequently must

⁸⁴ "How to think about the unity between Calvary and the Eucharistic altar in the act of offering is, if anything, even more difficult than how to think about the unity in what is offered. Briefly, though, Saint Thomas thinks of the Eucharist as Christ's own saving act of sacrifice first of all by way of a theology of Christ's priesthood and our participation in it." Marshall, "Whole Mystery of Salvation," 58.

⁸⁵ "Etiam sacerdos gerit imaginem Christi, in cuius persona et virtute verba pronuntiat ad consecrandum (...). Et ita quodammodo idem est sacerdos et hostia." *ST*, III^a q. 83 a. 1 ad 3.

⁸⁶ Rom. 6:10; Heb. 7:27; 9:28; 10:10; 1 Pet. 3:18.

⁸⁷ In the case of Eucharistic concelebration by several presbyters, Thomas argues that because they are all acting *in persona Christi*, their simultaneous consecration of the same elements is not redundant: *ST*, III^a q. 82 a. 2 ad 2.

⁸⁸ "What makes the Eucharist acceptable to God, Thomas suggests, is that Christ himself is ultimately both its priest and victim, the one who offers and what is offered. For just this reason, but not otherwise, the Eucharist is nothing less than 'the immolation of Christ,' Christ's own sacrifice." Marshall, "Whole Mystery of Salvation," 49.

cease being exercised. But it cannot simply be taken for granted that Christians of the first centuries were all as keenly sensitive as Aquinas and his medieval colleagues to avoid the theological difficulties inherent in the use of sacerdotal language for the church's ministers. It must be borne in mind that historically speaking, the concept of *sacerdotium* (priesthood) is not uniquely Christian. It was inherited from Judaism and was also a prominent feature of Greco-Roman religion. When cultic or sacerdotal language is used in an early Christian text, therefore, it cannot be assumed that the priesthood *of Christ*—which is explicitly described for the first time in the Epistle to the Hebrews—is the exclusive or even the primary framework of reference.⁸⁹ This is true even of other texts of the New Testament, such as 1 Peter and Revelation. The status of the Epistle to the Hebrews itself, as canonical literature, was far from universal in the first three centuries.⁹⁰ Hence the designation of ministers as ἱερεῖς or *sacerdotes* (priests), when it begins to occur in Christian literature, should not be taken *ipso facto* as implying participation in Christ's priesthood.

In order to qualify as an antecedent to *in persona Christi* theology, therefore, a patristic source must be shown to possess an explicitly Christic interpretation of the meaning of "priesthood" in the Christian dispensation. Ascertaining this may not always be a simple task, especially with respect to the earliest sources. It may be a challenge to distinguish a deliberate Christic interpretation of ministry from a more indirect or remote one. It is obvious that all the essential elements of the Christian religion—ministry, preaching, the sacraments, the church, and so on—are ultimately related to Christ in some

⁸⁹ "C'est [...] dans le sens d'une typologie vétérotestamentaire, plutôt qu'en relation avec le sacerdoce du Christ, que le vocabulaire sacerdotal se trouvera bientôt couramment appliqué aux ministères ordonnés dans les constitutions pseudo-apostoliques et chez les écrivains ecclésiastiques des III^e et IV^e siècles." de Halleux, "Ministère et sacerdoce," 304.

⁹⁰ Hebrews is absent from the Muratorian Canon, composed ca. 200 CE in Rome.

way. In the extremely broad sense, then, to qualify anything as "Christian" or to relate it to Jesus is already to interpret it christologically. So for example, the simple assertion that the presider of the eucharistic assembly repeats the words and gestures of Jesus at the Last Supper, or that the bishop is the "head" of the local church, could be seen as a "christological" interpretation of ordained ministry. But implicit affirmations, indirect comparisons, and allusions leave room for doubt about whether the author is *deliberately* and *consciously* making use of such an interpretation. In a critical study of historical sources, it is important to minimize such doubt.

5.2 Representation of Christ

(A) Representation

While it would not be correct to begin with a preconceived philosophical model of *repraesentatio*, the term can be assigned at least a minimal content in order to serve as a heuristic tool, in view of later developments. The kind of representation that is denoted by *in persona Christi* theology goes beyond the level of a merely artistic representation in which the *persona repraesentata* would remain absent. The priest is not a mere signpost, alongside other liturgical symbols such as the crucifix, the altar, etc. that bring Christ to the viewer's mind. A transfer takes place in which the words and actions of the priest become identical with those of the living, glorified Christ in the present. "But the form of this sacrament is pronounced as if Christ were speaking in person, so that it is given to be understood that the minister does nothing in perfecting this sacrament, except to pronounce the words of Christ."⁹¹ Representation in this strong, quasi-sacramental sense means *re-*

⁹¹ "Sed forma huius sacramenti profertur ex persona ipsius Christi loquentis: ut detur intellegi quod minister in perfectione huius sacramenti nihil agit nisi quod profert verba Christi." *ST*, III^a q. 78 a. 1 co.

presentation: the being-made-present of the person represented. Therefore, what will be required in a patristic source's use of representational language will be a symbolic identification of the minister with Christ, that is, a transfer of qualities, properties, or prerogatives *from Christ to the minister (or vice versa)*, in such a way that Christ is said to be personally present by means of his representative.

The notion of representation requires a third party: the one(s) *to whom* Christ is represented. By way of illustration, if a person were said to exercise authority, power, or prerogatives that properly belong to Christ *for the benefit of other Christians*, this would be an instance of representation (unless the context demanded a different interpretation). On the other hand, if a person were merely said to be a *recipient* of some grace or benefit from Christ, this could not be taken on its own as an instance of representation (even if arguably, all grace makes one more like Christ).

(B) of Christ

A fundamental methodological presupposition is that to qualify as an antecedent of *in persona Christi* theology, a source must designate the object of sacerdotal representation specifically and unambiguously as *Christ*, the Son of God, and not "God" or a different divine Person. A helpful distinction in this context may be made between the strict and the wide sense of the term "antecedent." To posit some kind of divine representation on the part of an ordained minister (as Ignatius and the *Didascalia* do, for example) could be seen as an antecedent in the wide sense of the term;⁹² however, it cannot be an antecedent in the

⁹² In addition to *in persona Christi* language pertaining to the minister of the Eucharist, Thomas also speaks of prelates' acting "in God's place" (*vicem Dei*) in their exercise of governance in the church. In a few cases he alternates between representation of God and of Christ in the same passage, e.g. *ST*, II^a-IIae q. 88 a. 12 co. Those who exercise legitimate authority in the realm of civil society also act *vicem Dei*: *ST*, I^a-IIae q. 100 a. 8 ad 3.

strict sense, because it leaves open the possibility that Christ is represented by some other, non-sacerdotal agency within the church (e.g.: the deacon).

5.3 Representation-of-Christ Attaches to Acts Proper to the Ordained Ministry

A theological distinction between the priesthood of the ordained and that of the baptized is foundational to the concept of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ. If this distinction were not clearly enunciated, it would become impossible to distinguish between the conformity to Christ that is effected by the sacrament of holy orders, and that which is effected by the sacrament of baptism. For Aquinas, the capacity of priests to act *in persona Christi* is clearly distinct from the configuration to Christ of all the baptized, since this capacity gives priests exclusive "power" to perform some sacramental actions, above all the Eucharist: "[A]s the power of receiving this sacrament is conceded by Christ to the baptized person, so likewise the power of consecrating this sacrament on Christ's behalf is bestowed upon the priest at his ordination."⁹³ The spiritual power possessed by the priest and the power of the words of institution are the two "instrumental causes" used by the "principal agent," Christ, to bring about the Eucharist (sacrament and sacrifice). In order to qualify as an antecedent of *in persona Christi* theology, then, a source must attach representation-of-Christ to acts that it considers proper to the ordained ministry, and not only to acts that could in principle be performed by any baptized person.⁹⁴

A further hermeneutical caution is needed. In the classic theology of priesthood, the capacity of the ordained to re-present Christ is permanent and objective: It is not lost along

⁹³ "Sicut autem baptizato conceditur a Christo potestas sumendi hoc sacramentum, ita sacerdoti, cum ordinatur, confertur potestas hoc sacramentum consecrandi in persona Christi." *ST*, III^a q. 82 a. 1 co.

⁹⁴ The historical-critical methodological approach followed here precludes bringing into play later developments in ecclesial praxis regarding the minister of the sacraments, such as the administration of baptism by laypersons.

with grace (i.e., it is not forfeited by the human failures and misdeeds of the minister). Therefore, for antecedence to be verified, a patristic source must not attribute representation only to the subjective *holiness* of the priest; it must be clear that any and every priest represents Christ in this manner.

Excursus: On the Correlation between Sacrifice and Priesthood

It may seem difficult to reconcile the lack of any explicit sacerdotal interpretation of ministry in the New Testament (noted above, in section 2.1), as well as the lack of strict historical correlation between sacrifice and priesthood (noted in section 4.1), with certain important elements of the Catholic doctrinal tradition. Indeed, the Council of Trent, in its definition of the dogma that there exists a "visible, external priesthood of the New Testament," declared in strong terms that sacrifice and priesthood are theologically inseparable: "Sacrifice and priesthood are so joined together by God's foundation that each exists in every law."⁹⁵ The reasoning of this first chapter in the Decree on Holy Orders is syllogistic:

[Major Premise] *Every dispensation has both a sacrifice and a priesthood.*

[Minor Premise] *The Eucharist is the visible sacrifice of the new covenant.*

[Conclusion] *There must also exist a visible priesthood of the new covenant.*

The ordinary magisterium has followed Trent's line of reasoning, as recently as the assertion of John Paul II in his 2004 Holy Thursday *Letter to Priests*: "There is a particular interplay between the Eucharist and the priesthood, an interplay which goes back to the

⁹⁵"Sacrificium et sacerdotium ita Dei ordinatione coniuncta sunt, ut utrumque in omni lege exstiterit." Council of Trent, Session 23 (15 July 1563), "The True and Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrament of Order, to Condemn the Errors of Our Time," ch. 1, in Tanner, *DEC 2*, 742.

Upper Room: these two Sacraments were born together and their destiny is indissolubly linked until the end of the world."⁹⁶ Such accounts of the institution of the ordained priesthood "in the Upper Room" appear to bypass completely the question of historicity.

The Tridentine definition was a way of accounting for the lack of any explicit ordination or institution of the apostles as "priests" by Christ, a datum that the Reformers were using to call into question not only the sacramentality of holy orders, but the very foundations of the medieval church's hierarchical structure and sacramental system. In the mind of the council fathers, however, if both the major and the minor premises of the above syllogism could be granted, then it would follow that there was no need for an *explicit* institution of a new priesthood. The very fact that the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice was entrusted to the apostles by Christ ("Do this in memory of me." [Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:25]) signified the institution of a new priesthood. On the level of their being, the apostles *became* priests, even though they were not *called* priests in the text of the institution narratives (or anywhere else in the New Testament); just as, before the giving of the Mosaic Law, the patriarchs Abel, Noah, Abraham, et al. can be considered a posteriori to have *been* priests (of the natural law), even though they are nowhere called such in the biblical text.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ John Paul II, "Letter to Priests for Holy Thursday 2004," 28 Mar. 2004, *The Holy See*, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/2004/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_20040406_priests-holy-thursday_en.html.

⁹⁷ A similar deductive reasoning is followed by Aquinas regarding sacraments. Since (A) God's saving grace has been offered to human beings from the very beginning of history, and (B) sacraments are the means of grace most suited to human nature, it follows that (C) sacraments must also have existed from the beginning. Hence Aquinas contends that even before the Mosaic covenant, at a time when humans served God only "under the law of nature," there were already sacraments, established solely on the basis of an interior, religious instinct (*ST*, III^a q. 60 a. 5). Thomas provides a few examples of these "sacramenta legis naturae" (as he calls them in III^a q. 61 a. 3): the vow of Jacob in Gen. 28:20-22 (III^a q. 60 a. 5), the institution of matrimony (III^a q. 61 a. 2), the sacrifice of Melchizedek (III^a q. 61 a. 3), circumcision (III^a q. 62 a. 6); and various oblations and tithes (III^a q. 65 a. 1 ad 7).

Several observations can be made on the presuppositions that are operative in the Tridentine teaching. The first is that the terms "priesthood" and "sacrifice" were clearly not meant by the council fathers to be understood literally as referring to socio-historical phenomena of Antiquity.⁹⁸ Rather, they were to be understood as *analogical* theological concepts. The New Testament itself uses the idea of sacrifice analogically in applying it to the non-sacral death of Christ on the Cross,⁹⁹ and uses the idea of priesthood analogically in calling the non-priest Jesus¹⁰⁰ "a great high priest who has passed through the heavens" (Heb. 4:14). In like manner, then, the analogy can be extended to include the apostles who were commanded to perpetuate the memorial of the Lord's death, notwithstanding the fact that they were not explicitly called "priests" either by Christ or by their fellow disciples.

The second observation is that the correlation of priesthood and sacrifice in Trent's Decree on Holy Orders—as evidenced by its citation of Heb. 7:12¹⁰¹—is derived from Hebrews.¹⁰² Thus the Decree takes for granted both that sacrifice is the essential, necessary function of a priest (Heb. 5:1; 8:3), and that the institution of a priesthood is correlative to the giving of a law (7:12). This accounts for the major premise of the syllogism described above. On the level of history, a strict correlation of priesthood and sacrifice is only encountered in the Priestly Source and the practices of Second Temple Judaism (and even there it was relativized by various elements in the biblical narrative). In comparison to

⁹⁸ For one thing, the reference to "every *law*" clearly excludes polytheistic worship. The document is not deriving its concepts of priesthood or sacrifice from the history of religions.

⁹⁹ Cf. John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7; Eph. 5:2; Heb. 9:26; 10:12; Rev. 5:9.

¹⁰⁰ The Epistle to the Hebrews readily acknowledges that Jesus could not have been a member of the Jewish priestly order of his own day (see Heb. 7:14; 8:4).

¹⁰¹ Tanner, *DEC* 2, 742.

¹⁰² Another probable influence was Aquinas's treatment of the sacrifice of the Mass: "Quant à sa définition du sacerdoce en fonction du sacrifice, elle reprend simplement ce que saint Thomas en avait dit à propos du ministre de l'Eucharistie (III^a, q.82)." Grelot, "Dimension sacerdotale," 162.

earlier periods of Israel's history, and to surrounding cultures, this exclusive focus on sacrifice is the result of a *narrowing* of the meaning of priesthood.¹⁰³ Trent's argument, however, is not based on a collation of historical data: it rests upon analogical concepts of priesthood and of sacrifice, as reinterpreted by the author of Hebrews. Furthermore, the Decree on Holy Orders in its final, approved form carefully avoids settling the question of whether there must be a *strict* correlation between sacrifice and priesthood, i.e. whether these must always have coexisted in the *same persons*. The council fathers were certainly aware of the objection that there are instances in the Old Testament of non-priests offering sacrifices. The point is that both priesthood and sacrifice have in fact coexisted in every dispensation.¹⁰⁴

The third observation is that the concept of priesthood found both in Hebrews and in Trent is that it is focussed not on sacrifice in general, but more specifically on the offering of sacrifice *for sin*. There were of course many different types of sacrifices in the Old Testament, not all of which had as their primary aim the expiation of sins.¹⁰⁵ What was of primary interest to the author of Hebrews, though, is how to show that Christ's is the only sacrifice that can definitively expiate human sins. What was of primary interest to the bishops gathered at Trent was defending the idea that in celebrating the Mass, Catholic

¹⁰³ "Dans le document sacerdotal, les sacrifices pour le péché et spécialement celui du jour des Expiations (Lv 16) prennent le pas sur les sacrifices de communion. Le rituel détaillé de Lv 1–10 ne dit rien des prières accompagnant les sacrifices ni ne précise les fonctions d'enseignement incombant aux [prêtres] (cf. à ce sujet Ag 2,10-14; Mt 2,4-7); il en résultera un appauvrissement de la conception du sacerdoce (comme on le voit par He 5,1-4)." Édouard Cothenet, "Prêtre," in *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de la Bible*, 3d ed., ed. Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 1052.

¹⁰⁴ See André Duval, "L'Ordre," in *Des sacrements au Concile de Trente*, Rites et symboles 16 (Paris: Cerf, 1985), 344–45.

¹⁰⁵ Leviticus describes five main types of sacrifices: holocausts, cereal offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, guilt offerings. The second and third types have no particular relation to sin.

ministers were offering Christ's own sacrifice, which meant that the Mass could be seen as propitiatory for the sins of the living and the dead.

There is no question that the discrepancy between the historical meaning of priesthood and its retroactive analogical application creates a logical tension. The difficulty in achieving a balanced position can be seen in an insightful article by Tillard, in which the author begins by confidently asserting that "it is rash to move from the assertion of the sacrificial quality of the Lord's Supper to the conclusion that its minister must therefore possess a priestly quality,"¹⁰⁶ but then later (in section IV), when attempting to account for the late introduction of sacerdotal titles for ordained ministers in the early church, he reverts to the Tridentine formulation: "Priesthood is intrinsically linked with sacrifice."¹⁰⁷ (Does Tillard mean to imply that the church fathers were "rash"...?)

As in many other instances of tension between history and dogma, there is no easy resolution to the issue of the interplay between the concepts of "priesthood" and "sacrifice." On the one hand, historical criticism would challenge proponents of a strictly dogmatic approach to take seriously the possibility that first- and second-century Christians may not have conceived of the apostles and their successors as members of a distinct class of "priests." On the other hand, systematic theology would challenge proponents of the historical-critical approach to recognize the legitimacy of analogical interpretations—and reinterpretations—of the meaning of historic events (e.g. the voluntary death of Jesus) and roles (e.g. the ministry of the Twelve) that have foundational significance for the life of the people of God.

¹⁰⁶ Tillard, "What Priesthood?" 258.

¹⁰⁷ Tillard, "What Priesthood?" 266.

Having established precise methodological criteria for selecting and analysing ancient Christian sources, we will proceed in the next chapter to survey a selection of early liturgical sources, with the aim of finding possible instances of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ.

CHAPTER 3 A SURVEY OF EARLY LITURGICAL SOURCES ON ORDAINED MINISTRY

1 Introduction

The choice to separate our analysis of ancient "liturgical" sources (in the present chapter) from other genres of sources, labelled "theological" (in the next chapter) is not meant to imply either that liturgical texts are *non*-theological, or that liturgy itself is not a genuine form of theology. On the contrary, that separation was made precisely out of a conviction that the church's liturgy is *theologia prima*, and is therefore a pre-eminent *locus theologicus*.¹ While the *lex orandi* is not autonomous from the *lex credendi*, it has always been seen—beginning with the fathers themselves—as a privileged witness of the great Tradition.

Regarding the theology of ordained ministry in particular, it was the witness of the ancient liturgy that led theologians in the early twentieth century to abandon the teaching of Thomas Aquinas,² adopted by the Council of Florence,³ that the matter of the sacrament of Order was the *porrectio instrumentorum* ("porrection [i.e. handing over] of the instruments" associated with each office) rather than the laying on of hands. Pius XII's Apostolic Constitution *Sacramentum ordinis*⁴ argues that the essential effects of a

¹ "Here liturgy is viewed as the *locus theologicus par excellence* because it is its very function, its *leitourgia* in the original meaning of that word, to manifest and to fulfill the Church's faith and to manifest it not partially, not 'discursively,' but as living totality and catholic experience." Alexander Schmemmann, "Liturgical Theology, Theology of Liturgy, and Liturgical Reform," in *Liturgy and Tradition: Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemmann*, ed. Thomas J. Fisch (Crestwood, N.Y.: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990), 40.

² See *Summa theologiae*, Suppl. q. 34 a. 5.

³ "Sextum est sacramentum ordinis, cuius materia est illud, per cuius traditionem confertur ordo. Sicut presbyteratus traditur per calicis cum vino et patene cum pane porrectionem." Council of Florence, "Bull *Exsultate Deo* on Union with the Armenians [22 Nov. 1439]," in Tanner, *DEC 1*, 549. ET: "The sixth is the sacrament of orders. Its matter is the object by whose handing over the order is conferred. So the [presbyterate] is bestowed by the handing over of a chalice with wine and a paten with bread."

⁴ Pius XII, "Apostolic Constitution *Sacramentum ordinis* (30 Nov. 1947)," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 40 (1948): 5-7.

sacrament instituted by Christ must have always been sufficiently signified by the rites in use *at all times* by *all* Churches of apostolic origin. Whereas it is well known that the Byzantine tradition has never practised porrection,⁵ he argues, the latter cannot be considered to be the essential gesture of the sacrament. The same historico-liturgical argumentation is used by the Second Vatican Council to formally reinstate the doctrine that episcopal consecration confers the fullness of the sacrament of holy orders, "that fullness which in the Church's liturgical practice and in the language of the holy Fathers of the Church is undoubtedly called the high priesthood, the apex of the sacred ministry. (...) For from tradition, which is expressed especially in liturgical rites and in the practice of the Church both of the East and of the West (...)" (LG 21). The two footnotes to this passage refer to ancient liturgical sources, beginning with the *Apostolic Tradition*.

If sacerdotal representation-of-Christ is an idea that belongs fully to the church's great Tradition, then, it follows that one should be able to find it embodied in the *lex orandi* of the patristic era, and specifically in the prayers and ceremonies of ordination. In theory at least, the liturgy of ordination, as it was celebrated by Christians of the first centuries, should reveal what they considered to be the most essential meaning of ordained ministry.

Unfortunately, however, an insurmountable limitation affects any attempt to recover or reconstruct ancient liturgy on the basis of textual evidence: The material available to

⁵ He might have added that in the case of the major orders, the Roman Rite itself did not practise porrection for many centuries, as the earliest evidence of the handing over of episcopal insignia is in the Carolingian period, and the *Romano-Germanic Pontifical* of 950 contains the first evidence of its use for the presbyter.

modern scholars is only an imperfect expression of the liturgy *as it was actually celebrated*. Five reasons for this hermeneutical limitation will be recalled briefly here.⁶

(1) As a result of the vicissitudes of manuscript transmission, not all the liturgical texts of the ancient church have survived to our own day. Fortunately, many crucially important witnesses (such as the ancient church orders to be discussed below in section 2) were recovered as a result of scholarly investigations beginning in the nineteenth century. But many more have not yet been discovered, and may never be. The archaeological record is similarly fragmentary.

(2) It is not always possible to achieve certainty about the degree to which a given liturgical text was ever used by living liturgical communities. In many instances a text was pseudonymously attributed to a great figure of primitive Christianity with the intention of ensuring its adoption in place of existing texts. Whether the author was successful or not may be a topic of intense debate among liturgical historians.

(3) Even when there is certainty that a liturgical text does reflect actual praxis in some local communities, this does not necessarily mean that all of its contents were always used. Over time, some of its elements (prayers, gestures, etc.) may have been retained simply out of fidelity to the past, without actually being used in the liturgy.

(4) In the earliest period, euchological improvisation was the norm, even for the anaphora. Written texts served as guides, but celebrants felt free to modify these in response to particular circumstances, personal inspiration, etc.⁷ This freedom is attested to by the

⁶ For a fuller explanation of the need for caution when attempting to reconstruct ancient Christian worship, see Paul F. Bradshaw, "Shifting Scholarly Perspectives," in *Search for the Origins*, 1–20.

⁷ See Allan Bouley, *From Freedom to Formula: The Evolution of the Eucharistic Prayer from Oral Improvisation to Written Texts*, Studies in Christian Antiquity 21 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1981).

Didache, Justin Martyr, and the *Apostolic Tradition*. It was only in the Constantinian era that a process of liturgical standardization led to the expectation that formularies approved by ecclesiastical authorities were to be recited verbatim. In the Western church at least, fear of heresy appears to have been the major factor behind the imposition of texts by councils and bishops of major sees.⁸

(5) As is the case today, it was not considered necessary to write down practices and customs that would have been common knowledge among those involved in liturgical celebrations. "Thus, directions do not generally deal with accepted and customary things, but only with new, uncertain, or controverted points: everything else will tend either to be passed over in silence or to receive the briefest of allusions."⁹ From our perspective, rubrics that would have been perfectly intelligible to their original audience are often frustratingly vague or brief.

The lack of simple identity between the liturgy as it can be reconstructed today and the liturgy as it was actually celebrated by ancient Christians should not lead to an attitude of radical scepticism regarding the possibility of finding valuable information about the theme of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ in the extant sources. What is necessary, though, is a healthy dose of caution in drawing conclusions. Especially to be avoided are enthusiastic generalizations about the prevalence or geographic spread of a particular custom (which may only reflect conditions in a source's time and place of composition), as well as extrapolations backward in time on the basis of a single source.¹⁰

⁸ See Anscar J. Chupungco, "History of the Liturgy Until the Fourth Century," in *Introduction to the Liturgy*, vol. 1 of *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, ed. Anscar J. Chupungco (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1997), 110–11; Bradshaw, *Search for the Origins*, 225.

⁹ Bradshaw, *Search for the Origins*, 16.

¹⁰ Unfortunately, liturgical scholars of previous generations did not always avoid these pitfalls.

After examining the ancient church orders (2), which are the earliest witnesses to the Christian liturgy, we will proceed to study the early ordination rites of Egypt (3), Rome (4), Gaul (5), Spain (6), Byzantium (7), and Georgia (8). Within each section, sources are treated in roughly chronological order. Some preliminary conclusions will be made (9) regarding the cumulative evidence of the liturgical sources studied. For the sake of completeness, it would have been desirable to include more of the Eastern rites of ordination, namely the Armenian, Coptic, East Syrian, Jacobite, Maronite, and Melkite traditions, but the earliest available documents for many of these ritual families are considerably later than the patristic period: they range from the ninth or tenth century for the Armenian rites, to the fifteenth century for the East Syrian.¹¹

2 The Ancient Church Orders

The documents to be studied in this section (as well as the *Didache*) belong to a unique genre of ancient Christian literature that combines disciplinary material, moral instruction, and descriptions/prescriptions pertaining to the liturgy, usually under pseudo-apostolic authorship. With the exception of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, these documents had all been lost until the mid-nineteenth century. Since that time, twelve have been recovered. Their interrelatedness was soon apparent, and many theories were advanced to account for it. Only in the mid-twentieth century did something of a scholarly consensus emerge regarding their literary relationship.¹² To this day, however, there are outstanding

¹¹ Paul F. Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites of the Ancient Churches of East and West* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990), 6–14.

¹² For a more detailed explanation of the "enigma" presented by the discovery of the ancient church orders, see Bradshaw, *Search for the Origins*, 73–98.

issues with respect to the precise dating and redactional history of several of the church orders. Despite the spurious nature of their claims to apostolic origin and to universal application, these documents are extremely valuable as the earliest witnesses to the development of ordained ministries in the Christian church.

2.1 The *Apostolic Tradition*

Even though the Greek original is no longer extant except in fragments, what makes the *Apostolic Tradition* deserving of inclusion in the present study is its widespread influence in the formative period of the great liturgical families, as evidenced by its incorporation or adaptation by subsequent church orders, including book 8 of the *Apostolic Constitutions* and the *Epitome*, the *Canons of Hippolytus*, and the *Testamentum Domini*. This influence is notably evident in the case of the ordination prayers: "The ordination prayers occurring in most other ancient Church orders seem to be directly or indirectly based on the *Apostolic Tradition*."¹³ Thus the theological significance of the document in no way depends upon its attribution to Hippolytus, a Roman presbyter and controversialist who lived ca. 170–236.¹⁴ Its importance is further underlined by the fact that the revised Roman rite of episcopal ordination (1st ed. 1968, 2nd ed. 1990) is based on the *Apostolic Tradition*.¹⁵

The *Apostolic Tradition* contained the earliest known rites and prayers for the ordinations of a bishop, of a presbyter, and of a deacon.¹⁶ The prayer for the ordination of

¹³H. Boone Porter, *The Ordination Prayers of the Ancient Western Churches*, Alcuin Club Collection 49 (London: SPCK, 1967), 1.

¹⁴The *Apostolic Tradition* is listed among his works on the base of a statue of him discovered in Rome in 1551. In the last twenty years, however, both the dating and the attribution to Hippolytus have been seriously questioned.

¹⁵Susan K. Wood, *Sacramental Orders*, Lex Orandi (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 45.

¹⁶Porter, *Ordination Prayers*, xi.

a bishop, the original form of which Bradshaw dates from no earlier than the mid-third century,¹⁷ is found in five versions/adaptations.¹⁸ One of them, *Epitome* 4.1-4,¹⁹ is one of the rare Greek fragments of the *Apostolic Tradition*; but in some cases the Latin version, 68.26-69.24²⁰ (which is literal to the point of grammatical incorrectness²¹) is thought to be closer to the original Greek text.²² Excerpts from the latter two versions will be quoted and commented upon. The *Canons of Hippolytus* and *Testamentum Domini* will be treated in their own separate sections, below (2.3 and 2.5).

ἄρχοντάς τε καὶ ἱερεῖς καταστήσας, τό τε ἅγίασμά σου μὴ καταλιπῶν ἀλειτούργητον.²³

principes et sacerdotes constituens et sanctum tuum sine ministerio non dereliquens.²⁴

These affirmations about God's establishing "rulers and priests" are contained within an anamnesis: a sequence of relative clauses, in which historical precedent (the fact that God's people has never been without leadership, and that the sanctuary has never been without a ministry) is being invoked in support of the church's petition for God to do something similar in the present. But historical continuity does not imply theological equivalence, as the ordinand obviously cannot become a Levitical priest in the literal sense,

¹⁷ Paul F. Bradshaw, Maxwell E. Johnson, and L. Edward Phillips, *The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2002), 35. All English translations of the various versions of *Trad. ap.* will be taken from this edition. N.B.: Each version has its own numbering system, distinct from that used for the (reconstructed) *Trad. ap.*

¹⁸ Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 30–36.

¹⁹ Franz Xaver Funk, ed., "Epitome Constitutionum Apostolorum VIII," in *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum*, reprint, 1905 (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1962), 2:72–96. Subsequent citations of *Epit.* refer to this edition.

²⁰ Tidner, *Versiones latinae*. Subsequent citations of the Latin version of *Trad. ap.* (*Trad. ap. Lat.*) refer to this edition.

²¹ Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 8.

²² Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 32–33.

²³ *Epit.* 4.2. ET: "appointing rulers and priests, and not leaving your sanctuary without a ministry."

²⁴ *Trad. ap. Lat.* 68:32-34. ET: "appointing rulers and priests, and not leaving your holy place without a ministry."

any more than he can become a Davidic king. A typological parallel²⁵ is being drawn between the institution of ἱερεῖς/*sacerdotes* in the Old Testament and the election of the ordinand, but that parallel does not explicate the specific nature of the *sacerdotium* that the latter is going to exercise—although it does situate that office within the context of cult and liturgy.

καὶ ἀρχιερατεύειν σοι ἀμέμπτως, λειτουργοῦντα νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας, ἀδιαλείπτως τε ἰλάσκεσθαι τῷ προσώπῳ σου καὶ προσφέρειν σοι τὰ δῶρα τῆς ἁγίας σου ἐκκλησίας καὶ τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἀρχιερατικῷ ἔχειν ἐξουσίαν ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας κατὰ τὴν ἐντολὴν σου.²⁶

primatum sacerdotii tibi exhibere, sine repraehensione seruientem noctu et die, incessanter repropitiari uultum tuum et offerre dona sancta<e> ecclesiae tuae, spiritu primatus sacerdotii habere potestatem dimittere peccata secundum mandatum tuum.²⁷

The language is unmistakably and very strongly sacerdotal: in language reminiscent of Leviticus (cf. 19:22) and Hebrews (cf. 2:17), the bishop is said "to serve as high priest" (Gk.) or "to exercise the high priesthood" (Lat.), "to propitiate [God's] countenance" and even "to forgive sins."²⁸ But because the title and function of high priest of the new covenant—not to mention the forgiveness of sins!—are attributed exclusively to *Christ* in

²⁵ According to Porter, the fundamental reason for the use of Scripture in this and other ancient ordination prayers "is the need to identify the ministry conferred by the Church with the ministry of the prophets, priests, apostles, and other spiritual leaders raised up by God in ages past. A typological and allusive manner of expression provides that degree of ambiguity which liturgical language must have." *Ordination Prayers*, xiv-xv.

²⁶ *Epit.* 4.4. ET: "and to serve as high priest for you blamelessly, ministering night and day; unceasingly to propitiate your countenance, and to offer to you the gifts of your holy church; and by the high priestly spirit to have authority to forgive sins according to your command."

²⁷ *Trad. ap.* Lat. 69:9-16. ET: "to exercise the high priesthood for you without blame, ministering night and day; unceasingly to propitiate your countenance, and to offer to you the holy gifts of your church; and by the spirit of high priesthood to have power to forgive sins according to your command."

²⁸ As used in the Bible, the Greek verb ἰλάσκομαι and the Latin verb *repropitio* both have the strong meaning of "to atone, to expiate." One wonders why the recent English versions of the episcopal ordination prayer in the Roman Rite have theologically weaker translations of "repropitiari uultum tuum": "may he always gain the blessing of your favor" (1978 *Roman Pontifical*) and "always gaining your favor" (2003 *Rites of Ordination*, 2nd typical edition).

Hebrews (4:14; 9:11; et al.), it is surprising that the *Apostolic Tradition* provides no explanation for their attribution to a Christian minister. The reader is left to wonder how the "expiation of sins" performed by the bishop is meant to relate to that performed by Christ on Calvary. This lacuna is all the more surprising because nearly all the functions that pertain to the episcopal ministry (which are enumerated in the final part of the ordination prayer) are expressed in language drawn directly from the New Testament: Acts 20:28; John 20:23; Matthew 18:18; Ephesians 5:2. Moreover, nowhere in our ordination prayer is there any mention of the nature of Christ's own high-priesthood (Is it any different from the Levitical order?); nor, for that matter, is there any direct reference to the Old Testament.²⁹ Thus the question of the theological connections that may have existed in the author's mind between the "high priesthood" of the bishop and those of Christ and/or of Moses-Aaron is left unanswered.

An anaphora is prescribed for the bishop to recite, immediately after the kiss of peace that follows his ordination. The language of priesthood is used in the anamnesis, according to the Ethiopic version: "giving thanks to you who have made us worthy to stand before you and to serve you as priests."³⁰ Sacerdotal terms are also found in the equivalent passages of the *Apostolic Constitutions* and *Testamentum Domini*; the Latin uses the cultic term *ministrare*.³¹ There is disagreement among scholars regarding the Greek verb that would have been translated by these terms. It is not evident, in any case, whether the priesthood that is being exercised is to be understood as that of the bishop alone, of the

²⁹ See de Halleux, "Ministère et sacerdoce," 303.

³⁰ In Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 40.

³¹ Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 40–41.

bishop together with the presbyters, or of the whole liturgical assembly.³² The interpretation depends on the referent of the "we" that is used as a subject throughout the anaphora. If one compares the anamnesis with (1) the passage of the episcopal ordination prayer, cited above, in which the functions proper to the high priest include "προσφέρειν σοι τὰ δῶρα τῆς ἁγίας σου ἐκκλησίας";³³ (2) *Apostolic Tradition* 8 (to be discussed below), in which deacons are excluded from the *sacerdotium* common to the bishop and his presbyters; and (3) *Apostolic Tradition* 34 (Lat. 77.22–23 + parallel texts in other versions), where the bishop is referred to as "princeps sacerdotum,"³⁴ it appears that the subject of the eucharistic offering is to be understood principally as the newly-ordained bishop, but with the participation of presbyters.

A further consideration on this issue is that the Latin, Sahidic, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions of the introduction to the anaphora all indicate that the presbyters lay their hands on the oblations together with the bishop.³⁵ Although inconclusive by itself, the prescription of this gesture is most easily explained if presbyters are considered to participate in the bishop's act of offering, and thus in his *sacerdotium*. This priestly handlaying recalls the gesture of Aaron and his sons, who laid their hands successively on the head of the sin-offering bullock (Lev. 8:14), the holocaust ram (8:18), and the ordination ram (8:22), after their own "ordination."

³² Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 48. For a defence of the position that the subject of the priestly activity in this clause—and of the entire anaphora—is the entire liturgical assembly, see Enrico Mazza, *The Origins of the Eucharistic Prayer* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1995), 151n222.

³³ *Epit.* 4.4. ET: "to offer to you the gifts of your holy church."

³⁴ Literally, "chief of (the) priests"; but Bradshaw translates it as "high priest." Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 176–77.

³⁵ Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 38.

A rather enigmatic instruction is found at the beginning of ch. 7: "episcopus [...] dicat secundum ea, quae praedicta sunt, sicut praediximus super episcopum" (71.22-25).³⁶ Given that a *new* prayer for presbyteral ordination does follow this instruction (at least in the Latin and Ethiopic versions), it is unclear whether the episcopal prayer is supposed to be used, in whole or in part, for ordaining presbyters. What is clear is that the prayer of presbyteral ordination *itself* does not contain any cultic or sacerdotal terminology. The ordinand is referred to simply as "seruum tuum istum" (this your servant). The Old Testament type used to describe the presbyteral office is the group of seventy elders chosen by Moses according to YHWH's command in Numbers 11:16-17; their role was primarily to assist Moses in governing the people,³⁷ although they also prophesied (Num. 11:25).

Presbyters are not to lay hands at the ordination of a deacon; the bishop alone is to do so. This is explained by the important clarification that deacons are not ordained to *sacerdotium* ("priesthood"): "In diacono ordinando solus episcopus inponat manus propterea, quia non in sacerdotio ordinatur sed in ministerio episcopi."³⁸ Hence the category of priesthood is not coextensive with ordained ministry as such. It is a more restrictive set of functions and prerogatives. The deacon does have a role in the celebration of the Eucharist, but a subordinate one: "to offer in your Holy of Holies that which is offered to you by your ordained high priest" (8.11 according to the Ethiopic version),³⁹ i.e. to present the offerings to the bishop (cf. 4.2 and 21.27).

³⁶ ET: "Let the bishop (...) say according to those things that have been said above, as we have said above about the bishop."

³⁷ "What is certain is that the prayer viewed the presbyterate as a corporate body that existed primarily for the leadership of the Christian community and not as a priesthood or simply for the exercise of specific liturgical functions." Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 59.

³⁸ *Trad. ap.* Lat. 72:9-12. ET: "In the ordination of a deacon, let the bishop alone lay on hands, because he is not ordained to the priesthood but to the service of the bishop."

³⁹ Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 62.

The central section of the episcopal ordination prayer consists in an epiclesis, a petition for the outpouring of the "spirit of authority" on the bishop-elect: "καὶ νῦν ἐπίχρεε τὴν παρὰ σοῦ δύναμιν τοῦ ἡγεμονικοῦ πνεύματος, ὅπερ διὰ τοῦ ἡγαπημένου σου παιδὸς Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δεδώρησαι τοῖς ἀγίοις σου ἀποστόλοις."⁴⁰ "nunc effunde eam uirtutem, quae a te est, *principalis spiritus*, quem dedisti dilecto filio tuo Iesu Christo, quod donauit sanctis apostolis."⁴¹ In the Greek version, the Father gave the "spirit of authority"⁴² to the apostles through his Son; in the Latin, the Father "gave" this spirit to his Son, who then "granted" it (different verb) to his apostles. (Of course, the end result is the same.) Although what is being directly invoked upon the bishop-elect in the prayer is "power" rather than "spirit,"⁴³ there is no reason to suspect any difference in meaning: the power is not logically separable from the spirit itself.

The idea that an essential quality of Christ as head of the church and shepherd of God's flock, namely the *spiritus principalis*, is here and now being communicated to the

⁴⁰ *Epit.* 4.3. ET: "And now pour forth the power that is from you, of the spirit of leadership that you granted through your beloved Child Jesus Christ to your holy apostles."

⁴¹ *Trad. ap.* Lat. 69:1-4. (This is one of the instances where the Latin version contains a grammatical error that reflects the Greek original: "the phrase 'spirit of leadership,' *principalis spiritus*, is followed first by a [masculine] relative pronoun, since the noun 'spirit' is [masculine] in Latin, but then by a neuter relative pronoun in the next clause, which would have been there in the Greek text, since the Greek noun πνεῦμα is neuter" Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 8.) ET: "now pour forth that power which is from you, of the spirit of leadership that [*masc.*] you gave to your beloved Son Jesus Christ, which [*neut.*] he gave to the holy apostles."

⁴² "L'évêque est le chef de l'Église. Dès lors, le choix du terme *hégemonicos* se comprend: c'est le don de l'Esprit qui convient à un chef. La meilleure traduction française serait peut-être: *l'Esprit d'autorité*. Mais, quelle que soit la traduction adoptée, le sens paraît certain." Bernard Botte, "Spiritus principalis" (formule de l'ordination épiscopale), *Notitiae* 10 (1974): 411.

⁴³ The current Roman rite of episcopal ordination has changed the genitive (*principalis spiritus*) to the accusative (*Spiritum principalem*) in this phrase, so as to express more clearly the notion that it is the Holy Spirit in person, and not merely his power, that was communicated to the apostles and is now being given to the ordinand. Catholic Church, *Pontificale Romanum: De ordinatione episcopi, presbyterorum et diaconorum*, Editio typica altera (Vatican City: Typis polyglottis Vaticanis, 1990), 24–25. That this is not a misinterpretation of the text can be shown by referring to the introductory rubric in *Trad. ap.* Lat. 68:22, in which the people are invited to keep silent and pray "propter discensionem spiritus" (on account of the descent of the Spirit).

bishop-elect establishes the latter as a representative of Christ. "This [imparting of the Spirit] traces a clear line of authority from Christ to the apostles and then to the bishop. The bishop is a prolongation of the visible presence of Christ and the apostles since he has received their powers and essential functions."⁴⁴ The power the bishop-elect receives from God through ordination will enable him to govern the church and to "feed [God's] holy flock" (cf. John 21:16; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2), *just as* Christ and the apostles did. Such a linear, descending transmission (God, Christ, apostles, church) is reminiscent of *1 Clement*,⁴⁵ despite the absence of any demonstrable literary dependency.⁴⁶

The possession of the *spiritus principalis* sets the bishop very clearly apart from every other member of the local church. It is precisely in his pastoral office, as ruler of the church community, that he represents the person of Christ. Therefore it is evident that his representation-of-Christ attaches to his role as an ordained minister and is not something he can share with anyone except fellow members of the college of bishops.

The *Apostolic Tradition* contains a strongly sacerdotal interpretation of the episcopal ministry. Furthermore, through the imparting of the *spiritus principalis* ("spirit of authority"), the bishop becomes a visible representative of Christ, who gave that same Spirit to his apostles. However, the origin of the *spiritus primatus sacerdotii* ("spirit of high priesthood") is not explicitly connected with the person of Christ. It is unclear whether Leviticus or Hebrews is the primary point of reference for the author's concept of

⁴⁴ Wood, *Sacramental Orders*, 49–50.

⁴⁵ "Οἱ ἀπόστολοι ἡμῖν εὐηγγελίσθησαν ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστὸς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐξεπέμφθη. ὁ Χριστὸς οὖν ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ· ἐγένοντο οὖν ἀμφότερα εὐτάκτως ἐκ θελήματος θεοῦ." *1 Clem.* 42.1-2. ET: "The apostles were given the gospel for us by the Lord Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ was sent forth from God. Thus Christ came from God and the apostles from Christ. Both things happened, then, in an orderly way according to the will of God."

⁴⁶ Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 33.

priesthood. In other words, is the bishop another Christ, or another Aaron? The *Apostolic Tradition* does not meet our first criterion for the treatment of sources (see ch. 2, 5.1), and for this reason—despite the presence of the theme of representation-of-Christ by the bishop—, this work cannot be judged to be an antecedent of *in persona Christi* theology in the strict sense.

2.2 The *Didascalia Apostolorum*

This church order was composed in northern Syria in the first half of the third century. Originally composed in Greek, the document survives only in a Syriac translation and an incomplete Latin translation.⁴⁷ In his monumental study of Christian ministry, Bernard Cooke identifies the *Didascalia* as a work of capital importance in the pre-Nicene period, and notes that in this work "the idea of priesthood is central, its application to the episcopacy explicit and extended." However, "its framework of reference is not noticeably that of Christ's priesthood. Christ is scarcely mentioned as high priest; instead, the antecedent of Christian priesthood from which the argumentation is drawn is the priesthood of the Old Testament."⁴⁸ This is a generally fair assessment.

The *Didascalia* transfers onto the bishops of the catholic church the prerogatives, titles, privileges, and imagery associated with the Aaronic (high) priesthood, and in fact with *virtually every other kind* of Old Testament leader:

Thus, you also today, O bishops, are priests to your people, and the Levites who minister to the tent of God, the holy catholic church, who stand continually before the Lord God. You now are to your people priests and prophets and chiefs and leaders and kings, and mediators between God and His faithful, and receivers of the

⁴⁷ Bradshaw, *Search for the Origins*, 78–80.

⁴⁸ Cooke, *Ministry to Word and Sacraments*, 537–38.

word, and preachers of it, (...) those who bear the sins of everyone, and are to give an answer for everyone.⁴⁹

The institution of the Christian hierarchy, with a single bishop at its head, is legitimized by appealing to an apostolic ordinance:

Again the apostles constituted that there shall be presbyters and deacons like the Levites, and subdeacons like those who carried the vessels of the court of the sanctuary of the Lord; and an overseer, that is to say the guide of all the people, like Aaron, the head and chief of all the priests and Levites of the whole town.⁵⁰

The sacrificial system of the church has replaced that of Israel: "At that time there were firstfruits and tithes and oblations and gifts, but today the offerings which are presented through the bishops to the Lord God, for they are your high priests."⁵¹ Although there is no immediate reference here to the sacrifice or the priesthood of Christ, the author is at least aware of the New Testament understanding that Christ is *the* high priest of the new covenant: "Set apart oblations and tithes and firstfruits to Christ, the true High Priest, and to His servants, tithes of salvation (to Him) the beginning of whose name is the Decade."⁵²

The *Didascalia* describes the episcopal ministry using the strongest possible representational language, which is frequently reinforced by citations from the canonical gospels. In one instance, in the context of an exhortation for repentant sinners to be reconciled to the church, the bishop is said to represent Christ: "For you [O bishop] have authority to forgive sins to him that offends, for you have put on the person of Christ. Wherefore our Savior also said to him that had sinned: 'Your sins are forgiven you [Matt.

⁴⁹ *Didasc.* 8, in Arthur Vööbus, ed. and trans., *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac*, Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium 401–402, 407–408 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1979). Subsequent citations of *Didasc.* refer to this edition, and will be given in English translation only.

⁵⁰ *Didasc.* 3.

⁵¹ *Didasc.* 9. Cf. *Did.* 13.3 and 15.1.

⁵² *Didasc.* 9.

9:2]; your faith has saved you alive—go in peace."⁵³ However, this Christic identification is *an isolated proposition*. The compiler's predominant idea, which may reflect the influence of Ignatius (e.g. *Trall.* 3.1), is that the bishop represents God the Father. "But let him be honored by you as God (is), because the bishop sits for you in the place of God Almighty."⁵⁴ It is difficult to imagine a more exalted view of the dignity of the episcopal ministry! Sayings of Christ to the apostles are used as prooftexts to bolster this high theology of ministry, manifesting an implicit theology of apostolic succession.⁵⁵

On this account, bishop, take pains now to be pure in your works. And know your place, (namely) that you are set in the likeness of God Almighty, and do hold the place of God Almighty. And so sit in the church and teach as having authority to judge those who sin—instead of God Almighty. For to you bishops it is said in the Gospel: "Something that you shall bind on earth, it shall be bound in heaven [Matt. 18:18]."⁵⁶

[The Lord will judge] whether layman loves layman, and whether again the layman loves the bishop and honors him and fears him as father and lord and god after God Almighty. For to the bishop it was said through the apostles: "Everyone who hears you, hears me [Luke 10:16]."⁵⁷

Curiously, it is the *deacon* who represents Christ, while presbyters represent the apostles. "But the deacon stands in the place of Christ, and you should love him. The deaconess, however, shall be honored by you in the place of the Holy Spirit. But the presbyters shall be to you in the likeness of the apostles, and the orphans and the widows shall be reckoned by you in the likeness of the altar."⁵⁸

⁵³ *Didasc.* 7.

⁵⁴ *Didasc.* 9.

⁵⁵ Kenan Osborne (*Priesthood*, 118, 137, 139) argues unconvincingly that in the *Didasc.* it is presbyters and not bishops who succeed the apostles.

⁵⁶ *Didasc.* 5.

⁵⁷ *Didasc.* 7.

⁵⁸ *Didasc.* 9.

This dual typology of bishop-God and deacon-Christ is not merely a theory: it is used as a model for the practical, day-to-day operation of the ministry: "[N]ot even to the Lord God Almighty can one approach except through Christ. Everything therefore that they [the faithful] desire to do, let them make known to the bishop through the deacons, and (only) then do them."⁵⁹ The theological association of the bishop and the deacon is consistently maintained throughout the text. "Let the bishops and the deacons, therefore, be of one mind. (...) For it is required of you both to become one body, father and son, for you are in the likeness of the Lordship. And let the deacon make known everything to the bishop, as Christ to His Father."⁶⁰

In chapter 9 an *additional* typology, drawn from the Old Testament, is elaborated in order to support the authority and the relationship of the bishop-deacon pair. In Exodus 4:16 YHWH establishes a relationship between Moses and Aaron that is analogous to his own relationship with Moses. In dealing with the Israelites, Moses will "be as god" and Aaron will be his "mouth" (i.e. prophet). A similar relationship is said to exist between the bishop and the deacon. The people are to honour the bishop as God, and the deacon as a prophet. The author of the *Didascalia* does not hesitate to assert that the bishop is to be worshipped.⁶¹

As we have seen, the *Didascalia* uses extremely strong representational language when describing the episcopal office. However, similar language is also used in ch. 19 in reference to confessors. Those who are persecuted for the sake of the faith are said to represent God and Christ:

⁵⁹ *Didasc.* 9.

⁶⁰ *Didasc.* 11.

⁶¹ *Didasc.* 9.

Indeed, let him that is condemned for the name of the Lord God be considered by you as a holy martyr, an angel of God, or God upon earth, one who is spiritually clothed with the Holy Spirit of God. Indeed, through him you see the Lord our Savior, as he has been found worthy of the incorruptible crown, and has renewed again the witness of the passion.⁶²

In light of this passage, it appears that the particular representation of God and of Christ that is certainly proper to the ordained ministry, according to the rest of the text of the *Didascalia*, is not exclusive of other forms of representation.

Despite one instance of identification with Christ, the *Didascalia* consistently and emphatically portrays the bishop as a representative of God the *Father*. This interpretation cannot be considered an antecedent of classic sacerdotal representation-of-Christ theology, with which indeed it stands in marked contrast—especially since it is not inclusive of the presbyterate.⁶³ Moreover, while the deacon is presented as a type of Christ, he is not designated as a priest (although the diaconal order is considered to correspond to the Levites, in the above-cited passage from ch. 3).

2.3 The *Canons of Hippolytus*⁶⁴

This ancient church order, originating in Egypt in the late fourth century (and preserved only in medieval Arabic manuscripts),⁶⁵ is one of the oldest derivatives of the *Apostolic Tradition*.⁶⁶ What stands out is its exclusion of much of the sacerdotal language

⁶² *Didasc.* 19.

⁶³ "The presbyters are mentioned only in a passing manner, but they are appointed by the episkopos, and their function is to be the counselors of the episkopos. At liturgical functions, they have their places around the chair of the episkopos in the eastern part of the building. These details about the presbyter confirm the picture that in this early period the presbyter did not, unless in some few, exceptional instances, play much of a liturgical role." Osborne, *Priesthood*, 118. Cf. Metzger, "Introduction," in *Les Constitutions apostoliques*, vol. 2, *Livres III-VI*, Sources chrétiennes 329 (Paris: Cerf, 1986), 48.

⁶⁴ René-Georges Coquin, ed., "Les canons d'Hippolyte," in *Patrologia orientalis 149 (31.2)* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1966), 273–443.

⁶⁵ "Although it is now extant only in Arabic, there is general agreement that this text is derived from a lost Coptic version, which was in turn a translation of an original Greek text." Bradshaw, *Search for the Origins*, 84.

⁶⁶ Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 10–11.

and Old Testament typology of its source.⁶⁷ In the prayer for the ordination of a bishop, the author has removed any mention of high priesthood. The episcopal ministry is described only as "shepherding" and "tending" the flock. The bishop still makes "offerings" to God, but these appear to be more spiritualized; no explicit connection is made with the Eucharist. A similar choice is made in the instructions for ordaining a deacon: the *Apostolic Tradition's* explanation that he is not ordained for the "priesthood" is replaced by "He is not appointed for the presbyterate."⁶⁸

2.4 The *Apostolic Constitutions*

This work, commonly considered by recent scholars to have been composed in Syria—in or near Antioch—not long before the First Ecumenical Council of Constantinople, is a compilation of previous works including the *Didascalia*, the *Didache*, a lost treatise on charisms attributed to Hippolytus, the *Apostolic Tradition*, and a collection of conciliar canons. Although the compiler and his team clearly reworked the source material to bring it into greater conformity with contemporary theory and praxis, the composite character of the work is apparent. There is a lack of inner consistency in the treatment of a number of topics.

There is consistency, however, in the use of sacerdotal language. In continuity with the *Didascalia*, from which its first six books were derived, the *Apostolic Constitutions* uses sacerdotal titles for bishops throughout the work. The bishop is called interchangeably

⁶⁷ See Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 47–48.

⁶⁸ *Can. 5*, in Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 61.

"ἱερεύς" or "ἀρχιερεύς"⁶⁹ and he is said to exercise a "ἱερωσύνην" (priesthood),⁷⁰ but these terms are clearly inclusive of other members of the clergy.⁷¹ Presbyters are commonly designated as "τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν" in relation to the bishop, who is then called "ὁ ἀρχιερεύς."⁷² The presbyteral ordination prayer does not contain a sacerdotal title, but the presbyter is said to carry out "ἱερουργίας" (sacred functions).⁷³ In a few texts it is implied that bishops and presbyters share in priesthood on a more or less equal footing: 8.1.20-21;⁷⁴ 8.2.6; 8.5.8.⁷⁵

As for deacons, they are not included in the priesthood, in continuity with the *Apostolic Tradition*: "Διάκονος οὐκ εὐλογεῖ· οὐ δίδωσιν εὐλογία, λαμβάνει δὲ παρὰ ἐπισκόπου καὶ πρεσβυτέρου· οὐ βαπτίζει, οὐ προσφέρει· τοῦ δὲ ἐπισκόπου προσενεγκόντος ἢ τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου, αὐτὸς ἐπιδίδωσιν τῷ λαῷ, οὐχ ὡς ἱερεύς, ἀλλ

⁶⁹ A.C. 8.12.5; 8.12.28; in Marcel Metzger, ed. and trans., *Les Constitutions apostoliques*, vol. 3, *Livres VII et VIII*, Sources chrétiennes 336 (Paris: Cerf, 1987). Subsequent citations of A.C. 7–8, both in the original and in French translation, refer to this edition.

⁷⁰ A.C. 2.3.1, in Marcel Metzger, ed. and trans., *Les Constitutions apostoliques*, vol. 1, *Livres I et II*, Sources chrétiennes 320 (Paris: Cerf, 1985). Subsequent citations of A.C. 1–2, both in the original and in French translation, refer to this edition. Cf. *Didasc.* 4.

⁷¹ A.C. 6.18.11, in Metzger, *Constitutions apostoliques 2*. Subsequent citations of A.C. 3–6, both in the original and in French translation, refer to this edition.

⁷² A.C. 2.26.3; 8.12.4.

⁷³ A.C. 8.16.

⁷⁴ "Ἀλλὰ μηδὲ ἐπίσκοπος ἐπαιρέσθω κατὰ τῶν διακόνων ἢ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, μήτε μὴν οἱ πρεσβύτεροι κατὰ τοῦ λαοῦ· ἐξ ἀλλήλων γάρ ἐστιν ἡ σύστασις τοῦ συναθροίσματος. Ὁ τε γὰρ ἐπίσκοπος καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τίνων εἰσιν ἱερεῖς; Καὶ οἱ λαϊκοὶ τίνων εἰσιν λαϊκοί;" FT: "Mais que l'évêque non plus ne se juge pas supérieur aux diacres et aux presbytres, ni les presbytres au peuple; car la structure de la communauté repose sur les uns et les autres. Car l'évêque et les presbytres, de qui sont-ils les prêtres? Et les laïcs, de qui sont-ils les laïcs?"

⁷⁵ "Καὶ ταῦτα ἐπευξαμένου οἱ λοιποὶ ἱερεῖς ἐπιλεγέτωσαν· Ἀμήν, καὶ σὺν αὐτοῖς ἅπας ὁ λαός." FT: "Après cette prière, les autres prêtres répondront: Amen! Et avec eux, le peuple tout entier."

ὡς διακονούμενος ἱερεῦσιν."⁷⁶ Rather, they are described as servants of the priests.⁷⁷

They are referred to as "Levites" in chapter two, but this category is used in a surprisingly inclusive way in 2.26.3.⁷⁸ The possibility that sacraments may be administered correctly but remain ineffectual is raised in relation to the problem of heresy. Heretical bishops or presbyters, who are termed "the impious," are denied the title of priests;⁷⁹ and the baptisms they perform are deemed null and void.

The priesthood of the ordained is emphatically distinguished from the priesthood of the baptized. The faithful are collectively a "royal priesthood" in accordance with the teaching of the New Testament, but they are not ordained (lit. "handlaid") priests: " Ἀλλὰ μόνον ἐν τῇ χειροθεσίᾳ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς χρίσει ὁ ἐπίσκοπος, ὃν τρόπον οἱ βασιλεῖς καὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς τὸ πρότερον ἐχρίοντο · οὐχ ὅτι καὶ οἱ νῦν βαπτιζόμενοι

⁷⁶ A.C. 8.28.4. FT: "Le diacre ne bénit pas; il ne donne pas l'eulogie mais la reçoit de l'évêque ou du presbytre; il ne baptise pas, n'offre pas; quand l'évêque ou le presbytre offre, il distribue au peuple, non comme prêtre, mais en tant que serviteur des prêtres." Cf. Canon 18 of Nicaea, in which deacons are expressly forbidden to give communion to presbyters, because only the latter (and bishops) have "ἐξουσίαν προσφέρειν" (the authority to offer). In Tanner, *DEC I*, 14.

⁷⁷ A.C. 8.30.2; see also 8.46.10-11: "ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τοῦ Κυρίου διδαχθέντες ἀκολουθίαν πραγμάτων, τοῖς μὲν ἐπισκόποις τὰ τῆς ἀρχιερωσύνης ἐνείμαμεν, τοῖς δὲ πρεσβυτέροις τὰ τῆς ἱερωσύνης, τοῖς δὲ διακόνοις τὰ τῆς πρὸς ἀμφοτέροισι διακονίας, ἵν' ἢ καθαρῶς τὰ τῆς θρησκείας ἐπιτελούμενα. Οὐτε γὰρ διάκονον προσφέρειν θυσίαν θεμιτὸν ἢ βαπτίζειν ἢ εὐλογίαν μικρὰν ἢ μεγάλην ποιεῖσθαι, οὔτε πρεσβύτερον χειροτονίας ἐπιτελεῖν· οὐ γὰρ ὅσιον ἀνεστράφθαι τὴν τάξιν." FT: "instruits par le Seigneur de la hiérarchie des fonctions, nous avons attribué aux évêques celle du pontificat, aux presbytres celle du sacerdoce et aux diacres, le service des deux fonctions précédentes, pour que le culte soit célébré correctement. Car il n'est pas permis au diacre d'offrir le sacrifice, de baptiser, de faire une bénédiction petite ou grande, ni au presbytre de procéder à des ordinations, car c'est une impiété que de bouleverser l'ordre."

⁷⁸ "Οὗτοι γὰρ ὑμῶν εἰσιν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς· οἱ δὲ ἱερεῖς ὑμῶν οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, καὶ οἱ λεῦϊται ὑμῶν οἱ νῦν διάκονοι καὶ οἱ ἀναγινώσκοντες ὑμῖν καὶ οἱ ψῆδοὶ καὶ οἱ πυλωροί, αἱ διάκονοι ὑμῶν καὶ αἱ χῆραι καὶ αἱ παρθέναι καὶ οἱ ὀρφανοὶ ὑμῶν." FT: "Car ce sont eux vos pontifes; vos prêtres, ce sont les presbytres, et vos lévites ce sont à présent les diacres, ce sont vos lecteurs, chantres et portiers, ce sont vos diaconesses, vos veuves, vos vierges et vos orphelins."

⁷⁹ "οἱ δὲ παρὰ τῶν ἀσεβῶν δεχόμενοι μόλυσμα κοινωνοὶ τῆς γνώμης αὐτῶν γενήσονται. Οὐ γὰρ εἰσιν ἐκεῖνοι ἱερεῖς (...). Οὐτε μὴν οἱ βαπτισθέντες ὑπ' αὐτῶν μεμύνηται, ἀλλὰ μεμολυσμένοι ὑπάρχουσι, οὐκ ἄφεσιν ἀμαρτιῶν λαμβάνοντες, ἀλλὰ δεσμὸν ἀσεβείας." A.C. 6.15.2-3. FT: "quiconque accepte la souillure conférée par les impies, partagera leur condamnation. Car ils ne sont pas prêtres (...). De plus, ceux qu'ils ont baptisés n'ont pas reçu l'initiation, au contraire ils restent souillés, puisqu'ils ne sont pas déliés de leurs péchés mais liés par l'impieité."

ἱερεῖς χειροτονοῦν, ἀλλ' ὡς ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ χριστιανοί, Βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα καὶ ἔθνος ἅγιον, Ἐκκλησία Θεοῦ."⁸⁰ The people of God is also referred to as a royal priesthood in the intercessions of the anaphora.⁸¹

Much as in the *Didascalia*, priestly attributes and prerogatives are most often imported directly from the Old Testament, without any immediate reference to Christ. To the bishop are due the firstfruits⁸² and tithes.⁸³ He is to bless the people with the Aaronic blessing.⁸⁴ There is much hyperbole in the exhortations to honour the bishop. In one passage, for instance, it is said that the bishop deserves even more tribute than the Israelite kings, because priesthood is superior to kingship just as the soul is greater than the body.⁸⁵ All the honorific titles applied to the bishop in the *Didascalia* are repeated; and his quasi-divine status is reinforced by the bold assertion: "οὗτος ὑμῶν ἐπίγειος θεὸς μετὰ θεόν" (he is your earthly god after God).⁸⁶

On the other hand, there are indications that the Christian priesthood does have something to do with the work of Christ. In one passage derived from *Didascalia* 9, the notion that Christ is a high priest is present in the admonition to present offerings, tithes, and firstfruits.⁸⁷ Furthermore, in a number of places the *Apostolic Constitutions* manifests an awareness that Christ brought about a substantial change in the cult of the Old

⁸⁰ A.C. 3.16.3. FT: "Mais l'évêque ne lui oindra que la tête [au catéchumène] lors de l'imposition des mains, comme on faisait autrefois pour les rois et les prêtres; non pas que maintenant les baptisés soient ordonnés prêtres, mais parce que à la suite du Christ ils sont des chrétiens, *un sacerdoce royal et une nation sainte, l'Église de Dieu.*"

⁸¹ A.C. 8.12.44.

⁸² A.C. 2.28.2.

⁸³ A.C. 2.34.5.

⁸⁴ A.C. 2.57.19.

⁸⁵ A.C. 2.34.1-4.

⁸⁶ A.C. 2.26.4.

⁸⁷ A.C. 2.26.1.

Testament⁸⁸ and that he is the mediator of the cult of the New Covenant, and in particular of the Eucharistic sacrifice.⁸⁹

In reworking the episcopal ordination prayer of the *Apostolic Tradition*, the compiler introduces a significant change with respect to the content of the offerings that the ordinand will be presenting to God as his high priest: "ἀτρέπτως, ἀμέμπτως, ἀνεγκλήτως προσφέροντά σοι καθαρὰν καὶ ἀνάιμακτον θυσίαν, ἣν διὰ Χριστοῦ διετάξω, τὸ μυστήριον τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης, εἰς ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας."⁹⁰ This is a major addition to the ordination prayer of the *Apostolic Tradition*, which only spoke at this point of "προσφέροντά σοι ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας."⁹¹ Here it is evident that an essential element of the bishop's priesthood is offering the Eucharistic gifts. This idea is reinforced by the *gesture* that immediately follows the ordination prayer⁹²: "Καὶ μετὰ τὴν προσευχὴν εἰς τῶν ἐπισκόπων ἀναφέρῃ τὴν θυσίαν ἐπὶ τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ χειροτονηθέντος."⁹³ Finally, in the anaphora based on the *Apostolic Tradition*, Christ is repeatedly designated as God's "ἀρχιερεὺς";⁹⁴ and the anamnesis uses a sacerdotal verb to denote the action being performed by the minister, i.e. the recitation of the anaphora itself: "ἱερατεύειν σοι."⁹⁵

⁸⁸ A.C. 6.23.5.

⁸⁹ A.C. 2.25.7.

⁹⁰ A.C. 8.5.7. FT: "en t'offrant sans déviation ni blâme ni reproche *le sacrifice pur* et non sanglant que tu as institué par le Christ, le mystère de *la nouvelle Alliance, en parfum d'agréable odeur.*"

⁹¹ *Epit.* 4.4. ET: "offering to you a sweet-smelling savor."

⁹² The emergence of this liturgical gesture may have been influenced by the description of the "ordination" of priests in Exod. 28:41 (LXX), which describes the consecration of a priest under the Mosaic Law: "καὶ χρίσεις αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐμπλήσεις αὐτῶν τὰς χεῖρας καὶ ἀγιάσεις αὐτούς, ἵνα ἱερατεύωσιν μοι" (And you shall anoint them and fill their hands and consecrate them, so that they may serve me as priests). "Fill their hands" is the idiomatic expression in Hebrew for ordination (see for instance 1 Kings 13:33 (referred to in A.C. 4.46): "ὁ βουλόμενος, ἐπλήρου τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐγίνετο ἱερεὺς εἰς τὰ ὕψηλά") (Anyone who wanted to, [Jeroboam] would fill his hand, and he would become a priest for the high places).

⁹³ A.C. 8.5.9. FT: "Après la prière, un des évêques apportera l'offrande dans les mains de l'ordinand."

⁹⁴ A.C. 8.12.6; 8.12.27; 8.12.30.

⁹⁵ A.C. 8.12.38. FT: "Tu nous as rendus dignes de nous tenir devant toi et de te servir par le sacerdoce."

It can be concluded that although the application of sacerdotal titles and prerogatives to bishops and presbyters appears in many, perhaps most cases to be a kind of theological shortcut that ignores or bypasses the newness of the Christian dispensation, the *Apostolic Constitutions* taken as a whole does give evidence of the conviction that Christ is the Mediator of the New Covenant, and that all priesthood in the church is derived from his.

In continuity with the *Didascalia*, the bishop is frequently said to represent God the Father: in relation to the faithful, to subordinate orders of ministers, and indeed to human beings in general, among whom he "holds the place of God."⁹⁶ It is the deacon who represents Christ. He is to relate to the bishop as Christ relates to the Father.⁹⁷ He cannot "exist" without the bishop,⁹⁸ although he does have a certain measure of autonomy within his appointed areas of responsibility.⁹⁹ The same verb, ὑπηρετέω ("to serve"), is used to define Christ's ministry and that of deacons.¹⁰⁰ Presbyters, for their part, represent the apostles.¹⁰¹ The deaconess is said to represent the Holy Spirit.¹⁰² (This may seem to grant her a status equal to the deacon and the bishop, but actually the Holy Spirit is subordinated to both Christ¹⁰³ and the Father, since the Spirit is in fact deemed to be a *creature*.¹⁰⁴) Widows and orphans represent the altar.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁶ "Διὰ τοῦτο οὖν, ὡς ἐπίσκοπε, σπουδάσῃ καθαρὸς εἶναι τοῖς ἔργοις, γνωρίζων τὸν τόπον σου καὶ τὴν ἀξίαν, ὡς Θεοῦ τύπον ἔχων ἐν ἀνθρώποις τῷ πάντων ἄρχειν ἀνθρώπων, ἱερέων, βασιλέων, ἀρχόντων, πατέρων, υἱῶν, διδασκάλων καὶ πάντων ὁμοῦ τῶν ὑπηκόων." A.C. 2.11.1. FT: "Pour cette raison, ô évêque, aie soin d'être pur dans tes actions, reconnais ta charge et ta dignité : tu tiens la place de Dieu parmi les hommes, par le fait que tu as autorité sur tous les hommes, prêtres, rois, magistrats, pères, fils, enseignants et toutes sortes d'autres qui te sont pareillement subordonnés."

⁹⁷ A.C. 2.26.5; cf. *Didasc.* 9.

⁹⁸ A.C. 2.30.1-2.

⁹⁹ A.C. 2.44.3.

¹⁰⁰ A.C. 2.57.15; 3.19.1,3.

¹⁰¹ A.C. 2.26.7.

¹⁰² A.C. 2.26.6.

¹⁰³ Cf. A.C. 8.5.5.

¹⁰⁴ According to A.C. 6.11.2 and 8.12.8.

¹⁰⁵ A.C. 2.26.8; cf. 3.6.3; 4.3.3.

It may seem illogical to have Christ the High Priest represented by deacons who are *not* priests, while bishops (and presbyters) are simultaneously priests, i.e. offerers of the sacrifice instituted by Christ,¹⁰⁶ *and* representatives of the Father, i.e. of the One to whom the sacrifice is offered.¹⁰⁷ The simplest explanation for this inconsistency, or asymmetry, is the *subordinationist Christology* of the *Apostolic Constitutions* (which is reflective of its source material, notably the *Didascalia*).¹⁰⁸ Throughout the work Christ is consistently portrayed in the role of a servant, totally subservient to the Father; Christ's very priesthood was something he had to receive from the Father.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, there is a manifest desire to emphasize the supreme authority of the bishop. These theological presuppositions would make it difficult to see the bishop as a representative of Christ. From the perspective of a more orthodox (Nicene) Christology, however, it is likely that identifying Christ with a subordinate ministerial role would have been seen as problematic.

By way of exception, there are a few scattered references to a representation of Christ. In a section based on the *Apostolic Tradition*, the "ἀρχιερατικὴν τιμὴν" (high-priestly honour) is reserved for the bishop, whose office involves a "μίμησιν (...) τοῦ μεγάλου ἀρχιερέως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ" (imitation of the great high priest Jesus Christ).¹¹⁰

Similarly in a section based on the *Didascalia*, the bishop is exhorted to seek the lost sheep,

¹⁰⁶ See A.C. 8.5.7.

¹⁰⁷ See A.C. 8.13.3.

¹⁰⁸ The subordinationism of A.C. is similar to that found in arianism, but not identical to it. Metzger, "Introduction," in *Constitutions apostoliques* 2, 11. It is better characterized as the result of a certain archaizing tendency on the part of the compiler: "Ce qui caractérise la christologie des CA, c'est donc cette présentation du Fils comme grand-prêtre, médiateur et ministre du Père. Un tel subordinationisme s'apparente à celui des ariens, mais sans y correspondre entièrement, car il s'agit plutôt de survivances de courants plus anciens, en particulier philonien et origéniste. De ce fait, tout en portant les marques du IV^e siècle, la christologie des CA manifeste un certain archaïsme, dû en particulier à la compilation de traditions anciennes." Metzger, "Introduction," in *Constitutions apostoliques* 2, 32.

¹⁰⁹ A.C. 2.27.4.

¹¹⁰ A.C. 8.46.4.

following the example of Christ, who will reconcile them to himself by means of the bishop's words.¹¹¹

One of the specific actions in which the deacon represents Christ is imploring the bishop for an excluded sinner,¹¹² just as Christ implored his Father from the cross to forgive his executioners. For his part, the bishop is to judge sinners as God: "Σὺ οὖν οὕτως κρῖνε ὡς θεῷ δικάζων· Ἐοῦ γὰρ Κυρίου, φησὶν, ἡ κρίσις".¹¹³ It is clearly stated that such judgment is reserved to priests: "τοῖς γὰρ ἱερεῦσιν ἐπετρέπη κρίνειν μόνοις."¹¹⁴ The bishop's priestly prerogatives must not be usurped by laymen: "πᾶς λαϊκὸς ἄνευ τοῦ ἱερέως ἐπιτελῶν τι ματαιοπονεῖ."¹¹⁵ These prerogatives specifically include "θυσίαν ἢ βάπτισμα ἢ χειροθεσίαν ἢ εὐλογίαν."¹¹⁶ The offering of the "θυσίαν καθαρὰν καὶ ἀναίμακτον" (pure and unbloody sacrifice) is reserved to priests ordained in apostolic succession.¹¹⁷

Although for the most part, the *Apostolic Constitutions* does not break new ground with respect to its sources, it does contain some evidence of the idea that the priesthood of the ordained (bishops and presbyters) derives from the high priestly office of Christ. Moreover, there are a few references to representation-of-Christ by the bishop, even though the latter is usually portrayed as a representative of the Father. Consequently, we may

¹¹¹ A.C. 2.20.9.

¹¹² A.C. 2.16.1.

¹¹³ A.C. 2.13.5. FT: "Quant à toi, en jugeant, agis pour Dieu, car il est dit : 'Au Seigneur revient le jugement.'"

¹¹⁴ A.C. 2.36.9. FT: "Juger n'a été confié qu'aux seuls prêtres."

¹¹⁵ A.C. 2.27.3,5. FT: "Tout laïc qui accomplit quelque chose sans le prêtre agit en vain."

¹¹⁶ A.C. 3.10.1. FT: "Mais nous interdisons aussi aux laïcs d'usurper une fonction sacerdotale telle que le sacrifice, le baptême, l'imposition des mains ou une bénédiction, petite ou grande."

¹¹⁷ A.C. 8.46.14-15.

consider the *Apostolic Constitutions* to contain some genuine antecedents to *in persona Christi* theology.

2.5 The *Testamentum Domini*

This fifth-century Greek document subsists in three versions: Syriac (7th-cent.),¹¹⁸ Arabic (unedited), and Ethiopic (15th-cent. and later).¹¹⁹ It contains an expansion of the ordination prayers and the anaphora found in the *Apostolic Tradition*; but there is no substantial change in the theology of priesthood expressed in the latter work.

In the episcopal ordination prayer (*T. Dom.* 1.21), the only notable innovation is the motif of God's heavenly sanctuary as the model for the ordering of ministry in the church. "The pattern for the ministry of the Church is not now primarily that of the Old Testament, but the unseen ministry above."¹²⁰ Just as in the parallel passage of the prayer in the *Apostolic Tradition*, the bishop is said to exercise the "high priesthood": "O Father who knows hearts, [grant] to this servant whom you have chosen for the episcopate to feed your holy flock, and to stand in the high-priesthood¹²¹ without blame, serving you day and night."¹²² However, there is a slight lessening of the sacerdotal imagery later in the prayer, where the *Testamentum Domini* replaces the expression "spirit of high priesthood" with "powerful Spirit" in connection with the bishop's remitting sins.

¹¹⁸ Syriac text and Latin translation: Ignatius Ephraem II Rahmani, ed., *Testamentum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi*, reprint, 1899 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1968). Complete ET, with helpful commentary: James Cooper and Arthur John MacLean, eds. and trans., *The Testament of Our Lord* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902). ET of the anaphora: Jasper and Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 139–41. ET of the ordination prayers: Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 117–20.

¹¹⁹ Ethiopic text and FT: *Testamentum Domini éthiopian: Édition et traduction*, ed. and trans. Robert Beylot (Louvain: Peeters, 1984).

¹²⁰ Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 49.

¹²¹ Alternative translation: "to stand at the head of the priesthood." *T. Dom.* 1.21, in Cooper and MacLean, *Testament*, 67. Likewise, the Ethiopic version has: "Donne-lui (...) d'être consacré chef des prêtres." *T. Dom. éthiopian*, 162. This would imply that there are other, subordinate, priests in the local church—presumably the presbyters.

¹²² *T. Dom.* 1.21, in Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 118.

In the ordination prayer for a presbyter, there is no mention of the specific functions associated with his office, only general references to leadership of God's people. There is a complete absence of sacerdotal terminology (at least in the prayer itself, although the rubrics do use "priest" instead of "presbyter").¹²³ Christ is only mentioned at the beginning and end of the prayer. The prayer is heavily pneumatological, with seven occurrences of the word "spirit." God is asked to send the Holy Spirit on the ordinand for two purposes: his equipping for ministry and his personal sanctification. There is one instance of representational language to express the presbyter's relation to the Holy Spirit: "so that he might be an instrument of your Holy Spirit."¹²⁴

In the oblation of the anaphora (1.23), there is an unambiguous mention of priesthood: "you have held us worthy¹²⁵ to stand before you and serve you as priests"; but the following rubric, "The people say likewise,"¹²⁶ shifts the meaning away from a concept of ordained priesthood towards the concept of the common or baptismal priesthood.

A surprisingly broad extension of the priestly category occurs among the rubrics for the communion: "Let the priests first receive, thus: the bishops, presbyters, deacons, widows, readers, subdeacons. After these those that have gifts, those newly baptized, babes."¹²⁷ Cooper and MacLean explain this unusual usage by remarking that the Syriac equivalent to the Greek ἱερεὺς "denotes the ministry in all its grades."¹²⁸

¹²³ Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 63.

¹²⁴ *T. Dom.* 1.30.

¹²⁵ Alternative translation: "Thou hast promised to us to stand before Thee and to serve Thee in priesthood." *T. Dom.* 1.23, in Cooper and MacLean, *Testament*, 73. A footnote explains that the reading "hast made us worthy" is based on a conjecture by Rahmani, the editor of the Syriac text. *Ibid.*, 73n10. The Ethiopic version has: "tu nous a ordonné de nous tenir devant toi et d'être tes prêtres." *T. Dom. éthiopien*, 169.

¹²⁶ *T. Dom.* 1.23, in Jasper and Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 140.

¹²⁷ *T. Dom.* 1.23, in Cooper and MacLean, *Testament*, 76.

¹²⁸ Cooper and MacLean, *Testament*, 178.

The same conclusion must be drawn regarding the *Testamentum Domini* as was made above concerning the *Apostolic Tradition*, namely, that despite the prevalence of sacerdotal language and of a hint of representation-of-Christ in the prayer for a bishop (inherited from the *Apostolic Tradition*), the "high priesthood" of the bishop is not explained in relation to Christ. Consequently, this source cannot be deemed an antecedent to *in persona Christi* theology.

2.6 *Statuta Ecclesiae Antiqua*

This anonymous compilation, composed in southern Gaul in the second half of the fifth century, contains only a brief set of rubrics for ordinations.¹²⁹ Neither in these nor in the remainder of the document is there enough material to deduce any specific theology of priesthood, although a mild presbyteralist agenda is at work in the directives concerning diocesan administration.¹³⁰

3 Egyptian Ordination Rites

3.1 The *Sacramentary of Sarapion*

When compared to the other early ordination prayers that we have surveyed so far, which all exhibit some form of literary dependency upon the *Apostolic Tradition*, "only the *Sacramentary of Sarapion* represents a truly independent euchological tradition."¹³¹ It is a collection of prayers attributed to a fourth-century bishop of Thmuis (in the Nile delta), preserved in a single eleventh-century manuscript.¹³² In both its presbyteral and episcopal

¹²⁹ *S.E.A.* 90-97, in Charles Munier, ed., *Les Statuta Ecclesiae Antiqua*, Bibliothèque de l'Institut de droit canonique de l'Université de Strasbourg 5 (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1960).

¹³⁰ Charles Munier, "Les tendances du recueil," in *Statuta*, 197.

¹³¹ Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 46.

¹³² Bradshaw, *Search for the Origins*, 104–5.

ordination prayers, which are brief and simple, there is a notable absence of any sacerdotal terminology or imagery. There is only one reference to the Old Testament, when the presbyters are placed in parallel with the seventy elders who received the spirit of Moses,¹³³ but the other biblical allusions are to ministers of the New Testament. The episcopal ministry is presented as a continuation of the mission of the apostles. The images used all have to do with shepherding or leadership; there is no mention of a cultic dimension of the episcopate.¹³⁴

The absence of any sacerdotal terminology in an episcopal prayer from the end of the fourth century¹³⁵ confirms the idea that the concept of priesthood only gradually established itself as the predominant theological interpretation of the ordained ministry. Still, it is surprising not to find any mention made of the cultic role of the bishop, which was surely by this time—in Egypt as elsewhere—a central aspect of his office.

4 Roman Ordination Rites

4.1 The *Verona Libelli*

Known formerly as the *Leonine Sacramentary*, this is the earliest surviving book of Mass prayers according to the Roman rite.¹³⁶ It exists in a single manuscript of the early seventh century, preserved in the Chapter Library at Verona. It is not in fact a sacramentary, but a private collection of *libelli* (roughly equivalent to today's Proper of Seasons). Its

¹³³ F. E. Brightman, "The Sacramentary of Serapion of Thmuis," *Journal of Theological Studies* 1 (1900): 266.

¹³⁴ Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 50.

¹³⁵ Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 34.

¹³⁶ "All authors agree on the Roman and papal origin of the book. (...) According to Chavasse's research, the book was composed at the time of Pope John III (561–574) from two documents dating from the fifth and sixth centuries." Eric Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books: From the Beginning to the Thirteenth Century* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 40–41.

prayers for the consecration of bishops and presbyters differ considerably from those found in the *Apostolic Tradition*. However, all the normative ritual actions mentioned in the *Apostolic Tradition* are preserved: handlaying by several bishops in the ordination of a bishop; handlaying by the whole presbyterium in the ordination of a presbyter; handlaying by the bishop alone in the ordination of a deacon; promotion to the minor orders without handlaying.

Surprisingly, there is no mention of Christ at all in any of the prayers pertaining to the ordination of a bishop.¹³⁷ The only interpretation given to the priesthood to be received by the ordinand is an Old Testament typology. The Second Collect that precedes the prayer of episcopal consecration alludes to the anointing of Aaron as high priest: "inclinato super hos famulos tuos cornu gratiae sacerdotalis benedictionis tuae in eos effunde uirtutem."¹³⁸ The prayer of consecration proper consists in a meditation on the mystical significance of the priestly vestments of Aaron, and a petition for heavenly anointing to come down upon the ordinand. The bishop will be a new Aaron—a "high priest." Although this text evidently supposes a theological distinction between the Aaronic and the Christian priesthoods, the distinction is not explicated. No reference is made to the apostles; nor is there any explanation of the bishop's role in the church, besides "ruling" it. As the Belgian liturgical scholar Paul De Clerck remarks, "Rien n'est dit de l'enseignement de la foi ni de l'eucharistie ou des sacrements."¹³⁹

¹³⁷ See Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 56.

¹³⁸ *Ve.* 946, in Leo C Mohlberg, Leo Eizenhöfer, and Pierre Siffrin, eds., *Sacramentarium Veronense, Rerum ecclesiasticarum documenta, Series maior, Fontes 1* (Rome: Herder, 1956). Subsequent citations of *Ve.* in the original refer to this edition. ET: "With the horn of priestly grace inclined over these your servants pour out upon them the power of your benediction." In Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 215. Subsequent English translations of *Ve.* are taken from this edition.

¹³⁹ De Clerck, "Ordination, ordre," col. 173.

The Collect that precedes the prayer of presbyteral consecration uses explicitly sacerdotal terminology: "super hos famulos tuos benedictionem sancti spiritus et gratiae sacerdotalis effunde uirtutem."¹⁴⁰ This is the first clear and explicit designation of presbyters as "priests" in an ordination rite. Presbyters as well as bishops receive an outpouring of *gratia sacerdotalis* ("priestly grace"). This is not meant to imply, though, that presbyters are equal to bishops within the priesthood. The prayer of ordination relates presbyters very strongly to the order of bishops; but it is a relationship of subordination. This is indicated first of all through the scriptural analogies used: Presbyters are like the Levitical priests who served under Aaron; they are like the seventy elders chosen by Moses to assist him in ruling the people; they are like the "teachers of the faith" sent out to help the apostles. Secondly, the need for presbyters in the church is explained by "weakness" and "need" on the part of the ordaining bishops—not by any intrinsic necessity.¹⁴¹ Their position within the ecclesiastical hierarchy is defined quite clearly as a *secundi meriti munus* (an "office of the second rank").¹⁴² As in the episcopal consecration, no mention is made of Christ as the origin of the priesthood in which presbyters will share—although they are indirectly related to him insofar as their predecessors are identified as the companions of Christ's apostles. Neither in the case of the bishop nor in the case of the presbyter is representational language used to characterize their relationship with divine Persons. The theology that emerges from

¹⁴⁰ *Ve.* 953. ET: "pour forth the benediction of the Holy Spirit and the power of priestly grace on these your servants."

¹⁴¹ "This is really a rather disappointing application of the ideas about providence expressed at the beginning of the prayer. It does not show the presbytery as in any way required by the nature or constitution of the church. Divine providence is called into play only to supply for the inadequacy of the bishop by a sufficient number of helpers." David N. Power, *Ministers of Christ and His Church, Theses Ad Lauream* [Pontificium Athenaeum Anselmianum, Pontificium Institutum Liturgicum] 8 (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1969), 70.

¹⁴² *Ve.* 954.

these prayers conceives of priests as performers of sacred rites (whether of the old or the new covenant); bishops are rulers of the church; presbyters are co-workers of the bishop and teachers of the faith.

One conspicuous feature of the ordination prayers of the *Verona libelli*—especially when compared to the prayers of the *Apostolic Tradition*—is the introduction, alongside biblical language, of terms taken from the vocabulary of imperial administration: *ordo*, *gradus*, *dignitas*, and *honor*.¹⁴³ The episcopal prayer opens with the invocation, "Deus *honorum* omnium, deus omnium *dignitatum* quae gloriae tuae sacratis famulantur *ordinibus*";¹⁴⁴ the presbyteral prayer opens with "Domine, sancte pater, omnipotens aeternae deus, *honorum* omnium et omnium *dignitatum* quae tibi militant distributor."¹⁴⁵ The presence of the language of status elevation in these prayers both reflects and legitimizes the concrete socio-political situation of late Antiquity, when Christian clergy had acquired the rights and privileges of state dignitaries, along with special exemptions.¹⁴⁶

4.2 The Gregorian Sacramentary of the *Hadrianum* Type

"*The Gregorian of the Hadrianum Type* (...) designates the text sent by Pope Hadrian to Charlemagne between 784 and 791 (...). Its contents are very close to those of the book composed in the first half of the seventh century under Pope Honorius."¹⁴⁷ The episcopal ordination prayer is identical to that found in *Verona libelli* 947. (In fact, there

¹⁴³ This feature is pointed out by Chupungco, "History of the Liturgy Until the Fourth Century," 109.

¹⁴⁴ *Ve.* 947 (italics added). ET: "God of all the honors, God of all the worthy ranks, which serve to your glory in hallowed orders."

¹⁴⁵ *Ve.* 954 (italics added). ET: "Holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, bestower of all the honors and of all the worthy ranks which do you service."

¹⁴⁶ See Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200--1000* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 78.

¹⁴⁷ Palazzo, *History of Liturgical Books*, 51.

is virtually no other extant Latin prayer of ordination for a bishop.¹⁴⁸) An expansion of the prayer is provided for the ordination of the Roman Pontiff,¹⁴⁹ but this makes no mention of Christ either, nor does it use any representational language. Likewise, the presbyteral ordination prayer is identical to that found in *Verona libelli* 954; therefore the same remarks made above about the latter may be applied to the Gregorian version.

4.3 *Ordo Romanus* 34

This *ordo* for ordinations originated in "Rome, about 750, after a source from the fourth century."¹⁵⁰ In this set of rubrics for ordinations, brief mention is made of Christ in the address pronounced by the pope before ordaining a bishop: "Oremus itaque pro eodem uiro, ut Deus et dominus noster Iesus Christus tribuat ei cathedram episcopalem ad regendam ecclesiam suam et plebem uniuersam."¹⁵¹ In this invitation to prayer, the purpose clause ("ut ... tribuat") clearly signifies that Christ will invariably impart authority to govern his church to the bishop-elect, by the very act of ordination. Thus Christ is implicated in each ordination; this is a form of representation. In addition, the newly ordained bishop will also represent Christ, by exercising authority granted him directly by Christ. However, the cited passage from *Ordo Romanus* 34 is an isolated instance,

¹⁴⁸ "C'est la seule prière latine pour l'ordination épiscopale qui nous ait été conservée, hormis le formulaire *Pater sancte* des pontificaux anglais et un fragment gallican." De Clerck, "Ordination, ordre," col. 173.

¹⁴⁹ *Ha.* 1018, in Jean Deshusses, ed., *Le sacramentaire grégorien: Ses principales formes d'après les plus anciens manuscrits*, vol. 1, *Le Sacramentaire, le Supplément d'Aniane*, 3d ed., Spicilegium friburgense 16 (Fribourg: Éditions universitaires, 1992).

¹⁵⁰ Palazzo, *History of Liturgical Books*, 180.

¹⁵¹ *O.R.* 34.38, in Michel Andrieu, ed., *Les ordines romani du Haut Moyen Âge*, vol. 3, *Les textes (suite) (Ordines XIV-XXXIV)* (Louvain: Spicilegium sacrum lovaniense 24, 1951). ET: "Therefore let us pray for this man, that our God and Lord Jesus Christ will bestow on him the episcopal throne to rule over his church and all its people." In Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 220–21.

outweighed by the fact that all known Roman ordination prayers are addressed to the Father.¹⁵²

5 Gallican Ordination Rites

There are no extant texts that would provide the "pure" Gallican ordination rites. The documents studied in this section contain a mixture of Roman and Gallican elements.¹⁵³ In the ordination prayers, for example, the Gallican elements consist of interpolations inserted into prayers borrowed from Roman sources. These interpolations seem to reflect the transfer of ordinary liturgical leadership from the bishop to the presbyter.

5.1 The *Old Gelasian Sacramentary*

"The Gelasian is a liturgical book in the full sense of the term and it appears to be Roman through and through. (...) In all likelihood it was written in the middle of the seventh century, because it features modifications introduced by Gregory the Great (590–604) in the canon of the Mass. (...) The Gelasian Sacramentary appears as the earliest agent of the romanization of the Frankish liturgy before the reform of Pepin the Short (751–768)."¹⁵⁴ Although the exhortation to the people and the bidding call the bishop a "priest," and even a "high priest," they describe his *role* more as a shepherd and teacher. This contrasts with the earlier Roman sources. The celebration of the Eucharist is not mentioned, whereas there is a forceful reference to the power of the keys. At most this

¹⁵² In *Ve.* and *Ha.*, the clause "Tribuas eis cathedram episcopalem ad regendam ecclesiam tuam et plebem uniuersam" (Grant to them an episcopal throne to rule your church and entire people) is an integral part of the episcopal ordination prayer, which is addressed to the Father.

¹⁵³ See Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 15.

¹⁵⁴ Palazzo, *History of Liturgical Books*, 45.

amounts to an indirectly Christic aspect of episcopal ministry; there is no explicit sacerdotal representation-of-Christ in the prayer.

The prayer prescribed for blessing a presbyter puts much emphasis on the need for the ordained to display good moral conduct as an example for the rest of God's people, and on his being "set apart." This prayer also contains the first explicit reference (in an ordination rite) to the presbyters' role in presiding over the celebration of the Eucharist: "per obsequium plebis tue corpus et sanguinem filii tui immaculata benedictione transformentur."¹⁵⁵ Here the cultic role of the presbyter is very narrowly focussed on the consecration of the Eucharistic elements. The relationship of the presbyter to the person of Christ is put in the context of the need for him to grow in holiness so as to attain the "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).¹⁵⁶ Because this kind of representation is part of the vocation of the church as a whole as well as that of every Christian, however, this is not an instance of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ.

5.2 *Missale Francorum*

This incomplete sacramentary from the early eighth century is closely related to the *Old Gelasian Sacramentary*. In comparison with earlier liturgical books, the most remarkable difference is in the "table of contents": The rites of ordination are now arranged in *ascending* sequence (doorkeeper, acolyte, reader, exorcist, subdeacon, deacon, presbyter,

¹⁵⁵ *Ge.* 148, in Leo C. Mohlberg, Leo Eizenhöfer, and Pierre Siffrin, eds., *Liber sacramentarium romanae Aeclesiae ordinis anni circuli* (*Cod. Vat. Reg. lat. 316/Paris Bibl. Nat. 7193, 41/56*), *Rerum ecclesiasticarum documenta, Series maior, Fontes 4* (Rome: Herder, 1960). Subsequent citations of *Ge.* in the original refer to this edition. The same phrase is found in *M.F.* 32, in Leo C. Mohlberg, Leo Eizenhöfer, and Pierre Siffrin, eds., *Missale Francorum* (*Cod. Vat. Reg. lat. 257*), *Rerum Ecclesiasticarum Documenta, Series Maior, Fontes 2* (Rome: Herder, 1957). Subsequent citations of *M.F.* in the original refer to this edition. ET: "with the consent of your people may he transform the body and blood of your Son by an untainted benediction." In Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 227.

¹⁵⁶ *Ge.* 148; *M.F.* 32.

bishop), reflecting progressive stages in a clerical career—and thus a shift in ecclesiological thinking. This new sequence would become normative in the medieval documents of the Roman Rite. Another innovation is the presence of two prayers to accompany the anointing of the presbyter's hands, a gesture that can be seen as consolidating the sacerdotalization of the presbyterate.¹⁵⁷

6 Mozarabic Ordination Rites

6.1 *Liber ordinum*

This document in its extant form dates from the eleventh century, but "the native biddings and ordination prayers probably date from the sixth century—the classic period of Visigothic creativity."¹⁵⁸ The *Liber ordinum* lacks an episcopal ordination prayer. From a theological perspective, the only notable innovation is the insertion of a phrase from earlier Roman rites of *episcopal* ordination into the *presbyteral* consecratory prayer: "Conple nunc, Domine, misterii tui summam."¹⁵⁹ It appears that the presbyterate is well on its way toward absorbing into itself the sacerdotal prerogatives originally ascribed to the episcopate. The predominant theme of the Mozarabic prayers is the moral worthiness of the minister.

¹⁵⁷ The prayers themselves do not refer to the anointing of OT priests, however; the second prayer only mentions the anointing of David as king and prophet.

¹⁵⁸ Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 16.

¹⁵⁹ *L. Ord.* 1.17, in Marius Férotin, ed., *Le Liber ordinum en usage dans l'Église wisigothique et mozarabe d'Espagne du cinquième au onzième siècle*, rev. Cuthbert Johnson and Anthony Ward, reprint, 1904, Bibliotheca Ephemerides Liturgicae Subsidia 83 (Rome: Edizioni liturgiche, 1996). ET: "Complete now, Lord, the fullness of your mystery." In Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 234. The significance of this change was pointed out by Porter, *Ordination Prayers*, 59.

7 Byzantine Ordination Rites

The earliest witness to this distinct liturgical family is an eighth-century Greek manuscript, *Barberinus graecus 336*.¹⁶⁰ Sacerdotal language is used repeatedly throughout the prayers for the ordination of a bishop and of a presbyter; it is absent from the prayers for the subordinate orders (deacon, deaconess, subdeacon, reader, and cantor). A distinction is made between the bishop and the presbyter: the former receives "high-priestly dignity" (τῆ ἀρχιερατικῆ ἀξία) and will exercise "high priesthood" (τὴν ἀρχιερωσύνην),¹⁶¹ whereas the latter receives "priestly dignity" (ιερατικῆς τιμῆς) and will exercise "priesthood" (τὴν ἱερωσύνην).¹⁶² Other aspects of ordained ministry, such as the ministry of the word and pastoral care, are interwoven (sometimes awkwardly) with sacerdotal-cultic themes in both the episcopal and the presbyteral sets of prayers. Old Testament typology is the only interpretation given to the "high priesthood" of the bishop, in the first episcopal ordination prayer. Like the high priests that God sanctified of old, the bishop is to present prayers and sacrifices to God on behalf of his people. No explicit interpretation is given to the origin or meaning of the presbyter's priesthood.

Neither the bishop nor the presbyter is portrayed as a representative of Christ. The second episcopal prayer is addressed to Christ, but what is asked is that Christ would make the newly ordained bishop an imitator of himself as the true shepherd. This is a petition for personal sanctity; it does not suggest that by his very office, the bishop is exercising the pastoral role of Christ in the church.

¹⁶⁰ Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 7.

¹⁶¹ *Euch.* 157, in *L'Euologio Barberini gr. 336 (ff. 1-263)*, ed. Stefano Parenti and Elena Velkovska, Bibliotheca "Ephemerides liturgicae," Subsidia 80 (Rome: CLV - Edizioni liturgiche, 1995). Subsequent citations of *Euch.* in the original refer to this edition.

¹⁶² *Euch.* 159-160.

8 Georgian Ordination Rites

The only available textual evidence for this ordination rite is a tenth/eleventh-century Georgian manuscript.¹⁶³ According to Bradshaw, the rite may date from the seventh century,¹⁶⁴ while the Georgian church was still dependent upon the see of Antioch. (It would become autocephalous in the eighth century.) The document incorporates the prayers for a presbyter and for a bishop from the *Testamentum Domini* (for which see above, 2.5), alongside newer prayers. Among the latter, the two additional episcopal consecration prayers include a few sacerdotal terms, but their main thematic emphasis is on the shepherding and teaching ministry of the bishop; as for the two additional presbyteral consecration prayers, they do not use sacerdotal terms for the presbyter, and they emphasize the ministry of teaching and offering the Eucharist: "[that he] may serve at your holy altar with pure and worthy heart and mind, to offer you this bloodless and reasonable sacrifice."¹⁶⁵ Representational language is not used in any of the distinctively Georgian prayers to characterize the ministry of priests.

9 Preliminary Conclusions

It would be premature to attempt an explanation of the results of our study of the liturgical sources, before examining the contemporaneous theological literature. However, three observations may be helpful as a way of summarizing the findings made in this chapter.

¹⁶³ Because of the lack of linguistic and paleographic competence, we have had to rely on the ET in Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 166–73.

¹⁶⁴ Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 11.

¹⁶⁵ Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 171.

The first observation is that the liturgical sources examined do not manifest complete unanimity regarding the identification of Christian ministers as "priests," especially in the case of the earliest witnesses. It is the widespread influence of the *Apostolic Tradition* that accounts for the incorporation of the image of the bishop as "high priest" in the subsequent church orders, but in these it is still only *one* among other aspects of episcopal ministry. Two fourth-century Egyptian sources, the *Canons of Hippolytus* and the *Sacramentary of Sarapion*, contain *no* sacerdotal terminology at all. By contrast, the later Western and Eastern ordination rites are replete with sacerdotal imagery, both for the bishop and the presbyter. The deacon, as well as subordinate orders of ministers, are consistently excluded from the category of priesthood.

A second observation is that even when sacerdotal language is present in ordination prayers (as in the *Apostolic Tradition*, the Roman, Byzantine, and Georgian prayers), a strong *ambiguity* attaches to their use of the concept of priesthood, because the priesthood of Christ is left unmentioned. A typological parallel with the Aaronic priesthood is the main interpretive strategy: The priests of the church are the "spiritual" counterparts of the "bodily" priests that ministered in the Temple. The typological use of the Old Testament *presupposes* the passage to a new economy, but in the sources we have studied, the newness effected by Christ is left unstated. Thus the most important theological distinction between the two priesthoods remains implicit.

A third observation is that with the exception of some instances in the *Apostolic Tradition*, the *Didascalia*, and the *Apostolic Constitutions*, the liturgical sources do not use representational language to describe the relation of priests to Christ. Paradoxically, while they do contain scattered instances of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ, the *Didascalia*

and the *Apostolic Constitutions* also contain well-developed expressions of an *alternative* interpretation of ordained ministry, according to which the bishop represents the Father, while the deacon represents Christ. Of course, it would not have been realistic to expect that liturgical sources would yield complete, self-contained expositions of their authors' theologies of ministry; nevertheless, the lack of *any* explicit trace of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ is puzzling.

CHAPTER 4

A SURVEY OF PATRISTIC THEOLOGICAL WRITINGS ON THE PRIESTHOOD

1 Introduction

As explained in the introduction to the previous chapter, the use of the label "theological" to describe the sources to be analysed in the present chapter is not meant to suggest that liturgy and theology are mutually exclusive categories. Just as liturgical sources are of pre-eminent theological interest as witnesses of the very well-spring of the church's *lex credendi*, the theological sources to be examined below were composed by Christians whose entire ethos was liturgical. As has often been observed, the doing of theology in the patristic era had a fundamentally liturgical and pastoral function. The fathers' theological repertoire consisted primarily of homilies, catechetical/mystagogical addresses,¹ and letters. Purely theoretical explorations of theological ideas were the exception rather than the rule.

The authors to be studied in the present chapter were selected because contemporary scholars judge them to have played a decisive role in the development of the theology of ministry.² Selected writings from nineteen church writers will be studied: Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian of Carthage, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nazianzus, Pacian, Ambrose of Milan, Ambrosiaster, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Augustine, Dionysius

¹The great fourth-century mystagogical catecheses (Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose of Milan, and John Chrysostom), together with the later liturgical commentaries (Dionysius the Areopagite, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Maximus the Confessor, Germanus of Constantinople, Symeon of Thessalonica, Amalarius of Metz) are sometimes disparaged by advocates of contemporary liturgical theology for replacing the inherent meaning of the rites themselves with a subjective, extraneous meaning. This criticism is akin to the rejection of patristic OT exegesis as fanciful and arbitrary. Such objections notwithstanding, the history of the liturgy is inseparable from the history of its interpretation by those who actually engaged in it. Reader-response theory would encourage a more sympathetic view of allegorical interpretation.

² See Cooke, *Ministry to Word and Sacraments*; Paul De Clerck, "Ordination, ordre"; Osborne, *Priesthood*.

the Areopagite, Narses of Edessa, Severus of Antioch, Gregory the Great, Isidore of Seville, Maximus the Confessor, Bede the Venerable, and John Damascene. As it happens, the list includes eight fathers who are recognized by the Catholic Church today as "doctors of the church": Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nazianzus, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, Augustine, Gregory the Great, Isidore of Seville, and John Damascene. However, the inclusion of authors in our study was not based on an evaluation of their orthodoxy, which is in many cases a complicated and controverted issue. Even writers who were condemned as "heterodox" in their own lifetime or soon after their death, and never rehabilitated, may have been read appreciatively by "orthodox" writers. Furthermore, modern discoveries of hitherto lost writings, dispassionate study, together with ecumenical work, have in many cases led to a more nuanced judgment regarding the orthodoxy of writers who were formerly condemned as "heretics."

Of the authors studied below, nine are conventionally classified as "Western" and ten as "Eastern," but in reality they represent considerable diversity on the cultural and linguistic levels, and their writings were composed in a wide variety of historical circumstances, in terms of both social and ecclesial contexts. Authors will be studied below in chronological order, that is by date of death or of last known literary production, as these are usually more certain than dates of birth. This diachronic approach is best suited to retracing the gradual emergence and development of ideas about the priesthood and representation, and respecting each author's unique contribution to the shaping of the theological tradition. In this way the richness and complexity of patristic thought will emerge.

2 Tertullian (ca. 160–ca. 220 CE, Carthage)

The father of Latin theology exhibits a remarkable consistency in his application of sacerdotal vocabulary to Christians, although one notes a certain hardening of his position in the writings that reflect his increasing alienation from the catholic church. Nonetheless, Eric Osborn notes, "Tertullian's theology is a consistent whole, which finally found its home within Montanism which supported his rigorist practices and principles. (...) His tone and style became more strident in his later writings; but there was no change in his theological outlook."³

In *Aduersus Marcionem*, Christ is designated as the "uerus summus sacerdos patris" (the true high priest of the Father), the fulfilment of the figure of the high priest Joshua (Lat. *Iesus*) of Zech. 3:1-5.⁴ In applying the title *summus sacerdos* to Christ, Tertullian is most likely influenced by the letter to the Hebrews, but the addition of *patris* is original.⁵ The adjective *uerus* is an element of typological exegesis, intended to indicate that the antitype (a reality of the New Testament) is superior to the type (an Old Testament item), but without implying any falsehood on the part of the latter.

In continuity with Hebrews, Tertullian presents the Christian cult as consisting in prayer and thanksgiving offered to God through Christ the priest.⁶ In a striking image, the

³ Eric Osborn, *Tertullian, First Theologian of the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 177.

⁴ Tertullian, *Adu. Marc.* 3.7.6, in *Contre Marcion: Livre III*, ed. and trans. René Braun, Sources chrétiennes 399 (Paris: Cerf, 1994). Subsequent citations of *Adu. Marc.* 3, both in the original and in French translation, refer to this edition.

⁵ Similar constructions are found in *Adu. Marc.* 4.9.9: "per Christum Iesum, catholicum patris sacerdotem" (through Jesus Christ, the universal priest of the Father) and 4.13.4: "Christus pontifex patris" (Christ the high priest of the Father). In *Contre Marcion: Livre IV*, ed. Claudio Moreschini, trans. René Braun, Sources chrétiennes 456 (Paris: Cerf, 2001). Subsequent citations of *Adu. Marc.* 4, both in the original and in French translation, refer to this edition.

⁶ *Adu. Marc.* 4.9.9.

twelve apostles are described, not as priests in their own right, but as twelve gemstones that illumine the sacred garment of Christ, which is the church: "Totidem enim apostoli portendebantur (...) proinde ut gemmae inluminaturi sacram ecclesiae uestem,⁷ quam induit Christus pontifex patris."⁸

On the basis of Jesus' injunction to a would-be disciple to "Let the dead bury their dead" (Luke 9:60), which he interprets as an application of a Levitical precept (Lev. 21:11), Tertullian argues that Christ's disciples were destined for the priesthood: "Puto autem et deuotioni et sacerdotio destinabat quem praedicando regno dei imbuerat."⁹

Although this idea could potentially undermine the notion of Christ as the unique Priest of the Father, Tertullian is careful to explain the dependency of the priesthood of the many on the priesthood of the one (Christ). He does so in the treatise *De baptismo*, a text of capital importance for the history of the development of Christian rites of initiation in the pre-Nicene period. This treatise provides our earliest evidence for postbaptismal rites. Tertullian knows of two: an anointing, and a laying on of hands with the invocation of the Spirit; and he interprets the anointing as *both priestly and Christic*: "Exinde egressi de lauacro perungimur benedicta unctione de pristina disciplina qua ungui oleo de cornu in sacerdotium solebant ex quo Aaron a Moyse unctus est; unde christi dicti a chrismate quod

⁷ "Il n'est pas douteux que l'emploi positif et christianisé de *sacer* ici a été suggéré par la terminologie 'sacerdotale' où il prend place. Ni *sacerdos* pour rendre ἱερεύς, ni *sacrificium* pour rendre θυσία n'ayant été évités dans le latin des Chrétiens, il est clair que ces vocables, porteurs de notions importantes de la nouvelle religion, devaient avoir une puissance de suggestion en faveur de *sacer*. (...) Tandis que *sanctus* mettait plus normalement l'accent sur l'aspect moral ou mystique, *sacer*, du fait de sa valeur originelle ('chose mise à part, réservée, consacrée à la divinité'), devait être senti comme plus apte à faire référence au rituel et au culte." René Braun, "'Sacré' et 'Profane' Chez Tertullien," in *Hommages à Robert Schilling*, ed. H. Zehnacker and G. Hentz (Paris, 1983), 46–47.

⁸ *Adu. Marc.* 4.13.4. FT: "Étaient annoncés en même nombre les apôtres (...), qui devaient, pareils à des gemmes, illuminer le vêtement sacré de l'Église—que revêt le Christ, grand prêtre du Père."

⁹ *Adu. Marc.* 4.23.11. FT: "Or je pense, il destinait à la consécration comme au sacerdoce celui qu'il avait formé pour l'annonce du royaume de Dieu."

est unctio quae etiam domino nomen adcommodauit, facta spiritalis quia spiritu unctus est a deo patre."¹⁰

The theological progression is as follows: (1) Aaron was consecrated for priesthood by an anointing with oil; (2) this ancient ceremony has been fulfilled in Jesus, who was consecrated by an anointing with the Spirit and was therefore called the Christ; (3) Christians are anointed with oil in order to share in priesthood—not on the model of Aaron, clearly, but on that of Christ.

Christians exercise their baptismal priesthood first of all by offering the sacrifice of prayer, as Tertullian explains: "Nos sumus ueri adoratores et ueri sacerdotes, qui spiritu orantes spiritu sacrificamus orationem, hostiam dei propriam et acceptabilem, quam scilicet requisivit, quam sibi prospexit."¹¹ The priesthood of Christians also has an eschatological dimension. In a very creative exegesis¹² of the two male goats of Leviticus 16, Tertullian describes Christians as "sacerdotes templi spiritalis, id est ecclesiae" (priests of the spiritual temple, that is the church), who will enjoy a banquet of the Lord's grace at his Parousia.¹³

¹⁰Tertullian, *Bapt.* 7.1, in *Traité du baptême*, ed. and trans. M. Drouzy and François Refoulé, reprint, 1952, Sources chrétiennes 35 (Paris: Cerf, 2002). Subsequent citations of *Bapt.* in the original refer to this edition. FT: "Ensuite, à la sortie du bain, nous recevons une onction d'huile bénite, conformément à la discipline antique. Selon celle-ci, on avait coutume d'élever au sacerdoce par une onction d'huile répandue de la corne: c'est ainsi qu'Aaron fut oint par Moïse. Aussi étaient-ils dits 'christs', de 'chrisma' qui signifie onction et qui donna aussi son nom au Seigneur. Cette onction est devenue spirituelle puisqu'il fut oint de l'Esprit par Dieu le Père, comme il est dit dans les Actes." *Le baptême: Le premier traité chrétien*, ed. and trans. François Refoulé, trans. Maurice Drouzy, Foi vivante (Paris: Cerf, 1976), 87. Subsequent French translations of *Bapt.* are taken from this edition.

¹¹Tertullian, *Orat.* 28, in *Tertullian's Tract on the Prayer*, ed. and trans. Ernest Evans (London: SPCK, 1953). ET: "We are the true worshippers and the true priests, who, praying in the Spirit, in the Spirit offer a sacrifice of prayer as an oblation which is God's own and is well pleasing <to him>, that in fact which he has sought after, which he has provided for himself."

¹²"Les Pères n'ont que rarement su faire le partage entre une typologie théologiquement fondée sur le sens littéral et une typologie illustrative." François Refoulé, "Introduction," in *Traité du baptême*, 27.

¹³*Adu. Marc.* 3.7.7.

Tertullian recognizes a threefold ministerial structure, consisting of bishops, presbyters, and deacons.¹⁴ He is a witness for the universal establishment of this pattern by the end of the second century.¹⁵ At this stage the offices of bishop and presbyter are completely distinct (not synonymous as in the Pastoral Letters of the New Testament), office-holders may only exercise one ministry at a time, and the monoepiscopacy is taken for granted. He mocks the "heretics" who have no clear and stable distinctions among ranks of ministers.¹⁶ Tertullian is the first to use the term *ordo*—a term borrowed from the Roman class system—to refer to the estate formed by Christian ministers within the church;¹⁷ and he "employs the term '*ordinatio*' in what is already a technical sense."¹⁸

Surprisingly, when Tertullian applies the term *sacerdos* (and its cognates) to the *ordo* or the *clerus*, he usually does so in a way that appears to exclude the laity. For instance, in *De exhortatione castitatis*, he contrasts the *ordo sacerdotalis* with the *laici* or *plebs*.¹⁹ Moreover, in *De monogamia* he characterizes the requirement of absolute monogamy, which applies to all the *clerus*, as a *disciplina sacerdotalis* ("priestly discipline").²⁰ This usage obviously demands clarification, given the fact that he elsewhere calls all the baptized *sacerdotes* (see below). A further complication arises from his use of

¹⁴ Osborn, *Tertullian, First Theologian*, 181–82.

¹⁵ Cooke, *Ministry to Word and Sacraments*, 61.

¹⁶ Tertullian, *Praescr.* 41.8, in *Traité de la prescription contre les hérétiques*, ed. François Refoulé, trans. Pierre Champagne de Labriolle, Sources chrétiennes 46 (Paris: Cerf, 1957). Subsequent citations of *Praescr.*, both in the original and in French translation, refer to this edition.

¹⁷ "Dès les débuts du latin chrétien, chez Tertullien, nous voyons l'analogie avec l'*ordo* et le peuple de la cité romaine servir à exprimer la situation du clergé dans le peuple de Dieu." Gy, "Vocabulaire antique," 126.

¹⁸ Tillard, "What Priesthood?" 262.

¹⁹ Tertullian, *Castit.* 7, in *Exhortation à la chasteté*, ed. Claudio Moreschini, trans. Jean-Claude Fredouille, Sources chrétiennes 319 (Paris: Cerf, 1985). Subsequent citations of *Cast.*, both in the original and in French translation, refer to this edition.

²⁰ Tertullian, *Monog.* 12, in *Le mariage unique (De monogamia)*, ed. and trans. Paul Mattei, Sources chrétiennes 343 (Paris: Cerf, 1988).

the term *summus sacerdos* for the bishop,²¹ which implies that there are degrees within the *sacerdotium* of the ordained, but without explaining the basis for those degrees. According to Pierre-Marie Gy, Tertullian manifests an explicit awareness that presbyters participate in the *sacerdotium* of the bishop;²² but this may be stretching the evidence a little too far.

When attempting to prove that all the faithful should observe the clerical discipline of marrying only once, Tertullian, speaking as a layman and appealing to the authority of Revelation 1:6, famously claims the title of *sacerdos* for all the baptized: "Nonne et laici sacerdotes sumus? Scriptum est: *Regnum quoque nos et sacerdotes deo et patri suo fecit. Differentiam inter ordinem et plebem constituit ecclesiae auctoritas et honor per ordinis consessum sanctificatus. (...) Sed ubi tres, ecclesia est, licet laici.*"²³

The distinction between the *ordo* and the *plebs* being only a matter of ecclesiastical authority, there is no difference between them in terms of sacramental capacity. In *De baptismo*, Tertullian asks sarcastically whether the disciples of Christ were already called bishops, presbyters, and deacons.²⁴ In normal circumstances, hierarchical distinctions must be upheld, and it would be improper even for a presbyter or a deacon, for instance, to baptise "sine episcopi auctoritate, propter ecclesiae honorem quo saluo salua pax est."²⁵ It would be a sign of arrogance for laity to exercise sacerdotal functions when the clergy are able to do so. However, in the absence of an ordained minister—a scenario that might well

²¹ *Bapt.* 17.1-2.

²² Gy, "Vocabulaire antique," 142.

²³ *Cast.* 7.3. FT: "Pour être laïcs ne sommes-nous pas également prêtres ? Il est écrit: 'Il a fait de nous une royauté en même temps que des prêtres pour son Dieu et père.' La distinction entre ordre sacerdotal et peuple de laïcs, c'est l'autorité de l'Église qui la crée, et la préséance se voit sanctifiée quand se rassemble l'ordre sacerdotal. (...) Mais là où il y a trois fidèles, il y a une Église, même si ce sont des laïcs." The idea of "three" believers constituting the church is probably an allusion to Matt. 18:20.

²⁴ *Bapt.* 17.2.

²⁵ *Bapt.* 17.1. FT: "jamais sans l'autorisation de l'évêque, à cause du respect qui est dû à l'Église et qu'il faut sauvegarder pour sauvegarder la paix."

be realized in times of persecution—the layman may act as a *sacerdos*: "Adeo ubi ecclesiastici ordinis non est consessus, et offers et tinguis et sacerdos es tibi solus."²⁶

Tertullian deduces from this the idea that laymen should always observe the very same discipline as the clergy, so that they should always find themselves in a state that allows them to celebrate the sacraments: "Omnes nos deus ita uult dispositos esse, ut ubique sacramentis eius obeundis apti simus."²⁷ And by sacraments, we are to understand principally, if not exclusively, baptism and the eucharist. It is unthinkable for him that these essential rites of the church should be performed by a digamist, whether ordained or lay: "Digamus tinguis? digamus offers?"²⁸

Nor are they to be celebrated by a woman: "Non permittitur mulieri in ecclesia loqui, sed nec docere, nec tinguere, nec offerre, nec ullius uirilis muneris, nedum sacerdotalis officii sortem sibi uindicarent."²⁹ It should be noted that Tertullian's apodictic exclusion of women from the administration of baptism contradicts his assertion "quod enim ex aequo accipitur ex aequo dari potest,"³⁰ unless he were willing to propose that the effects of baptism are, in fact, unequal for males and females! It is absurd to posit that women might receive a priestly anointing which they would be perpetually incapable of exercising, by reason of a condition that pre-existed their baptism (femininity). The logical

²⁶ *Cast.* 7.3. FT: "C'est pourquoi, quand il n'y a pas d'assemblée eucharistique, tu offres le saint sacrifice, tu baptises, tu es prêtre, seul pour toi même."

²⁷ *Cast.* 7.6. FT: "Dieu veut que nous soyons tous dans des conditions telles que, en toute circonstance, nous soyons en mesure d'administrer ses sacrements."

²⁸ *Cast.* 7.4. FT: "Baptises-tu, si tu es digame? offres-tu le saint sacrifice, si tu es digame?"

²⁹ Tertullian, *Virg. uel.* 9.2, in *Le voile des vierges (De uirginibus uelandis)*, ed. Eva Schulz-Flügel, trans. Paul Mattei, Sources chrétiennes 424 (Paris: Cerf, 1997). Subsequent citations of *Virg. uel.* refer to this edition. FT: "'Il n'est pas permis à la femme de parler à l'église' 'ni non plus d'enseigner', baptiser, offrir le sacrifice, revendiquer l'attribution d'aucune fonction masculine, et moins encore d'une charge sacerdotale." See also *Bapt.* 17.4. It should be noted that Tertullian derived the first two prohibitions—against women's speaking in church and teaching—directly from the Pauline epistles: 1 Cor. 14:34 and 1 Tim. 2:12.

³⁰ *Bapt.* 17.2. FT: "Ce que tous reçoivent au même degré, tous peuvent le donner au même degré."

implication of Tertullian's position is that the baptismal priesthood of females is somehow of a lower degree and is restricted to non-sacramental worship.

Edward Kilmartin asserts that Tertullian calls the bishop a *uicarius Christi*, *uicarius Petri* or *apostolorum*.³¹ However, this claim is not supported by any direct citation from his writings. Moreover, the secondary source that Kilmartin cites³² does not attribute this usage to Tertullian. Given the latter's consistently held ecclesiological positions, the presence of such terminology in his writings would be surprising, to say the least. But in fact, nowhere does Tertullian apply the term *uicarius* to Christian ministers.

It is the Holy Spirit whom Tertullian calls "Christi uicarius"³³ and "uicari[us] Domini."³⁴ This title is in continuity with the christological title "uicarius patris."³⁵ The latter term is also applied to the Son in *Aduersus Praxean* 24, where a full-fledged concept of representation is developed: "Secundum haec enim uicarium se Patris ostenderat, per quem Pater et uideretur in factis et audiretur in uerbis et cognosceretur in Filio facta et uerba Patris administrante, quia inuisibilis Pater quod et Philippus didicerat in lege et meminisse debuerat: *Deum nemo uidebit et uiuet*."³⁶ But the basis of this representation of the Father by the Son is clearly their sharing in the divine essence; it has nothing to do with the priestly office of Christ.

³¹ Kilmartin, "Apostolic Office," 245, n. 21.

³² Michele Maccarrone, *Vicarius Christi: storia del titolo papale*, Lateranum, Nova Series, an. 18.1–4 (Rome: Facultas theologica Pontificii athenaei lateranensis, 1952), 26–28.

³³ *Praescr.* 28.1; cf. 13.5.

³⁴ *Virg. uel.* 1.6.

³⁵ *Adu. Marc.* 3.6.7.

³⁶ Tertullian, *Adu. Prax.* 24, in *Q.S.F. Tertulliano Contro Prassea*, ed. and trans. Giuseppe Scarpat, *Corona Patrum* 12 (Turin: Società editrice internazionale, 1985). ET: "For according to these <texts> he had revealed himself as the deputy of the Father, by means of whom the Father was both seen in acts and heard in words and known in the Son ministering the Father's acts and words: because the Father is invisible, a fact which Philip also had learned in the Law and ought to have remembered—*No one shall see God and live*." In *Tertullian's Treatise Against Praxeas*, ed. and trans. Ernest Evans (London: SPCK, 1948).

The representation of Christ by the Holy Spirit can indeed be exercised through human agents, but only by an elite group of "spiritual persons" which is not co-extensive with the hierarchy of the catholic church. This is especially clear in Tertullian's late work *De pudicitia*, where he challenges the official church's authority to reconcile grave sinners: "Et ideo ecclesia quidem delicta donabit, sed ecclesia spiritus per spiritalem hominem, non ecclesia numerus episcoporum. Domini enim, non famuli est ius et arbitrium; Dei ipsius, non sacerdotis."³⁷

The theology of *sacerdotium* found in Tertullian's writings is certainly in continuity with the teaching of the New Testament (especially Hebrews) and other primitive Christian literature (Justin Martyr et al.). However, his position is impossible to reconcile with subsequent catholic tradition. For Tertullian, the members of the *Ordo* exercise priestly functions for the sake of good order within the church, not because they have the exclusive capacity to do so. It is baptism, not ordination, that imparts the priesthood of Christ to believers. This radical position appears to exclude, in principle, *any* unique representation of Christ by ordained ministers. Tertullian's vitriolic critique of the catholic bishops of his own time both illustrates and confirms the conclusion that he did not attribute any intrinsic sacramental power to the ordained ministry, independent of the personal spiritual endowment of the ministers. For the reasons just enunciated, it is clear that Tertullian's writings do not contain any antecedents to *in persona Christi* theology; and in fact, they are in direct contradiction with it.

³⁷ Tertullian, *Pudic.* 21.16, in *La pudicité (De pudicitia)*, ed. and trans. Charles Munier, introd. by Claudio Micaelli, Sources chrétiennes 394 (Paris: Cerf, 1993). FT: "C'est pourquoi l'Église remettra bien les péchés, mais l'Église de l'Esprit, par l'intermédiaire d'un homme spirituel, et non l'Église constituée par des évêques en nombre. Il s'agit, en effet, d'un droit et d'une décision qui appartiennent au Seigneur et non au serviteur, à Dieu lui-même et non au prêtre" (Ibid.).

3 Origen (ca. 185–253 CE, Alexandria and Caesarea)

Origen's extant writings do not indicate that the ecclesiastical hierarchy was a major concern of his exegetical and theological enterprise. As a generalized theological concept, on the other hand, the notion of priesthood receives its own independent elaboration. The fullest exposition of his ideas on this subject is to be found in his sixteen *Homiliae in Leuiticum*, a mature work composed around the year 240 CE in Caesarea.³⁸ Commentators discern no less than six distinct kinds or levels of priesthood in Origen's thought: "the priesthood of the Logos; the Levitical priesthood; the priesthood of Christ; the priesthood of the baptized; the heavenly priesthood of the saints; and lastly, the spiritual levels of the exercise of priestly ministry in the body of Christ."³⁹

Origen's application of priestly qualities to the (pre-existent) Logos is influenced by the works of Philo; but in speaking of the priesthood of the (earthly) Christ the major source is the Epistle to the Hebrews.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, his commentary on Hebrews is no longer extant; but abundant citations of the letter can be found throughout his other works.⁴¹

Following Hebrews (e.g.: 10:1), Origen sees heavenly priesthood as the ultimate *reality*, of which the Levitical priesthood was a *shadow*, and of which the priesthood of

³⁸ Cf. Marcel Borret, "Introduction," in Origen, *Homélie sur le Lévitique*, ed. and trans. Marcel Borret, Sources chrétiennes 286–287 (Paris: Cerf, 1981), 1:52; John Anthony McGuckin, ed., *The Westminster Handbook to Origen*, The Westminster Handbooks to Christian Theology (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 179.

³⁹ McGuckin, *Handbook to Origen*, 179; cf. Henri Crouzel, *Origène, Chrétiens aujourd'hui* 15 (Paris: Lethielleux, 1985), 288.

⁴⁰ "The New Testament texts that are foundational for his theological reflections on priesthood are Hebrews, in which he explores the relationship between the Levitical priesthood and the priesthood of Christ, and 1 Peter, where Origen is constantly drawn to comment on the priestly nature of the community of faith (referring especially to 1 Pet. 2:5; 2:9a." McGuckin, *Handbook to Origen*, 179.

⁴¹ McGuckin, *Handbook to Origen*, 179.

Christians is an *image*.⁴² Also following the theology of Hebrews, Origen consistently applies the title of high priest (ἀρχιερεύς, rendered in the Latin versions of his works as *summus sacerdos* or *pontifex*) to Christ. It is through this high priest⁴³ that all Christian prayer (προσευχή) rises to God the Father.⁴⁴ The title of high priest denotes an ascending mediation (from human beings to God), while other titles express Christ's descending mediation.⁴⁵

With respect to the priesthood that is exercised within the church, by far the most prevalent interpretation in Origen's writings is that the entire Christian community, as well as each of the baptized, exercises a true *sacerdotium*.⁴⁶ Origen frequently cites 1 Peter 2:9, which he interprets in both a collective and an individual sense: "Aut ignoras tibi quoque, id est omni Ecclesiae Dei et credentium populo, sacerdotium datum?"⁴⁷ Specifically, it is the post-baptismal anointing that confers priesthood upon the baptized:

Omnes enim, quicumque unguento sacri chrismatis delibuti sunt, sacerdotes effecti sunt, sicut et Petrus ad omnem dicit Ecclesiam: *Vos autem genus electum, regale sacerdotale, gens sancta. Estis ergo genus sacerdotale et ideo acceditis ad sancta.*

⁴² "La distinction entre les trois stades de l'ombre, de l'image, de la réalité, distinction inspirée de l'Épître aux Hébreux (Heb. 10,1), aura un très grand succès dans la littérature patristique et servira à désigner le stade terrestre de la vie de l'Église, intermédiaire entre l'Ancien Testament qui le préfigure, et le stade définitif du ciel dont il est une *image*, un sacrement." Joseph Lécuyer, "Sacerdoce des fidèles et sacerdoce ministériel chez Origène," *Vetera Christianorum* 7 (1970): 261.

⁴³ "ὡς δι' ἀρχιερέως." Origen, *Cels.* 4.7.46. "διὰ τοῦ μόνου ἀρχιερέως." *Cels.* 4.8.36, in *Contre Celse IV*, Marcel Borret, Sources chrétiennes 150 (Paris: Cerf, 1969).

⁴⁴ "[C]'est par le Christ, 'le grand prêtre qui enseigne aux hommes la vraie piété', 'le seul grand-prêtre', que nos prières sont offertes au Père." Lécuyer, "Sacerdoce chez Origène," 255.

⁴⁵ Origen, *Cels.* 2.3.34, in *Contre Celse II*, ed. and trans. Marcel Borret, Sources chrétiennes 136 (Paris: Cerf, 1968).

⁴⁶ "Tous les baptisés ont été oints d'une onction sacerdotale." Lécuyer, "Sacerdoce chez Origène," 257.

⁴⁷ Origen, *Hom. in Leu.* 9.1, in *Homélies sur le Lévitique*. FT: "Ou ignores-tu qu'à toi aussi, c'est-à-dire à toute l'Église de Dieu et au peuple des croyants, le sacerdoce est donné?" Subsequent citations of *Hom. in Leu.*, both in its Latin version and in French translation, refer to this edition.

Sed et unusquisque nostrum habet in se holocaustum suum et holocausti sui ipse succendit altare, ut semper ardeat.⁴⁸

Origen transfers onto the Christian faithful the dignity and prerogatives of the Levitical priesthood.⁴⁹ In the Christian dispensation, priesthood is entirely spiritualized and is exercised primarily through prayer, godly living, and biblical interpretation.⁵⁰ Moreover, this priesthood is always exercised in dependence upon the high priesthood of Christ.⁵¹

There is a certain tension, however, between Origen's inclusion of all the baptized in the category of priesthood, on the one hand, and a tendency towards elitism, on the other. In a number of texts he presents sacerdotal status as conditional upon the pursuit of a holy life,⁵² such that not all Christians truly deserve the titles of "Levites" and "priests."⁵³ Only to those who keep the fire of faith burning upon the altar of their souls can priesthood rightfully be ascribed;⁵⁴ and those who do not conduct themselves in a priestly manner are

⁴⁸ *Hom. in Leu.* 9.9. FT: "Car tous ceux qui ont été oints de l'onguent du saint chrême sont devenus prêtres, comme Pierre le dit à toute l'Église: 'Mais vous êtes une race élue, un sacerdoce royal, une nation sainte.' Vous êtes donc une 'race sacerdotale,' et c'est pourquoi vous avez accès au sanctuaire. De plus, chacun de nous a en lui son holocauste, et il embrase l'autel de son holocauste pour qu'il brûle toujours."

⁴⁹ "As 'priestly people' the community of the faithful inherits the Levitical (Aaronic) priesthood of ancient Israel. Thus they have an authentic priesthood, but it is differentiated by Origen from the Melchizedech high priesthood, which belongs to the Logos alone." McGuckin, *Handbook to Origen*, 180.

⁵⁰ "Stat ergo etiam nunc uerus *pontifex* noster Christus et repleti uult *manus suas incenso composito minuto*, et ab unaquaque Ecclesia, quae sub caelo est, considerat quid offeratur, quam integre *incensum* suum diligenterque componat, quiam *minutum* id faciat, id est quomodo unusquisque nostrum opera sua ordinet et quomodo sensum ac uerba Scripturarum spiritali explanatione discutiat." *Hom. in Leu.* 9.8. FT: "Debout aujourd'hui encore se tient notre Pontife véritable, le Christ. Il veut qu'on remplisse 'ses mains d'une composition d'encens fin.' Il examine ce qu'offre chaque Église qui est sous le ciel, avec quelle intégrité et quelle conscience elle compose son encens, à quel point elle le rend fin: c'est-à-dire la manière dont chacun de nous met en ordre ses oeuvres et dont il explique le sens et les paroles des Écritures par une interprétation spirituelle."

⁵¹ "Ieiunans enim debes adire pontificem tuum Christum, qui utique non in terris requirendus est, sed in caelis, et per ipsum debes offerre hostiam Deo." *Hom. in Leu.* 10.2. FT: "C'est en jeûnant que tu dois approcher ton pontife le Christ, lequel n'est certes pas à chercher sur la terre mais au ciel, et que par lui tu dois offrir une victime à Dieu."

⁵² E.g., *Hom. in Leu.* 6.5.

⁵³ Origen, *Jo.* 1.9-10, in *Commentaire sur Saint Jean*, vol. 1, *Livres I-V*, 2nd rev. ed., ed. and trans. Cécile Blanc, Sources chrétiennes 120bis (Paris: Cerf, 1996).

⁵⁴ *Hom. in Leu.* 4.6.

not "truly" priests and Levites—even if they happen to belong to an institutional priesthood.⁵⁵

The highest form of priesthood within the church community (which might even warrant the title of "high priest"⁵⁶ belongs to those who provide enlightened, scripturally-based instruction to others.⁵⁷ The apostle Paul is called a priest (*pontifex, sacerdos*) in this sense.⁵⁸

Alongside this moral-ascetical concept of the priesthood of all the faithful, Origen speaks of the apostles as "priests and sons" of the high priest, the Lord Jesus: "Quod ergo praecepit lex Aaron et filiis eius, ut uinum et siceram non bibant cum accedunt ad altare, uideamus, quomodo id uero pontifici Iesu Christo Domino nostro et sacerdotibus eius ac filiis, nostris uero Apostolis, possimus aptare";⁵⁹ "ad Dominum meum Iesum personam pontificis reuocauimus et ad filios eius sanctos Apostolos."⁶⁰ Here the prescriptions of Paul to Titus, which in the context of that letter (1:7-8) pertained to the selection of candidates

⁵⁵ "Etenim quicumque sacerdotali religione et sanctitate uiuunt, non solum hi qui sedere uidentur in consessu sacerdotali, sed hi magis, qui sacerdotaliter agunt, quorum pars est Dominus nec ulla iis portio habetur in terris, ipsi sunt uere sacerdotes et Leuitae Domini, qui in humeris suis legem Dei portant, agendo uidelicet et implendo per opus ea quae scribuntur in lege." Origen, *Hom. in Ios. 9.5*, in *Homélies sur Josué*, rev. ed., ed. and trans. Annie Jaubert, reprint, 1960, Sources chrétiennes 71 (Paris: Cerf, 2000). FT: "Tous ceux en effet qui vivent leur religion d'une manière sainte et sacerdotale, pas seulement ceux qu'on voit siéger dans les assemblées des prêtres, mais plutôt ceux qui se conduisent dans un esprit sacerdotal, ceux dont le Seigneur est l'unique part et qui ne possèdent rien d'autre sur la terre, ceux-là sont vraiment les prêtres et les lévites du Seigneur, qui portent sur leurs épaules la loi de Dieu, car ils réalisent et ils accomplissent dans leurs œuvres ce qui est écrit dans la Loi" (Ibid.).

⁵⁶ "It is clear enough that Origen sees himself, in terms of his office as teacher and exegete, as a 'priest' (perhaps even a high priest in the line of Aaron)." McGuckin, *Handbook to Origen*, 181.

⁵⁷ "Within the priesthood of the faithful, according to Origen, there are different levels of exercising the role of priestly mediation and reconciliation. (...) The Levites are believers; the priests are the rare souls who have been able to assume the role of spiritual teacher and illumined guide to the Scriptures." McGuckin, *Handbook to Origen*, 181.

⁵⁸ *Hom. in Leu. 4.6*.

⁵⁹ *Hom. in Leu. 7.1*. FT: "Or, ce que la Loi prescrit à Aaron et à ses fils, de ne boire ni vin ni boisson fermentée quand ils s'approchent de l'autel, voyons comment nous pouvons l'appliquer au pontife véritable Jésus-Christ notre Seigneur, et à ses prêtres et fils, nos apôtres."

⁶⁰ *Hom. in Leu. 7.3*. FT: "Nous avons appliqué le rôle de pontife à mon Seigneur Jésus et à ses fils les saints apôtres."

for the office of *bishop*, are taken as a confirmation of the ongoing normative force of a Levitical precept regarding the sobriety of *priests* who approach the altar. The apostles and their successors the bishops, then, truly are priests in the theological sense.

In *Homiliae in Leuiticum* 6 the expression *sacerdos Ecclesiae* is used several times to refer to unspecified Christian ministers; the references to 1 Timothy 3:7-8, though, suggest that "priest of the church" means a bishop. Origen refers to the requirement of 1 Timothy 3:7, namely that a *bishop* should have a good public reputation, as a precept that pertains to the ordination of a *priest*.⁶¹ Origen lists seven ways by which the gospel indicates we can receive the forgiveness of sins: baptism, martyrdom, almsgiving, mutual forgiveness, zeal for conversion, abundant charity, and penance. The last explicitly involves having recourse to the "*sacerdos Domini*"—which can only be a reference to the bishop.⁶² In addition, in at least one other passage Christian presbyters, too, are explicitly referred to

⁶¹ "Requiritur enim in ordinatione sacerdote et praesentia populi, ut sciant omnes et certi sint quia qui praestantior est ex omni populo, qui doctior, qui sanctior, qui in omni uirtute eminentior, ille eligitur ad sacerdotium et hoc adstante populo, ne qua postmodum retractatio cuiquam, ne quis scrupulus resideret. Hoc est autem quod et Apostolus praecepit in ordinatione sacerdotis." *Hom. in Leu.* 6.3. FT: "En effet, à l'ordination du prêtre la présence du peuple est requise, afin que tous le sachent avec certitude: c'est le plus remarquable de tout le peuple, le plus savant, le plus saint, le plus éminent en toutes vertus qui est choisi pour le sacerdoce, et cela, en présence du peuple, pour que dans la suite chez personne aucune hésitation, aucun scrupule ne subsistent. Et telle est bien aussi la prescription de l'Apôtre pour l'ordination d'un prêtre."

⁶² "Est adhuc et septima, licet dura et laboriosa, per paenitentiam remissio peccatorum, cum lauat peccator *in lacrimis stratum* suum et fiunt ei *lacrimae suae panes die ac nocte*, cum non erubescit sacerdoti Domini indicare peccatum et quaerere medicinam." *Hom. in Leu.* 2.4. FT: "Il en est encore une septième, bien que dure et pénible, la rémission des péchés par la pénitence, quand le pécheur baigne sa 'couche de larmes', que 'ses larmes' deviennent 'son pain jour et nuit', quand il ne rougit pas de déclarer son péché au prêtre du Seigneur et de demander un remède." The same terminology is used in *Hom. in Num.* 10.1.8. Origen, *Homélie sur les Nombres I*, ed. and trans. Louis Doutreleau, André Méhat, and Marcel Borret, Sources chrétiennes 415 (Paris: Cerf, 1996). Subsequent citations of *Hom. in Num.* refer to this edition.

as "priests";⁶³ but this is a rare designation.⁶⁴ It is noteworthy that Origen never uses ἄρχιερεὺς for members of the clergy.⁶⁵

Origen, then, does witness to the use of sacerdotal terminology for members of the church hierarchy.⁶⁶ However, as with his treatment of the priesthood of the faithful, a certain moralizing or elitist tendency can be detected in a few passages that deal with the power of ministers to perform sacerdotal actions. In his commentary on the promises of Christ to Simon Peter in Matthew 16,⁶⁷ Origen seems to be saying that only those bishops whose conduct is worthy can effectively bind and loose.⁶⁸ Elsewhere he explicitly asserts that there are degrees of merit within the priesthood: "Unum igitur est sacerdotii nomen, sed non una uel pro uitae merito uel pro animi uirtutibus dignitas."⁶⁹ It is clear that providing authentic instruction to the faithful is in Origen's mind the hallmark of the genuine priest.⁷⁰

Although Origen puts more emphasis on the similarity between the common and the ordained priesthoods than on their dissimilarity,⁷¹ there is no evidence that he would accept

⁶³ Origen, *Hom. in Ier.* 12.3, in *Homélie sur Jérémie II*, ed. and trans. Pierre Nautin and Pierre Husson, Sources chrétiennes 238 (Paris: Cerf, 1977).

⁶⁴ Théo Hermans, *Origène, théologie sacrificielle du sacerdoce des chrétiens*, Théologie historique 102 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1996), 20.

⁶⁵ Hermans, *Théologie sacrificielle*, 11.

⁶⁶ In addition to the references already given, see *Hom. in Num.* 2.1.4.

⁶⁷ Origen, *Comm. in Mt.* 12.14, in Erich Klostermann, Ernst Benz, and Ursulae Treu, eds., *Origenes Werke*, vol. 10, *Matthäuserklärung*, Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte 40 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1935).

⁶⁸ Lécuyer, "Sacerdoce chez Origène," 260.

⁶⁹ *Hom. in Leu.* 6.6. FT: "Unique donc est le nom du sacerdoce; non point unique sa dignité, proportionnée au mérite de la vie comme aux vertus de l'âme."

⁷⁰ *Hom. in Leu.* 6.6.

⁷¹ For example, he invites the faithful to listen attentively to the consecration of a bishop, because they too are priests of the Lord: "Intentis auribus et uigilanti corde consecrationem pontificis uel sacerdotis audite, quia et uos secundum promissa Dei sacerdotes Domini estis." *Hom. in Leu.* 6.2. FT: "Les oreilles attentives et le cœur vigilant, écoutez la consécration du pontife ou du prêtre, car vous aussi selon la promesse de Dieu vous êtes prêtres du Seigneur."

Tertullian's view that holy or spiritual lay persons could perform the same actions as the ordained.⁷²

Only in a few brief and scattered phrases does Origen establish a direct connection between the priesthood of the ordained and the person of Christ. Speaking of the forgiveness of sins within the church, he says of the apostles and their successors: "ἱερεῖς ὄντες κατὰ τὸν μέγαν ἀρχιερέα, ἐπιστήμην λαβόντες τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ θεραπείας."⁷³

Again in the context of a discussion of ministers' role in the forgiveness of sins, Origen affirms that the "ministers and priests of the church" act according to the image of the one who gave the priesthood to the church:

Dicit ergo lex: *Sacerdos qui obtulerit, edet illud in loco sancto, in atrio tabernaculi testimonii*. Consequens enim est, ut secundum imaginem eius, qui sacerdotium Ecclesiae dedit, etiam ministri et sacerdotes Ecclesiae *peccata populi* accipiant et ipsi imitantes magistrum remissionem peccatorum populo tribuant.⁷⁴

Even here, however, one notes the same ambiguity noted earlier regarding the source of sacramental efficacy, because he goes on to insist on the need for the priests of the church to be morally perfect and well instructed, so as to "eat" the sins of the people: "Debent ergo et ipsi Ecclesiae sacerdotes ita perfecti esse et in officiis sacerdotalibus

⁷² "Interestingly (and of considerable importance for theological reflection on the nature of ministry), they [the ante-Nicene Christian writers] did not draw the implication that possession of the Spirit, particularly by one of eminent sanctity, placed that person in a ministerial position. Even Origen, who inclined somewhat this way in his view of the role of spiritual Christians, bears witness to the enduring conviction that specialized ministry in the church flows from some kind of ministerial charism that is distinct from grace, a ministerial charism that is either recognized or granted in ordination." Cooke, *Ministry to Word and Sacraments*, 553.

⁷³ Origen, *Or.* 28.9, in *Origenes Werke*, vol. 3, *Buch V.-VIII Gegen Celsus; Die Schrift vom Gebet*, ed. Paul Koetschau, Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte 3 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1899). ET: "priests according to the *great High Priest*, having received the science of divine therapy." Origen, *Prayer; Exhortation to Martyrdom*, trans. John J. O'Meara, *Ancient Christian Writers* 19 (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1954), 112.

⁷⁴ *Hom. in Leu.* 5.3. FT: "La loi déclare donc: 'Le prêtre qui offre la victime la mangera dans un lieu saint, dans le parvis de la tente du témoignage.' Il est bien logique, à l'image de celui qui a donné le sacerdoce à l'Église, que les ministres et les prêtres de l'Église aussi portent 'les péchés du peuple' et qu'eux-mêmes, imitant leur maître, accordent au peuple la rémission des péchés."

eruditi, ut *peccata populi in loco sancto, in atriis tabernaculi testimonii ipsi non peccando consumant.*"⁷⁵ Bishops undoubtedly represent Christ, but this representation seems to derive its power at least as much from the personal holiness and learning of the ministers as from their ordination.

Origen's theology of priesthood, as evidenced by his allegorical exegesis of the Old Testament—and particularly of the Book of Leviticus—is strongly influenced by the Letter to the Hebrews; moreover, it is entirely centred upon the figure of Christ, the ἀρχιερεύς. The church and each one of its members, according to the oft-cited 1 Peter 2:9, share in a true priesthood. However, there are degrees within this priesthood, corresponding to the varying degrees of personal holiness and learning among the faithful. Although sacerdotal titles are also used for the clergy (bishops and more rarely, presbyters), and a distinction is made between their priesthood and that of the laity, representational language is rarely used to express the relation between the ordained and the person of Christ. When it is used, in the context of the forgiveness of sins, there is some question as to whether their ability to reconcile sinners derives from their personal merit and holiness, or from something more objective, such as ordination. Consequently it is not possible to find in Origen's writings any undisputable antecedents of *in persona Christi* theology.

4 Cyprian of Carthage (bishop ca. 248/249–258 CE)

Despite his high level of education and culture, Cyprian had no pretensions of being a systematic, speculative theologian in the same league as an Origen. He was above all a

⁷⁵ Ibid. FT: "Donc les prêtres de l'Église ont l'obligation d'être assez parfaits et instruits des devoirs du sacerdoce pour dévorer 'les péchés du peuple dans un lieu saint, dans le parvis de la tente du témoignage' sans pécher eux-mêmes."

pastor, leading his flock through a series of crises brought about by state persecutions and their aftermath. The authoritarian tone of his writings needs to be understood in light of the confusion caused by rival claimants to episcopal sees, including that of Rome (the Novatian schism). Moreover his own leadership was seriously questioned both by outsiders—e.g. the presbyters and deacons of Rome on learning that he had gone into hiding during the Decian persecution—and by members of his own clergy (e.g. the presbyter Novatus and the deacon Felicissimus).

In continuity with the usage of his North African precursor Tertullian,⁷⁶ Cyprian refers quite readily to himself and other catholic bishops as "priests." The title *sacerdos* is used without qualification or explanation. What is noticeably different in Cyprian's use of sacerdotal terminology, however, is that he never applies it to the lay faithful. This appears to be a deliberate, personal choice,⁷⁷ and is quite possibly indicative of Cyprian's desire to avoid some of the more subversive implications of Tertullian's ideas regarding the priesthood of the laity.⁷⁸

Bévenot notes that the terms *episcopus* and *sacerdos* are not quite synonymous for Cyprian: there is a nuance. "A first rough distinction can be stated thus: 'episcopus' means *the man in charge of a local church*; 'sacerdos' is the man as chosen by God to be *his*

⁷⁶ According to Jerome in *De uiris illustribus* 53, Cyprian read Tertullian every day and acknowledged him as "the master."

⁷⁷ "Cyprian often uses the idea of 'putting on Christ', but he never says that baptism makes us 'sacerdotes'. That Cyprian's avoidance of the title 'sacerdotes' for all the baptized was quite deliberate is shown by the way in which he uses 1 Pet. ii." Maurice Bévenot, "'Sacerdos' as Understood by Cyprian," *Journal of Theological Studies* 30 (1979): 423.

⁷⁸ "We find Cyprian referring constantly to himself and to the other bishops of his day as 'sacerdotes'. And, equally, surprisingly, he never speaks of the priesthood of the faithful. What had happened? What had happened was Tertullian—whom he had no doubt known in Carthage as a young man, and whom in so many ways he looked upon as his 'Master.'" Bévenot, "'Sacerdos' as Understood by Cyprian," 416–17. The only authority for this last affirmation is the testimony of Jerome referred to above, as Tertullian is not *explicitly* acknowledged as an authority in Cyprian's writings.

instrument for the distribution of his graces to those in his charge."⁷⁹ In other words, the use of the title *episcopus* refers primarily to the bishop's position as head of a local church community, whereas the title *sacerdos* refers mainly to his mediatorial function between God and the people. The semantic differentiation between various titles applied to the person of the bishop can be seen quite clearly in the following passage: "nisi apud te purgati fuerimus et sententia tua absoluti, ecce iam sex annis nec fraternitas habuerit episcopum nec plebs praepositum nec grex pastorem nec ecclesia gubernatorem nec Christus antistitem nec deus sacerdotem."⁸⁰

There is only one *sacerdos* in each local church. Although there are passages that imply that presbyters share in some of the sacramental prerogatives of the bishop, including presidency of the Eucharist, Cyprian does not give them the title of *sacerdotes*.⁸¹ Moreover, he does not follow Tertullian's usage in calling the bishop *summus sacerdos* ("high priest"), a title that at least suggests the existence of subordinate ranks in the priesthood.⁸²

One of the most distinctive features of Cyprian's theology is his insistence on the necessary unity and singularity of the church, which contains within itself the totality of the means of salvation. It is simply unthinkable for him that there should be true sacraments or

⁷⁹ Bévenot, "Sacerdos' as Understood by Cyprian," 417.

⁸⁰ Cyprian of Carthage, *Ep.* 66.5.1, in *Sancti Cypriani Episcopi Epistularium*, vol. 2, *Epistulae 58–81*, ed. Gerard F. Diercks, Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina 3C (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996). Subsequent citations of *Ep.* 58–81 in the original refer to this edition. ET: "And unless we are cleared before your bench and are acquitted by your verdict, the brethren will have had no [bishop] these last six years, the people no leader, the flock no shepherd, the Church no helmsman, Christ no [overseer], and God no [priest]!" In *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, vol. 3, *Letters 55–66*, trans. G. W. Clarke, Ancient Christian Writers 46 (New York, NY: Newman Press, 1986). Subsequent English translations of Cyprian's Letters 55–66 refer to this edition.

⁸¹ "Cyprian, while manifestly recognizing that the 'presbyteri' could celebrate the eucharist at least on occasion, yet never calls them 'sacerdotes'—a title which he reserves for the bishops." Bévenot, "Sacerdos' as Understood by Cyprian," 414.

⁸² Maurice Bévenot, "Notes to Chapters 25–28," in *The Lapsed*, by Cyprian of Carthage, Ancient Christian Writers 25 (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1957), 92n132.

legitimate orders outside this one church. Schismatics such as Novatian are called neither *episcopi* nor *sacerdotes*.⁸³ He grudgingly grants that there may be de facto bishops outside the church, but they are in no way willed by God: "Plane episcopi non de uoluntate dei fiunt, sed qui extra ecclesiam fiunt, sed qui contra dispositionem et traditionem euangelii fiunt."⁸⁴

In marked contrast to the roughly contemporaneous—and equally hierarchicalist—Syrian work, the *Didascalia* (see ch. 2, 2.2), we find in Cyprian's writings a thoroughly Christic theology of ordained ministry. Furthermore, the relationship between the priest-bishop and the person of Christ is strongly representational. Whereas the *Didascalia* spoke of the bishop's taking the place of God (the Father) when judging the faithful, Cyprian unequivocally states that the bishop judges in *Christ's* stead; indeed, the unity of the church stands or falls on the recognition of this truth: "Neque enim aliunde haereses abortae sunt aut nata sunt schismata quam dum sacerdoti dei non obtemperatur nec unus in ecclesia ad tempus sacerdos et ad tempus iudex uice Christi cogitatur."⁸⁵

Representation of Christ applies not only to the bishop's governance of the church, but also to his role as the offerer of the Eucharistic sacrifice. This is expressed most clearly and vividly in Cyprian's *Epistula* 63, addressed to Caecilius, which is a refutation of the error of those bishops who use only water in the chalice. This letter is historically valuable

⁸³ Bévenot, "‘Sacerdos’ as Understood by Cyprian," 417.

⁸⁴ *Ep.* 59.5.2. ET: "Men may indeed be made bishops not according to the will of God, but only when they are made bishops outside the Church, only when they are made bishops in defiance of the teachings and ordinances of the gospel."

⁸⁵ *Ep.* 59.5.1. ET: "In truth, heresies and schisms have their source and origin precisely in circumstances where people fail to obey God's [priest] and where they forget the fact that in a church there is but one [priest] and judge who acts in Christ's stead for the time being." "He often refers to the bishop as being 'iudex uice Christi', and tells an ageing bishop that he must have no qualms about using his 'sacerdotalis potestas' to dismiss or excommunicate the obstreperous deacon who was insulting and harming him (*ep.* 3. 1; 3. 3)." Bévenot, "‘Sacerdos’ as Understood by Cyprian," 423.

because, despite its brevity, it is the first Christian treatise that directly raises the question of the nature of the Eucharist. What guarantees that the church's celebration truly coincides with the intention of Christ? The church is not at liberty to change the material elements used by Christ at the Last Supper. On the contrary, a priest may only be certain of offering Christ's own sacrifice if he imitates the manner in which Christ actually offered it:

Nam si Iesus Christus dominus et deus noster ipse est summus sacerdos dei patri et sacrificium patri se ipsum primus obtulit et hoc fieri in sui commemoratione praecepit, utique ille sacerdos uice Christi uere fungitur qui id quod Christus fecit imitatur et sacrificium uerum et plenum tunc offert in ecclesia deo patri, si sic incipiat offerre secundum quod ipsum Christum uideat optulisse.⁸⁶

The text just cited implies an equation between the Eucharist and the Lord's passion: they are one and the same sacrifice. This notion is brought out more explicitly in the following passage: "Et quia passionis eius mentionem in sacrificiis omnibus facimus, passio est enim domini sacrificium quod offerimus, nihil aliud quam quod ille fecit facere debemus."⁸⁷ As Enrico Mazza remarks, in this text the imitation of Christ's external actions at the Last Supper is the factor that determines sacramentality:

In Cyprian's thinking, the relationship of conformity or imitation between the Eucharist of the Church and the Last Supper is the essential constituent of sacramentality. (...) The bishop takes the place of Christ and acts his role because, prior to doing so, he participates in Christ, being an imitator of him. If the Eucharist is an act of obedience and imitation of the Last Supper, then the bread and wine will be the same as those of the Supper; and, because Christ said that the latter were his

⁸⁶ *Ep.* 63.14.4. ET: "For if Christ Jesus, our Lord and God, is Himself the great High Priest of God the Father and if He offered Himself as a sacrifice to the Father and directed that this should be done in remembrance of Him, then without a doubt that priest truly serves in Christ's place who imitates what Christ did and he offers up a true and complete sacrifice to God the Father in the Church when he proceeds to offer it just as he sees Christ Himself to have offered it." This text is cited in support of *in persona Christi* theology in LG 21 and in *Inter insigniores*.

⁸⁷ *Ep.* 63.17.1. ET: "And because at every sacrifice we offer we mention the passion of our Lord (indeed, the passion of our Lord is the sacrifice we offer), then we should follow exactly what the Lord did."

Body and Blood, the bread and wine of the Church will likewise be the Body and Blood of Christ.⁸⁸

Although in the immediate context Cyprian's principal concern is to safeguard the integrity of the Eucharistic celebration, not to explicate the nature of ordained ministry in general, there is no doubt that his assertions about the priest's functioning in Christ's stead (*uice Christi fungitur*) are in line with his Christic understanding of episcopal authority (*iudex uice Christi*). Another implication of the passage cited above from *Epistula* 63.14.4 is that Cyprian's concept of priesthood is also Christic: The church's *sacerdos* is presented as one who re-enacts the sacrifice of the *summus sacerdos*. He is a *sacerdos Dei* in the same sense as Christ is.

For Cyprian, the essential functions of the church—and most especially the actions by which membership in the church is determined—all depend on the bishop and are his prerogative. "Without [him] there can be no eucharist, no baptism, no remission of sins, no reconciliation of sinners."⁸⁹ Any usurpation of these functions by one who is not the legitimate bishop necessarily brings about rupture with the person of Christ himself.

An esse sibi cum Christo uidetur qui aduersum sacerdotes Christi facit, qui se a cleri eius et plebis societate secernit? Arma ille contra ecclesiam portat, contra Dei dispositionem repugnat. Hostis altaris, aduersus sacrificium Christi rebellis, pro fide perfidus, pro religione sacrilegus, inobsequens seruus, filius impius, frater inimicus, contemptis episcopis et Dei sacerdotibus derelectis constituere audet aliud altare, precem alteram inlicitis uocibus facere, dominicae hostiae ueritatem per falsa sacrificia profanare.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Enrico Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist: The Origin of the Rite and the Development of Its Interpretation*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 133.

⁸⁹ Power, *Ministers*, 46.

⁹⁰ Cyprian of Carthage, *Vnit. eccl.* 17, in *De lapsis and De ecclesiae catholicae unitate*, ed. and trans. Maurice Bévenot, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971). ET: "Does a man think he is with Christ when he acts in opposition to the [priests] of Christ, when he cuts himself off from the society of His clergy and people? He is bearing arms against the Church, he is waging war upon God's institutions. An enemy of the altar, a rebel against the sacrifice of Christ; (...) despising the bishops and deserting the priests of God, he presumes to set up a new altar, to raise unauthorized voices in a rival liturgy, to profane the real victim in

Taking a position that would prove unacceptable to Stephen, bishop of Rome,⁹¹ and would subsequently be rejected by the Western church, Cyprian asserts that there can be no true baptism outside the boundaries of ecclesial communion: "Vnde intellegimus non nisi in ecclesia praepositis et euangelica lege ac dominica ordinatione fundatis licere baptizare et remissam peccatorum dare, foris autem nec ligari aliquid posse nec solui, ubi non sit qui aut ligare possit aut soluere."⁹² Likewise, the bishop has supreme authority regarding the reconciliation of the lapsed: "Si quis immoderatus et praiceps siue de nostris presbyteris uel diaconis siue de peregrinis ausus fuerit ante sententiam nostram communicare cum lapsis, a communicatione nostra arceatur."⁹³ The singularity of the bishop, in relation to his own particular church, mirrors the singularity of Christ with respect to the catholic church. In this sense, the bishop is as irreplaceable as Christ.

In the writings of Cyprian of Carthage we find a consistently and unambiguously Christic theology of priesthood, albeit one that is unusual in not including the laity. This exclusion is probably the direct result of Cyprian's concern to correct perceived abuses of his time (such as the reconciliation of sinners by confessors of the faith); indirectly, it may also be an attempt to refuse the anti-hierarchical positions of Tertullian. The title of *sacerdos* is used frequently to refer to the bishop. In his roles as judge of the faithful and

the Lord's sacrifice by pseudo-sacrifices" (Ibid.). Cf. Bévenot, "'Sacerdos' as Understood by Cyprian," 426.

⁹¹ Cf. the excerpts of Stephen's letter preserved in Cyprian's *Ep.* 73 to Pompeius.

⁹² *Ep.* 73.7.2. ET: "From all this we perceive that only those leaders who are set in authority within the Church and have been established in accordance with the law of the gospel and the institution of the Lord have the lawful power to baptize and to grant forgiveness of sins; outside the Church there can be neither binding nor loosing, for there is nobody who has the power either to bind or to loose." In *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, vol. 4, *Letters 67–82*, trans. G. W. Clarke, Ancient Christian Writers 47 (New York, NY: Newman Press, 1989).

⁹³ *Ep.* 34.3.2. ET: "If anyone—whether he be presbyter or deacon from our own or from other churches—if anyone should be possessed of such headstrong and outrageous temerity as to admit the lapsed into communion before we have come to our decision, he is to be banished from communion with us." In *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, vol. 2, *Letters 28–54*, trans. G. W. Clarke, Ancient Christian Writers 44 (New York, NY: Newman Press, 1984).

president of the Eucharistic assembly, roles that are exclusively his own, the bishop stands in a strongly representational relationship to the person of Christ. He acts *uice Christi*, in Christ's place or stead. Cyprian's understanding of episcopal ministry, particularly in *Epistula* 63.14, meets the criteria for antecedence to *in persona Christi* theology.

5 Cyril of Jerusalem (ca. 315–387 CE)

There has been considerable scholarly disagreement about Cyril's authorship of the *Catecheses mystagogicae*; currently the weight of opinion appears to favour attributing original authorship to him, while recognizing his successor John as the final redactor.⁹⁴ In any case, the work itself is of capital importance for the history of the liturgy and of its interpretation. It proceeds sequentially through all the rites of Christian initiation: renunciations and profession of faith (*Catech. myst.* 1); baptism (*Catech. myst.* 2); chrismation (*Catech. myst.* 3); the body and blood of Christ (*Catech. myst.* 4); the Eucharistic celebration (*Catech. myst.* 5).

Since he is addressing an audience of neophytes, Cyril's focus is naturally on what they did and what was done to them. Nonetheless it is striking that in the first four catecheses he does not once mention the minister(s) who is/are performing the rites of initiation. In these catecheses, everything that would (presumably) have been done by a minister—questions, prayers, anointings, immersion, chrismation—is spoken of in the passive voice, except for a vague mention of "the saints" in *Catecheses mystagogicae* 2.3. It is only in the fifth catechesis, on the Eucharistic celebration, that we encounter ministerial

⁹⁴ Auguste Piédagniel, "L'auteur des *Catéchèses mystagogiques*," in Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catéchèses mystagogiques*, 2nd ed., ed. and trans. Auguste Piédagniel and Pierre Paris, Sources chrétiennes 126bis (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1988), 186–87.

titles: "τὸν διάκονον," "τῷ ἱερεῖ" (clearly a reference to the bishop), and "πρεσβυτέρους."⁹⁵ The presiding bishop is referred to consistently and exclusively using this sacerdotal title throughout this catechesis, although when describing the recitation of the anaphora Cyril switches to the first person plural.⁹⁶ No particular efficacy is attributed to the words or actions of the ἱερεύς in this context; his role is simply to say certain words and to invoke the Holy Spirit. Sacramental efficacy is ascribed to the exorcised oil used in the prebaptismal anointing,⁹⁷ to the triple immersion,⁹⁸ to the epiclesis over the myron,⁹⁹ and to the epiclesis over the bread and wine.¹⁰⁰ In his account of the synaxis, Cyril does not mention a recitation of the institution narrative.

No representational language is used for the ministers mentioned in the fifth catechesis. On the other hand, the neophytes themselves, by virtue of the mysteries in which they have shared, have become "Christs": "Χριστοὶ δὲ γεγόνατε, τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος τὸ ἀντίτυπον δεξάμενοι, καὶ πάντα εἰκονικῶς ἐφ' ὑμῶν γεγένηται, ἐπειδὴ εἰκόνες ἐστὲ Χριστοῦ."¹⁰¹ Those who participate in the body and blood of Christ become "Christ-bearers": "Οὕτω γὰρ καὶ χριστοφόροι γινόμεθα, τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ αἵματος εἰς τὰ ἡμέτερα ἀναδιδομένου μέλη."¹⁰² Such examples are a helpful reminder of the common patristic teaching on the dignity of the baptized and their vocation to represent

⁹⁵ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Myst. cat.* 5.2, in *Catéchèses mystagogiques*. Subsequent citations of *Myst. cat.*, both in the original and in French translation, refer to this edition.

⁹⁶ *Myst. cat.* 5.6.

⁹⁷ *Myst. cat.* 2.3.

⁹⁸ *Myst. cat.* 2.4.

⁹⁹ *Myst. cat.* 3.3.

¹⁰⁰ *Myst. cat.* 1.7; 3.3; 5.7.

¹⁰¹ *Myst. cat.* 3.1. FT: "Or, vous êtes devenus des christs, ayant reçu l'empreinte de l'Esprit-Saint, et tout s'est accompli sur vous en image, parce que vous êtes les images du Christ."

¹⁰² *Myst. cat.* 4.3. FT: "Ainsi devenons-nous des 'porte-Christ,' son corps et son sang se répandant en nos membres."

Christ in the world by the holiness of their lives. However, these are not antecedents to *in persona Christi* theology because they do not pertain to ordained ministers.

6 Gregory of Nazianzus (ca. 326–ca. 390 CE)

Around the year 362, Gregory wrote a lengthy oration to justify his reluctance to accept presbyteral ordination at the hands of his father, the bishop of Nazianzus. In this work, *Oratio 2*,¹⁰³ whose intended audience appears to be primarily the local clergy as well as learned monastics, he presents and argues for his elevated view of the ordained ministry.¹⁰⁴ The ministerial titles ἐπίσκοπος and πρεσβύτερος are used very seldom in *Oratio 2*; instead, for stylistic reasons, Gregory prefers to use a palette of titles that express the essential functions of the ministry—all of which seem to revolve around the theme of authority. As the editor of the critical edition, Jean Bernardi, comments, "À ses yeux, en effet, le prêtre se présente avant tout comme un homme qui est revêtu d'un pouvoir: il est *chef de communauté*."¹⁰⁵ Although the traditional image of the shepherd (ποιμήν and cognates) is used, the preponderant image is that of the προστάτης, the patron/ruler, with two secondary images, physician and teacher, completing the picture.¹⁰⁶ In comparison with contemporary writers such as Ambrose of Milan, Gregory's use of sacerdotal terminology for bishops and presbyters is surprisingly scarce, and it occurs mostly in the context of Old Testament citations and allusions.¹⁰⁷ Although he does take the prophetic injunctions and

¹⁰³ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or. 2*, in *Discours 1–3*, ed. and trans. Jean Bernardi, reprint, 1978, Sources chrétiennes 247 (Paris: Cerf, 2006). Subsequent citations refer to this edition.

¹⁰⁴ Jean Bernardi, "Introduction," in *Discours 1–3*, 35.

¹⁰⁵ Bernardi, "Introduction," 45.

¹⁰⁶ Bernardi, "Introduction," 47–48.

¹⁰⁷ E.g., *Or. 2*, 95.

warnings directed towards Old Testament priests as pertaining to the bishops and presbyters of today, the category of priesthood, ἱερωσύνη, appears peripheral to his understanding of ordained ministry. Although the term ἀρχιερεὺς is found as a Christological title in *Or. 2*, 95, 98, this theme does not receive any specific elaboration in relation to the ministry of the church. There is no discussion of the origins of the ministry or of apostolic succession (except in passing, e.g. *Or. 2*, 52). Finally, there is a marked disinterest on Gregory's part in the cultic aspect of ministry.¹⁰⁸ In the judgment of Bernardi, the explanation is that liturgical presidency is subordinate to the primary category of authority: "C'est que, fort probablement, la fonction liturgique, si importante soit-elle, lui paraît revêtir un caractère accessoire: elle est liée à l'exercice de l'autorité dont elle est la manifestation et le privilège."¹⁰⁹

Gregory's theology of priesthood has no particularly Christocentric emphasis, with the exception of a few isolated expressions such as "Χριστῷ συνιερεύσοντα."¹¹⁰ Most often, bishops and presbyters are simply priests of "God,"¹¹¹ who exercise "μεσιτείαν Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων,"¹¹² as Moses did. Nor does Gregory use representational language to express ministers' relation to Christ. In his *Oratio 40* he challenges the prevalent attitude that it was preferable to be baptized by a minister who was of noble birth, well educated,

¹⁰⁸ There is a passing reference to offering the "sacrifice that is the antitype of the great mysteries" in *Or. 2*, 95.

¹⁰⁹ Bernardi, "Introduction," 49.

¹¹⁰ *Or. 2*, 73. ET: "share the priesthood of Christ." But in context, the latter expression is only one stage in an ascending series of exalted attributes of the priesthood, a series which culminates with the astounding claim that the priest is "to be God and to deify." This mediatorial role is for Gregory the most essential reality of the priesthood.

¹¹¹ *Or. 2*, 111.

¹¹² *Or. 2*, 91. ET: "mediation between God and human beings." The use of this expression may be an allusion to 1 Tim. 2:5, in which case the role of the bishop is equated to that of Christ. But Gregory does not explicate the precise relationship between Christ's and the bishop's mediation.

learned, etc. by arguing that a signet ring produces the same imprint in wax, regardless of whose hand is wearing it.¹¹³ Joseph Lécuyer presents this analogy as evidence of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ.¹¹⁴ This argument has been repeated more recently by Nichols.¹¹⁵ However, it does not bear close scrutiny. In context, the comparison undoubtedly argues that the effect of baptism is identical, regardless of the personal worthiness of the minister; but Gregory does not attribute this to the minister's configuration to Christ. Baptism is efficacious because, and in so far as, its minister has been "formed by the same faith" ("ὁ τῆ αὐτῆ πίστει μεμορφωμένος").¹¹⁶ It is the profession of the true faith by the baptizer, then, rather than representation of Christ, that assures the effectiveness of baptism.¹¹⁷ There are, in fact, no identifiable antecedents to *in persona Christi* theology in Gregory's works.

7 Pacian (d. before 392 CE, Barcelona)

In the extant writings¹¹⁸ of this Iberian catholic bishop of the late fourth century, the term *sacerdos*—with no qualification or explanation—is used extensively and consistently to designate the bishop: *Paraenesis* 2.1; 5.4; 6.1-2; 8.1-2; 9.2; 10.6; *Sermo de baptismo* 6.3;

¹¹³ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or. 40*, in *Discours 38–41*, ed. and trans. Claudio Moreschini and Paul Gallay, Sources chrétiennes 358 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1990).

¹¹⁴ Joseph Lécuyer, *Prêtres du Christ: le sacrement de l'ordre*, Je sais, je crois 53 (Paris: Fayard, 1957), 11; Joseph Lécuyer, *Le sacerdoce dans le mystère du Christ*, Lex orandi 24 (Paris: Cerf, 1957), 291.

¹¹⁵ Nichols, *Holy Order*, 90.

¹¹⁶ *Or. 40*, 26.

¹¹⁷ Cf. the interpretation of Gregory's analogy by a later patristic writer, Severus of Antioch: "The difference of the character of those who officiate makes no difference whatever in the mysteries that are celebrated, so long as both confess one orthodox faith, and are not stained by the stain of any heresy." *Ep. 3.3*, in *Sixth Book of Letters*. Subsequent citations refer to this edition.

¹¹⁸ Pacian, *Écrits*, ed. Carmelo Granado, trans. Chantal Epitalon and Michel Lestienne, Sources chrétiennes 410 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1995). Subsequent citations of the original text of Pacian's works refer to this edition.

Epistula 1, 2.4; 3.4-5; 5.1; 6.1; *Epistula 2*, 7.3; *Epistula 3*, 3.2.¹¹⁹ Sacerdotal language is not used to describe the role of the lay faithful. As noted earlier in this study, the use of a theological title (*sacerdos*) as a synonym for a ministerial title (*episcopus*) is a clear indication that a full-fledged concept of Christian priesthood (*sacerdotium*) is present. It remains to be seen, however, what relationship may exist between this concept and the New Testament theology of priesthood.

In the case of Pacian's writings, and particularly in his treatise on baptism, it is evident that the concept of priesthood is entirely situated within the framework of the Christian economy. The functions that the author identifies as proper to priests are chiefly the imparting of new birth through baptism (*Bapt.* 6.3–4), and the remission of sins through the reconciliation of penitents.¹²⁰ Furthermore, in both cases the power to effect these sacraments in the church is presented as having been transmitted to the bishops by the apostles.

Strong representational language is used to characterize the role of the priest in baptism: "Sic generat Christus in ecclesia per suos sacerdotes, ut idem apostolus: *In Christo autem ego uos genui*. Atque ita Christi semen, id est Dei Spiritus, nouum hominem aluo matris agitatus et partu fontis exceptum manibus sacerdotis effundit, fide tamen pronuba."¹²¹

¹¹⁹ The French translator in many instances has deemed it necessary to translate *sacerdos* as *évêque*, to avoid the confusion created by the use of *prêtre*, a term commonly taken to mean a presbyter and which, like the English word priest, is etymologically derived from the Latin term *presbyter*.

¹²⁰ *Ep.* 1 6.1; 7.1-2. Interestingly, the latter text is followed by a quotation of 2 Cor. 2:10 which includes the formula "in persona Christi" (*Ep.* 1 7.3). A similar reading of that verse is found in *Tract.* 18.5, also in the context of a discussion of the bishop's power to reconcile sinners. These are among the earliest instances of this Latin formula in patristic literature, as noted by Marliangeas, *Clés pour une théologie du ministère*, 43–44.

¹²¹ *Bapt.* 6.3. ET: "Thus Christ engenders life in the Church through his priests, as the same Apostle states, 'And indeed, in Christ I have begotten you.' And so the seed of Christ, that is, the Spirit of God, produces through the hands of the priests the new man, conceived in the womb of our [spiritual] mother and received at birth at the baptismal font, with faith still attending as the nuptial protectress." Craig L. Hanson, trans., *Iberian Fathers*, Fathers of the Church 99 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press,

The context is an attempt by Pacian to explain how the life of Christ can be transmitted to believers, in counterpoint to the transmission of sin from Adam to his descendants as discussed in Romans 5. An identification is made between the action of the priest who baptizes and the action of Christ who imparts his life (the Holy Spirit) to one who has faith: it is one and the same act, which is characterized metaphorically as a "begetting."

Similarly strong representational language is used in the discussion of the possibility of "binding and loosing" of sins:

Numquam Deus non paenitenti comminaretur, nisi ignosceret paenitenti. Solus hoc, inquires, Deus poterit. Verum est, sed et quod per sacerdotes suos facit, ipsius potestas est. Nam quid est illud quod apostolis dicit: *Quae ligaueritis in terris, ligata erunt et in caelis, et quaecumque solueritis in terris, soluta erunt et in caelis* [Matt. 18:18]? Cur hoc, si ligare hominibus ac soluere non licebat?¹²²

In this context, "God" must be taken to refer to the Son, since there is no change in subject when the declaration of Christ to the Twelve is introduced. What God the Son does through "his priests"—the apostles and their successors, the bishops—is the work of his own power; what they forgive is ipso facto forgiven by God.

Pacian does not suggest that every action of a priest is the work of God. There is the possibility that a bishop may do wrong, or judge incorrectly, in which case he will ultimately have to render an account to God. However, whatever worthy actions are

1999). (Subsequent English translations of Pacian's works are taken from this edition.)

Pacian's use of the Pauline proof-text is untenable, both because he omits the concluding phrase "through the gospel" from his citation of 1 Cor. 4:15, and because Paul has already (and emphatically) excluded baptism from his apostolic mandate in 1 Cor. 1:17.

¹²² *Ep. 1, 6.1*. ET: "Never would God threaten the unrepentant unless he would pardon the penitent. This, you will say, God alone can do. True enough. But it is also true that what he does through his priests still represents his own power. For what else can it mean when he says to his apostles, 'Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven'? Why was he saying this, if it were not lawful for men to bind and loose?"

performed by the priest make him a coworker with God: "si pia illa administratio est, adiutor Dei operum perseuerat."¹²³

The conferring of new life through baptism and the remission of sins through reconciliation are the prerogative of bishops. In the case of baptism, the bishop's instrumentality is more exclusive: "Haec autem compleri alias nequeunt nisi lauacri et chrismatis et antistitis sacramento."¹²⁴ In the case of reconciliation, according to the *Sermon on Penitents*, the faithful who have committed capital sins have a necessary part to play in obtaining divine forgiveness through their own works of penance and through *exomologesis* (i.e. the open confession of their sins to the church community); nonetheless, their sins cannot be considered "loosed" without the intervention of a bishop in apostolic succession.¹²⁵

In conclusion, Pacian's writings meet all three criteria for antecedence: he has a concept of priesthood that is explicitly Christic; he uses representational language to describe the relation between the priest and Christ; and the acts by which the priest represents Christ (baptism and the forgiveness of sins) are clearly proper to the ordained ministry.

8 Ambrose of Milan (ca. 333/334–397 CE)

Ambrose follows Origen and other earlier theologians in affirming that all the faithful share in the priestly anointing of their Head. He also speaks frequently about the

¹²³ *Ep. 1*, 7.1. ET: "If his conduct is holy, he continues as a helper in the work of God."

¹²⁴ *Bapt. 6.4*. ET: "These things cannot otherwise be fulfilled, except by the sacraments of baptism and chrism at the hands of the bishop."

¹²⁵ See *Ep. 1*, 6.4.

spiritual sacrifice that consists in offering one's whole life to God by living out the baptismal vocation through faith, active charity, and participation in the sacramental life of the church.¹²⁶ However, Ambrose is noticeably reticent to grant the title of "priests" directly to the laity: Gryson finds only four occurrences in all his works, and sees in this a mark of "clericalism": "L'hésitation d'Ambroise à parler explicitement d'un 'sacerdoce' des fidèles est une manifestation de son 'cléricalisme', c'est-à-dire de la distinction très tranchée qu'il établit entre clercs et laïcs, et de la supériorité qu'il prête aux premiers sur les seconds."¹²⁷ Whereas for Origen the elite Christians are those who are more spiritually advanced, for Ambrose it is the clergy who are—at least objectively—closest to God among the baptized.¹²⁸

Among the clergy, the bishop occupies the predominant position. His theological title, *sacerdos*, occurs more frequently in Ambrose's writings than the ministerial title *episcopus*; but by this point in the fourth century, the two terms had become so synonymous in the Western church that *sacerdos* was the usual term used to translate ἐπίσκοπος in Latin versions of Greek Christian works.¹²⁹ In a small number of texts, Ambrose speaks of the bishop as a "high priest," *summus sacerdos*, but generally speaking the Latin equivalents of ἀρχιερεύς are reserved for Christ or the Jewish high priest.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ See Roger Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise*, Dissertationes ad gradum magistri in Facultate theologica vel in Facultate iuris canonici consequendum conscriptae (Universitas catholica lovaniensis). Series III, 11. (Louvain: Edition orientaliste, 1968), 95.

¹²⁷ Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise*, 321.

¹²⁸ "La vision qu'Ambroise a de l'Église est infiniment plus 'cléricale' que celle d'Origène. L'idée d'une distinction entre la hiérarchie institutionnelle et la hiérarchie spirituelle ne l'effleure pas; pour lui, elles se recouvrent de droit; aux clercs d'être à la hauteur de leur situation." Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise*, 112.

¹²⁹ Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise*, 134.

¹³⁰ Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise*, 135.

There is no conclusive evidence regarding Ambrose's inclusion of presbyters in the category of priests. In certain cases the context does leave open the possibility that his use of sacerdotal terminology *sacerdos*, *sacerdotium*, *sacerdotalis* comprises both the order of bishops and the order of presbyters.¹³¹

Ambrose's concept of priesthood draws heavily on Hebrews and is therefore anchored to the figure of Christ, who is frequently referred to as the high or supreme priest, the first or chief among priests. Gryson notes a preference for the title *princeps sacerdotum*: "Parmi les différents équivalents latins du terme grec ἀρχιερεύς (*magnus sacerdos*, *summus sacerdos*, *primus sacerdos*, *princeps sacerdos*, *princeps sacerdotum*, *pontifex*), Ambroise emploie de préférence à propos du Christ le titre de *princeps sacerdotum*. Dans certains cas, il apparaît bien clairement que le mot *princeps* doit s'entendre dans cette formule au sens de 'premier d'entre les autres'. Ainsi dans l'expression *princeps omnium sacerdotum* (*Patr.*, 14)."¹³² If one examines the acts by which Christ exercises his priesthood, a common theme emerges: obtaining the remission of sins. "Le Christ est prêtre parce que propitiateur, *sacerdos quia propitiator*."¹³³ This notion too is prevalent in Hebrews.

The priesthood that bishops exercise is nothing other than a share in Christ's own priesthood. In *Epistula 2*, Ambrose argues that Arians should be deprived of their priestly rank, inasmuch as the priesthood they claim derives precisely from the One of whom they refuse to acknowledge the full divinity: "Ne ulterius populos deciperent quos tenebant, sacerdotio putauimus abdicandos, quoniam subditi libelli impietatibus concinebant. Neque

¹³¹ Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise*, 141.

¹³² Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise*, 45n1.

¹³³ Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise*, 62.

enim dignum est ut sacerdotium eius sibi uindicent quem negauerunt."¹³⁴ Confirmation of the thoroughly Christic nature of priesthood can be found in the fact that Ambrose refers to one of the essential elements of the ordination rite as a "blessing [*benedictio*] in the name of the Lord Jesus": "ordinatio non repraehendetur, quam accepisti *per inpositionem manuum mearum* et benedictionem in nomine domini Iesu."¹³⁵ Furthermore, Christ is the model or exemplar that Ambrose constantly exhorts priests to follow. This is particularly emphasized in treating the attitude priests should have toward sinners: they are called to imitate the example of the Good Shepherd in welcoming all penitents with compassion.¹³⁶

There is no doubt that for Ambrose, the apostles of Jesus were the first priests. Even though he never uses the expression "apostolic succession," nor refers to bishops as "successors of the apostles," it is sufficiently evident that the bishops of today exercise the very same powers and functions that Christ once gave to the apostles.¹³⁷ The clearest example of this is Ambrose's explanation of how it is that the priests of today have the power to remit sins: "Sed quod impossibile erat, fecit Deus esse possibile, qui tantam nobis donauit gratiam. Similiter impossibile uidebatur per paenitentiam peccata dimitti; concessit

¹³⁴ Ambrose of Milan, *Ep.* 2.8, in *Epistularum liber decimus; Epistulae extra collectionem; Gesta Concili Aquileiensis*, ed. Michaela Zelzer, *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum* 82/3 (Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1982). ET: "That they may not further deceive the people whom they govern, we have decided that they should be deprived of their priestly power, since they agreed to the impiety in the [Arian] document presented to them. It is not fitting that they claim for themselves the priesthood of One whom they deny." In *Letters*, trans. Mary Melchior Beyenka, *Fathers of the Church* 26 (New York, N.Y.: Fathers of the Church, 1954). Subsequent English translations of *Ep.* will be taken from this edition.

¹³⁵ *Ep.* 5.6, in *Epistularum libri I–VI*, ed. Otto Faller, *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum* 82/1 (Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1968). Ambrose of Milan 1968. ET: "Your ordination, which you received through the laying on of my hands, and through the blessing in the name of the Lord Jesus, will not be censured."

¹³⁶ Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise*, 279.

¹³⁷ Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise*, 238.

hoc Christus apostolis suis, quod ab apostolis ad sacerdotum officia transmissum est."¹³⁸

These apostolic powers are not transmitted in a merely horizontal fashion, from minister to minister; they require a special, new imparting of the Holy Spirit: "Accepimus spiritum sanctum, qui non solum nostra peccata dimittit, sed etiam nos facit sacerdotes suos aliis peccata dimittere."¹³⁹

In a mystagogical explanation of the rites of baptism, Ambrose invites his neophytes to look beyond appearances and argues that by virtue of their office alone, priests (regardless of their personal merits) efficaciously make present the Lord Jesus, and indeed the whole Trinity,¹⁴⁰ when they pray over the baptismal waters: "Non merita personarum consideres sed officia sacerdotum. (...) Credo ergo adesse dominum Iesum inuocatum precibus sacerdotum qui ait: 'Ubicumque fuerint duo uel tres ibi et ego sum.' Quanto magis ubi ecclesia est, ubi mysteria sunt, ibi dignatur suam impertire praesentiam."¹⁴¹

In refuting the position of the Novatians on the impossibility of forgiving post-baptismal sins, Ambrose cites the biblical examples of Peter's being invested with the power of the keys (Matt. 16:19) and Paul's treatment of the offender in the Corinthian community

¹³⁸ Ambrose of Milan, *Paenit.* 2.12, in *La Pénitence*, ed. and trans. Roger Gryson, Sources chrétiennes 179 (Paris: Cerf, 1971). FT: "Mais ce qui était impossible, Dieu l'a rendu possible en nous faisant le don d'une si grande grâce. De la même façon, il apparaissait impossible que les péchés fussent remis par le moyen de la pénitence. Cela a été une faveur accordée par le Christ à ses apôtres, et des apôtres, cela est passé parmi les fonctions des prêtres" (Ibid.).

¹³⁹ Ambrose of Milan, *In psalm. 118*, in *Expositio psalmi CXVIII*, 2nd rev. ed., ed. Michael Petschenig and Michaela Zelzer, Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum 62 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1999). FT: "Nous avons reçu l'Esprit-Saint (...), qui ne remet pas seulement nos propres péchés, mais qui fait aussi que nous, ses Prêtres, nous remettons aux autres leurs péchés." In Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise*, 285–86.

¹⁴⁰ See *Sacr.* 1.18.

¹⁴¹ Ambrose of Milan, *Myst.* 27, in *Des sacrements; Des mystères; Explication du Symbole*, 2nd ed., ed. and trans. Bernard Botte, reprint, 1961, Sources chrétiennes 25bis (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1994). FT: "Ne considère pas les mérites des personnes, mais les fonctions des prêtres. (...) Crois donc qu'il est présent, invoqué par la prière des prêtres, le Seigneur Jésus qui a dit: 'Partout où deux ou trois se trouveront, là je suis moi aussi.' À combien plus forte raison là où est l'Église, là où sont les mystères, daigne-t-il accorder sa présence" (Ibid.).

(2 Cor. 2:10): "Si cui autem quid donatis, et ego; nam et ego quod donavi, propter uos in persona Christi.' Cur igitur Paulum legunt, si eum tam impie arbitrantur errasse ut ius sibi uindicaret Domini sui? Sed uindicauit acceptum, non usurpauit indebitum."¹⁴² In the latter text, according to Ambrose, Paul is not merely speaking of an ordinary human act of forgiveness; rather, he is exercising the right to remit post-baptismal sins—a right given to him by Christ. The one whom Paul forgives is forgiven by Christ. This strong, sacramental reading of the text is supported by the reading "in persona Christi."¹⁴³ The implication is that the bishops of the catholic church, who exercise the apostolic ministry, are entirely justified in reconciling sinful members of their communities; and when they do so, divine forgiveness is imparted to the penitents.

The language of representation is even stronger in Ambrose's explication of the conversion of the Eucharistic elements into the body of Christ. Whereas in baptism Christ becomes present in response to the priest's prayers, in the recitation of the Eucharistic prayer Christ is here and now speaking, as the priest quotes his words in the institution narrative. "Quomodo potest qui panis est corpus esse Christi? Consecratio igitur quibus uerbis est et cuius sermonibus? Domini Iesu. Nam reliqua omnia quae dicuntur in superioribus a sacerdote dicuntur: laus deo, defertur oratio, petitur pro populo, pro regibus, pro caeteris; ubi uenitur ut conficiatur uenerabile sacramentum, iam non suis sermonibus utitur sacerdos, sed utitur sermonibus Christi. Ergo sermo Christi hoc conficit

¹⁴² *Paenit.* 1.7. FT: "[2 Cor. 2:10]. Pourquoi lisent-ils donc Paul, s'ils croient qu'il s'est égaré dans l'impiété au point de revendiquer pour lui un droit qui revient à son Seigneur? Mais il l'a revendiqué après l'avoir reçu; il ne l'a pas usurpé indûment."

¹⁴³ 2 Cor. 2:10 is also cited in *Paenit.* 1.17; 2.7 (and both of these have the reading "in persona Christi"). The "sacramental" interpretation of this verse is more explicit in Ambrosiaster's commentary on 2 Cor. (see below).

sacramentum."¹⁴⁴ This text is the point of departure of the distinctly Western theory of Eucharistic change, which ascribes preponderant efficacy to the words of Christ. Most notably, *De sacramentis* 4.14 is cited in the *Summa* (III^a q. 78 a. 1 s. c.), and its influence is perceptible in the language used by the Council of Florence: "Forma huius sacramenti [Eucharistiæ] sunt verba Salvatoris, quibus hoc confecit sacramentum; sacerdos enim in persona Christi loquens hoc conficit sacramentum."¹⁴⁵

Ambrose's theology makes Christ the true subject of the Eucharistic consecration, as he states explicitly in one of his exegetical works: "Hic ergo est diues thesaurus, cuius pinguis panis, et bene pinguis, quem qui manducauerit esurire non poterit. Hunc panem dedit apostolis, ut diuiderent populo credentium, et hodieque dat nobis eum, quem ipse sacerdos cotidie consecrat suis uerbis. Hic ergo panis factus est esca sanctorum."¹⁴⁶ Pursuing this line of reasoning further, Ambrose declares that inasmuch as it is Christ's body that is offered in the Eucharist, and that his own words are what sanctifies the sacrifice, Christ is offering himself visibly in the very sacrifice made by his priests. In this sense, the once-for-all sacrifice of Hebrews is simultaneously a heavenly and a temporal

¹⁴⁴ *Sacram.* 4.14. FT: "Comment ce qui est du pain peut-il être le corps du Christ? Par quels mots se fait donc la consécration et de qui sont ces paroles? Du Seigneur Jésus. En effet tout le reste qu'on dit avant est dit par le prêtre: on loue Dieu, on lui adresse la prière, on prie pour le peuple, pour les rois, pour tous les autres. Dès qu'on vient à produire le vénérable sacrement, le prêtre ne se sert plus de ses propres paroles, mais il se sert des paroles du Christ. C'est donc la parole du Christ qui produit ce sacrement."

¹⁴⁵ Council of Florence, "Bull *Exsultate Deo* on Union with the Armenians [22 Nov. 1439]," in *DEC I*, 546.

¹⁴⁶ Ambrose of Milan, *Patr.* 38, in *Sancti Ambrosii opera*, vol. 2, *De Iacob; De Ioseph; De patriarchis; De fuga saeculi; De interpellatione Iob et Daud; De apologia Daud; Apologia Daud altera; De Helia et ieiunio; De Nabuthae; De Tobia*, ed. Karl Schenkl, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 32/2 (Vienna: Tempsky, 1897). ET: "Therefore He is a rich treasure, for His bread is rich. And 'rich' is apt, for one who has eaten this bread will be unable to feel hunger. He gave it to the Apostles to distribute to a believing people, and today He gives it to us, for He, as a priest, daily consecrates it with His own words. Therefore this bread has become the food of the saints." In *Seven Exegetical Works*, trans. Michael P. McHugh, *Fathers of the Church* 65 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1972).

reality. Objectively speaking, offering the Eucharist for the people of God brings honour to priests, even if their personal merits may be lacking:

Vidimus principem sacerdotum ad nos uenientem, uidimus et audiimus offerentem pro nobis sanguinem suum. Sequimur ut possumus sacerdotes, ut offeramus pro populo sacrificium etsi infirmi merito, tamen honorabiles sacrificio, quia, etsi nunc Christus non uidetur offerre, tamen ipse offertur in terris, quia Christi corpus offertur, immo ipse offerre manifestatur in nobis, cuius sermo sanctificat sacrificium quod offertur.¹⁴⁷

As a hermeneutic tool to join together the Old Testament, the New Testament, and eschatological reality, Ambrose adopts Origen's tripartite schema of shadow-image-truth.¹⁴⁸ According to this schema, the church's priests—beginning with the apostles—are said to be "images" of the true and eternal Priest: "Ascende ergo, homo, in caelum et uidebis illa, quorum umbra hic erat uel imago; uidebis non ex parte, non in aenigmate, sed in consummatione, non in uelamine, sed in luce. Videbis uerum lumen, aeternum atque perpetuum sacerdotem, cuius hic imagines uidebas Petrum Paulum Iohannem Iacobum

¹⁴⁷ Ambrose of Milan, *In psalm. 38.25*. In *Explanatio psalmorum XII*, 2nd rev. ed., ed. Michael Petschenig and Michaela Zelzer, *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum 64* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1999). Subsequent citations refer to this edition. FT: "Nous avons vu le premier des prêtres venant à nous, nous l'avons vu et entendu offrir pour nous son sang. Nous suivons comme nous pouvons, nous les Prêtres, afin d'offrir pour le peuple un sacrifice. Bien que faibles par le mérite, nous sommes dignes d'honneur, cependant, à cause du sacrifice. Car, quoique maintenant, on ne voie pas le Christ offrir, c'est cependant lui-même qui est offert sur la terre, parce que c'est le corps du Christ qui est offert. Bien plus, c'est lui-même qui offre de façon visible en nous, lui dont la parole sanctifie le sacrifice qui est offert." In Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise*, 272.

N.B.: This is one of the patristic texts cited by the Second Vatican Council (LG 21) in support of *in persona Christi* theology.

¹⁴⁸ "Primum igitur umbra praecessit, secuta est imago, erit ueritas; umbra in lege, imago uero in euangelio, ueritas in caelestibus." *In psalm. 38.25*. FT: "D'abord, donc, l'ombre a précédé; l'image a suivi; la vérité est à venir. L'ombre se trouve dans la Loi, l'image dans l'Évangile, la vérité dans les cieux." In Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise*, 271–72.

Matthaeum Thomam."¹⁴⁹ Thus the representation of Christ by priests extends beyond the celebration of the sacraments: simply as priests, they are his "images."

Ambrose is careful to balance his assertions about the pre-eminent position of priests in relation to the divine with reminders of the entirely *ministerial* character of their mediation. In general, the divine power that operates and communicates grace through the words and actions of Christ's disciples never becomes their private possession. "Vult Dominus plurimum posse discipulos suos, vult a seruulis suis ea fieri in nomine suo quae faciebat ipse positus in terris. (...) Omnia ergo dedit, sed nulla in his hominis potestas est ubi diuini muneris gratia uiget."¹⁵⁰ The salvific efficacy of the sacraments, in particular, must always be ascribed to their divine author. This comes through clearly in the treatise on the Holy Spirit: "Non mundauit Damasus, non mundauit Petrus, non mundauit Ambrosius, non mundauit Gregorius; nostra enim seruitia, sed tua sunt sacramenta. Neque enim humanae opis est diuina conferre, sed tuum, domine, munus et patris est."¹⁵¹

Ambrose's clericalist mindset precludes any overlap between the respective roles of the clergy and the laity. On the contrary, these roles are sharply distinguished.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ *In psalm.* 38.26. FT: "Monte donc au ciel, ô homme, et tu verras ces réalités dont il y avait ici-bas l'ombre ou l'image. Tu verras non pas partiellement, non pas en énigme, mais dans la perfection; non pas dans un voile, mais dans la lumière. Tu verras la véritable lumière, le prêtre éternel et vivant à jamais, dont tu voyais ici-bas les images, Pierre, Paul, Jean, Jacques, Matthieu, Thomas." In Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise*, 272.

¹⁵⁰ *Paenit.* 1.8. FT: "C'est la volonté du Seigneur que ses disciples aient des pouvoirs étendus. C'est sa volonté que ses serviteurs fassent en son nom ce que lui-même faisait quand il se trouvait sur la terre. (...) Il a donc tout donné, mais il n'y a aucun pouvoir de l'homme en ces choses où c'est la grâce du don divin qui déploie sa puissance."

¹⁵¹ Ambrose of Milan, *Spir.* 1.18, in *De Spiritu Sancto Libri Tres; De Incarnationis Dominicae Sacramento*, Otto Faller, Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum 79 (Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1964). ET: "Damasus [of Rome] did not cleanse; Peter [of Alexandria] did not cleanse; Ambrose [of Milan] did not cleanse; Gregory [of Constantinople] did not cleanse; for ours are the services, but Yours are the sacraments. For it is not of human power to confer the divine; but it is Your gift, O Lord, and the Father's." In *Theological and Dogmatic Works*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari, Fathers of the Church 4 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1963). Cf. *Spir.* 3.137.

¹⁵² See Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise*, 98, 102.

Teaching,¹⁵³ as well as presidency over sacramental rites such as baptism, the Eucharist, and the reconciliation of penitents are the exclusive prerogative of priests. As for heretics, they cannot have true sacraments because they do not have true priests.¹⁵⁴

For Ambrose as for the author of Hebrews, the essence of Christ's priesthood lies in his obtaining the remission of sins, through his sacrificial death. This priestly power was communicated by Christ to his apostles, from whom it has been transmitted to the priests (i.e. bishops) of today. Priests exercise their priestly prerogative to forgive sins both in baptism and in penance. In the Eucharist Christ offers himself in sacrifice through them, as they repeat his own words in the institution narrative. In their priestly office taken as a whole, they are images of Christ. Gryson is quite justified in concluding his study of Ambrose's vision of the priesthood thus: "Voilà en quoi consiste tout le mystère du Sacerdoce: à travers un homme, choisi et consacré pour cette fonction, c'est le Christ-prêtre qui se révèle et qui agit."¹⁵⁵ The works of Ambrose provide clear and strong antecedents for *in persona Christi* theology.

9 Ambrosiaster (fl. late 4th cent., Rome)

The anonymous scriptural commentator of the late fourth century, known in modern times as Ambrosiaster, had much in common socially and culturally with Cyprian and Ambrose. Theologically, though, his writings reveal little awareness of Eastern Christian

¹⁵³ "Une des tâches essentielles du Prêtre est la fonction d'enseigner. Cette fonction lui revient en propre, et les laïcs ne sauraient prétendre à l'exercer." Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise*, 260.

¹⁵⁴ "Le double droit de lier et de délier n'a été concédé qu'aux seuls Prêtres. L'Église le revendique à juste titre, car elle a de vrais Prêtres; l'hérésie ne saurait y prétendre, car ses Prêtres ne sont pas des Prêtres de Dieu." Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise*, 288.

¹⁵⁵ Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise*, 329.

thought.¹⁵⁶ Another significant difference is that he was most probably not a bishop.¹⁵⁷ His attitude towards the church hierarchy is detached and sometimes overtly critical,¹⁵⁸ although he is by no means anticlerical in his outlook.

In Ephesians 4:11-12, the church's ministerial roles are spoken of as "gifts" bestowed by the risen Lord for the building up of the "body of Christ." Commenting on this verse, Ambrosiaster tries to make each role in the text correspond to an office in his own church. Apostles correspond to bishops, prophets to those who explain the Scriptures, evangelists to deacons, etc. He realizes that there is no perfect correspondence, but he accounts for this by arguing that Paul was writing for the unique situation at the beginning of the church, when there was less of a need for order and structure. "Ideo non per omnia conueniunt scripta apostoli ordinationi, quae nunc in ecclesia est, quia haec inter ipsa primordia sunt scripta."¹⁵⁹ Originally, the orders of bishops and presbyters were

¹⁵⁶"Ambrosiaster clearly belongs to the Latin theological tradition and was only minimally influenced by Greek, Jewish or other sources. He knew writers like Tertullian and Cyprian well enough to be able to quote them in support of his own views, and he was also familiar with the Roman schismatic Novatian. He never mentioned anyone from the Eastern church, apart from an occasional reference to Arius." Gerald Lewis Bray, "Translator's Introduction," in Ambrosiaster, *Commentaries on Romans and 1–2 Corinthians*, trans. and ed. Gerald Lewis Bray, Ancient Christian Texts (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2009), xxi. In his other major work, Ambrosiaster makes more than an "occasional" reference to Arius, as he devotes an entire chapter (*Quaest. test.* 97) to refuting his heretical teachings, to which he refers in at least two other chapters (*Quaest. test.* 23 and 72). Cf. the table of contents in *Pseudo-Augustini Quaestiones veteris et novi testamenti CXXVII. Accedit appendix continens alterius editionis quaestiones selectas*, ed. Alexander Souter, reprint, 1908, Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum 50 (New York, N.Y.: Johnson Reprint, 1963), 11.

¹⁵⁷Scholarly opinion is divided on the question of whether Ambrosiaster was a layman or a cleric; but there are good reasons to support the latter. See Marie-Pierre Bussières, "Introduction," in Ambrosiaster, *Contre les païens et Sur le destin*, ed. and trans. Marie-Pierre Bussières, Sources chrétiennes 512 (Paris: Cerf, 2007), 38–40.

¹⁵⁸"His attitude to clerical matters is that of an external observer and critic." Alexander Souter, *A Study of Ambrosiaster*, Texts and Studies 7/4 (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1905), 176.

¹⁵⁹Ambrosiaster, *Comm. Ephes.* 4.12.5, in *In epistulas ad Galatas, ad Efesios, ad Filippenses, ad Colosenses, ad Thessalonicenses, ad Timotheum, ad Titum, ad Filemonem*, vol. 3 of *Commentarius in epistulas Paulinas*, ed. Heinrich Josef Vogels, Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum 81/3 (Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1969). Subsequent citations of *Comm. (Gal.–Philem.)* in the original refer to this edition. ET: "Therefore not everything written by the apostle coincides with the order of things which now exists in the church, because the apostolic writings describe what happened at the beginning." In *Commentaries on Galatians-Philemon*, trans. and ed. Gerald Lewis Bray, Ancient Christian Texts (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2009). Subsequent English translations of *Comm. (Gal.–Philem.)* are taken from

undifferentiated. "Nam et Timotheum presbyterum a se creatum episcopum uocat, quia primi presbyteri episcopi appellabantur, ut recedente eo sequens ei succederet."¹⁶⁰ What bishops and presbyters have in common is that they are both *sacerdotes* ("priests"):

Post episcopum tamen diaconis ordinationem subiecit. Quare, nisi quia episcopi et presbyteri una ordinatio est? Uterque enim sacerdos est, sed episcopus primus est, ut omnis episcopus presbyter sit, non tamen omnis presbyter episcopus. Hic enim episcopus est, qui inter presbyteros primus est. Denique Timotheum presbyterum ordinatum significat, sed quia ante se alterum non habebat, episcopus erat. Unde et quemadmodum episcopum ordinet ostendit. Neque enim fas erat aut licebat, ut inferior ordinaret maiorem. Nemo enim tribuit quod non accepit.¹⁶¹

It was the subsequent growth and spread of the church that necessitated a greater differentiation in ministerial roles: "Et coepit alio ordine et prouidentia ecclesia gubernari (...), quia, si omnes eadem possent, inrationabile esset et uulgaris res et uilissima uideretur."¹⁶² The new system included a permanent designation for the episcopal office, in which the election of each bishop would be based upon the judgment of many *sacerdotes* (i.e. of presbyters, referred to here as "priests"). When compared to the language of Cyprian and Ambrose, such use of a sacerdotal title for presbyters represents a significant shift in usage, and in thinking. The bishop is still quite clearly at the top of the ecclesiastical hierarchy: "Nam in episcopo omnes ordines sunt, qui et (...) primus sacerdos est, hoc est princeps sacerdotum, et profeta et euangelista et cetera ad implenda officia ecclesiae in

this edition.

¹⁶⁰ *Comm. Ephes.* 4.12.5. ET: "Paul calls Timothy, whom he had made a presbyter, a bishop, because at first presbyters and bishops were the same thing, and when he eventually left the scene Timothy succeeded him [as bishop]."

¹⁶¹ *Comm. 1 Tim.* 3.10.1-2. ET: "After dealing with bishops, Paul goes on to talk about the ordination of deacons. Why does he do this, except that bishops and presbyters are the same thing? Both are priests, but the bishop comes first, so that while every bishop is a presbyter, not every presbyter is a bishop. The bishop is the one who is first among the presbyters. Paul indicates that Timothy was ordained a presbyter, but as he had no one over him, he was a bishop. This is why he shows him how to ordain a bishop, for it is neither right nor permissible for an inferior to ordain a superior. No one can give what he has not received."

¹⁶² *Comm. Ephes.* 4.12.4. ET: "Thus the church began to be governed by a different order and system (...), because if everyone could do it, there would have been chaos and the whole thing would have looked vulgar and improper."

ministerio fidelium."¹⁶³ Nevertheless, that presbyters should be characterized as *sacerdotes* in the full sense of the term, and in their own right, makes the figure of the bishop appear far less superior to presbyters here than in those previous authors.¹⁶⁴

Ambrosiaster's concept of priesthood is highly representational. "The idea that the *sacerdos* is one who carries out this representational function is stated most dramatically in Ambrosiaster's discussion of Melchizedek in the *Questions on the Old and New Testaments*."¹⁶⁵ Firstly, in this question (109) Ambrosiaster presents representation of the Father as the very essence of Christ's own priesthood: "Christus autem uicarius patris est et antestes ac per hoc dicitur et sacerdos."¹⁶⁶ Secondly, Ambrosiaster argues that Melchisedek is not a normal human being but is in fact the Holy Spirit, sent to bless Abraham. So whatever is said in Hebrews about Melchisedek, including the fact that he is a "priest of the Most High God," is taken to refer to the Holy Spirit. But obviously this designation requires some justification. What does it mean to call the Holy Spirit a "priest"? Ambrosiaster argues that a priest is essentially a representative of God. Because the Holy Spirit images the Father by his very nature, he can rightly be called a priest—although not

¹⁶³ *Comm. Ephes.* 4.12.2. ET: "All the orders are found in the bishop, who (...) is the chief priest, that is to say, the prince of the priests, as well as the chief prophet, evangelist and so on, in order to fill the offices of the church's ministry." Ambrosiaster's commentary on this verse of Eph. 4 is cited by LG 21. However, it contains no explicit representation-of-Christ.

¹⁶⁴ Equating presbyters with bishops also implies that *deacons* cannot claim equality with them. Lécuyer proposes that Ambrosiaster's theology is an attempt to counter the insubordination of the Roman deacons during the reign of Damasus: see Lécuyer, *Le sacerdoce*, 367–68. This agenda is especially evident in *Quaest. test.* 101.

¹⁶⁵ David G. Hunter, "Clerical Celibacy and the Veiling of Virgins: New Boundaries in Late Ancient Christianity," in *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R. A. Markus*, ed. William E. Klingshirn and Mark Vessey, *Recentiores: Later Latin Texts and Contexts* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 149.

¹⁶⁶ Ambrosiaster, *Quaest. test.* 109.21. In *Quaestiones veteris et novi testamenti*. Subsequent citations of the original refer to this edition. ET: "For Christ is the vicar and minister of the Father, and for this reason he is also called a priest" (translation mine).

the high priest, who is Christ alone.¹⁶⁷ "Sacerdotes igitur uel legati ideo dicuntur, quia (...) illum in se ostendunt cuius legati sunt; sunt enim eius imago. Ac per hoc Christus et sanctus spiritus naturaliter habentens dei imaginem sacerdotes eius dicuntur. In ipsis uidetur deus."¹⁶⁸ Such a merging of the concept of *sacerdotium* with the idea of representation builds upon ideas found in earlier Latin authors—particularly Cyprian—but recasts them in an original formulation.

Ambrosiaster consistently portrays the ministry of the apostles, and that of priests, using representational terms, such as *uice*, *uicarius*, *legatus*, *legatio*, *actor*.¹⁶⁹ In each case it is Christ who is represented. "A deo ergo patre per Christum dominum [apostoli] hanc acceperunt potestatem, ut uice domini signis doctrinam dominicam acceptabilem facerent."¹⁷⁰ That these terms refer to well-established functions in the realms of Roman law, politics, and military organization gives apostolic representation-of-Christ a public, official quality. "Hanc esse dei uoluntatem, ut in Christo et per Christum omnibus misereatur, uicariis eius praedicantibus, hoc est pro nomine eius [Rom. 1:5], sicut alibi dicit: pro quo legatione fungimur [2 Cor. 5:20]."¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ Hence Ambrosiaster suggests that the Roman Canon is in need of correction where it reads, "Summus sacerdos tuus Melchisedech."

¹⁶⁸ *Quaest. test.* 109.21. ET: "[Priests are given the name of ambassadors] because they (...) reveal in themselves that One whose [ambassadors] they are, for they are his image. That is why Christ and the Holy Spirit, who bear by nature the image of God, are called his 'priests.'" In Hunter, "Clerical Celibacy," 149.

¹⁶⁹ See Hunter, "Clerical Celibacy," 147.

¹⁷⁰ *Comm. Rom.* 1.5.2. In *In epistulam ad Romanos*, vol. 1 of *Commentarius in epistulas Paulinas*, ed. Heinrich Josef Vogels, *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum* 81/1 (Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1966). Subsequent citations of *Comm. Rom.* in the original refer to this edition. ET: "[The apostles] received this authority from God the Father through Christ the Lord. As [the Lord's] representatives, they could make his teaching acceptable by signs of power." In *Commentaries on Romans and 1–2 Corinthians*, trans. and ed. Gerald Lewis Bray, Ancient Christian Texts (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2009). Subsequent English translations of *Comm. Rom.* are taken from this edition.

¹⁷¹ *Comm. Rom.* 1.5.3. ET: "that it is the will of God, to have pity on all in Christ and through Christ, by the preaching of his [vicars], that is, *for his name*. As he says elsewhere: *For which mission we are appointed*."

In Ambrosiaster's commentary on 2 Corinthians is found one of the earliest in a long series of what Marliangeas calls "sacramental" interpretations of 2 Corinthians 2:10, which would provide the scholastics for a scriptural locus for their elaboration of *in persona Christi* theology.

'Etenim ego quod donavi, si quid donavi, propter uos in persona Christi.¹⁷² (...) Et ut ratum ei, cui donavit, ostenderet apud deum, ait in persona Christi se donasse quod donavit. Hoc est accepto tulisse Christum, cuius legatione fungebatur, ut factum apostoli factum sit Christi, sicut dixit: 'quaecumque solueritis super terram, erunt soluta et in caelo.' Si ergo huic pro qui petierunt, per apostolum Christus ignovit, quanto magis huic iam ignotum erat, cui ut donent etiam ipse hortatur?¹⁷³

In language that is reminiscent of Cyprian's *Epistula* 63 (see above), Ambrosiaster understands the priest to be acting as a representative of Christ in offering the Eucharistic

¹⁷² 2 Cor. 2:10. "What Latin version Ambrosiaster was using is unknown. It was probably the one known to Lucifer of Cagliari, who was writing about the same time. It contained some egregious errors which a knowledge of Greek would have corrected, but beyond that it is impossible to go. (...) This may have been the Itala, (...) but if so, we can only say that it provides clear evidence of the need for a fresh translation, which Jerome was even then being commissioned to provide." Gerald L. Bray, "Translator's Introduction," in Ambrosiaster, *Commentaries on Romans and 1–2 Corinthians*, xviii. On the Pauline text used by Ambrosiaster, see Heinrich J. Vogels, ed., *Das Corpus Paulinum des Ambrosiaster*, Bonner biblische Beiträge 13 (Bonn: P. Hanstein, 1957).

Ambrosiaster did not see conformity with "original" Greek manuscripts as a sufficient criterion of authenticity. See Marie-Pierre Bussi eres, "Le commentaire au 4^e si ecle ou, pour reformuler le dicton, anciennet e a-t-elle toujours autorit e," in *The Reception and Interpretation of the Bible in Late Antiquity: Proceedings of the Montr eal Colloquium in Honour of Charles Kannengiesser, 11–13 October 2006*, ed. Lorenzo DiTommaso and Lucian Turcescu, *Bible in Ancient Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 94–95. As for Jerome, who was very much concerned with philological accuracy, he never completed the translation of the Pauline Epistles. Marliangeas finds one instance in Jerome's *Adu. Iouin.* in which he appears to provide his own, corrected translation: "si quid donavi, propter uos, coram Christo" (PL 23.222). But later in the same work, to better buttress his argument against the Montanists who denied the possibility of a post-baptismal penance, Jerome returns to the traditional reading, "in persona Christi." Marliangeas, *Cl es pour une th eologie du minist ere*, 44–45.

¹⁷³ *Comm. 2 Cor. 2.10.2.* In Ambrosiaster, *In epistulas ad Corinthios*, vol. 2 of *Commentarius in epistulas Paulinas*, ed. Heinrich Josef Vogels, *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum* 81/2 (Vienna: H older-Pichler-Tempsky, 1968). Subsequent citations of *Comm. 2 Cor.* in the original refer to this edition. ET: "In order to show that God approved of this, Paul says that he has forgiven what he has forgiven in the [person] of Christ. This means that because it was agreed that Christ, whose envoy Paul was, had taken away the sin, the apostle's act of forgiving was the act of Christ himself. As he said: [whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven]. If Christ, through the apostle, has forgiven the man for whom the Corinthians had interceded, how much more had forgiveness already been granted to the one to whom Paul himself is urging them to grant it?" In Ambrosiaster, *Commentaries on Romans and 1–2 Corinthians*. Subsequent English translations of *Comm. 1–2 Cor.* are taken from this edition.

sacrifice. He interprets the mention of prophecy and laying on of hands in 1 Timothy 4:14 as a reference to presbyteral ordination: "Profetia est, qua eligitur quasi doctor futurus idoneus, manus inpositionis uero uerba sunt mystica, quibus confirmatur ad hoc opus electus, accipiens auctoritatem, teste conscientia sua, ut audeat uice domini sacrificium deo offerre."¹⁷⁴

The function of representing Christ in cultic actions, of being in close daily contact with the realm of the holy, imposes upon priests a higher standard of holiness than is required of non-priests. "Ac per hoc antestites dei puriores esse debent quam ceteri, quia et Christi habent personam et ministros dei mundiores esse oportet."¹⁷⁵ This higher ethical imperative brings with it, however, the privilege of being above suspicion. Vicars of Christ—and here Ambrosiaster explicitly applies this term to *presbyters*—are presumed to be leading personal lives that are in conformity with their exalted "objective" holiness: "Aduersum presbyterum accusationem ne receperis, quoniam huius ordinis sublimis honor est—huiusmodi enim uicarii Christi sunt—, idcirco non facile de hac persona accusatio debet admitti. Incredibile enim debet uideri istum, qui dei antistes est, criminose uersatum, sicut credibile est scenicum esse turpissimum."¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ *Comm. 1 Tim.* 4.14.2. ET: "Prophecy is the way in which a future teacher is chosen as suitable, whereas the hands of imposition are secret words by which the person chosen is confirmed for this work and receives authority, his conscience bearing witness, that he may dare to offer sacrifice to God as the Lord's representative."

¹⁷⁵ *Quaest. test.* 127.36. ET: "Therefore the representatives of God must be purer than others both because they represent the person of Christ and because it is necessary that the ministers of God be cleaner." In Hunter, "Clerical Celibacy," 147.

¹⁷⁶ *Comm. 1 Tim.* 5.19. ET: "Since this is the highest honor (for presbyters are the vicars of Christ), accusations against a presbyter should not be readily entertained. It should be just as impossible to believe that someone who is God's representative could be a hardened criminal as it is possible to believe that an actor leads a wicked life." This text is justifiably cited in LG 21 in support of *in persona Christi* theology.

Bearing the person of Christ is not restricted to the actual performance of sacramental rites; it is a permanent quality that makes the priest deserving of external marks of respect. This is how Ambrosiaster explains Paul's prescriptions regarding the veiling and the silence of women in church in 1 Corinthians 11 and 14 respectively:

Mulier ergo idcirco debet uelare caput, quia non est imago dei, sed ut ostendatur subiecta. Et quia preuaricatio per illam inchoata est, hoc signum debet habere, ut in ecclesia propter reuerentiam sacerdotalem (episcopalem) non habeat caput liberum, sed uelamine tectum, nec habeat potestatem loquendi, quia sacerdos (episcopus) personam habet Christi. Quasi ergo ante iudicem sic ante sacerdotem (episcopum), quia uicarius domini est.¹⁷⁷

Although Ambrosiaster's thoughts on the priesthood of ordained ministers are found in scattered passages throughout his various exegetical works rather than in an extended theological argument, nonetheless they form a consistent whole. For him the notion of representation is inherent in the concept of priesthood itself. Being priests, bishops and even presbyters bear the person of Christ; they are his vicars, his ambassadors, not only in the performance of sacred rites but in their very persons. The influence of Ambrosiaster's works, passed on through the medieval period under the names of Ambrose and Augustine, makes them not merely distant forerunners of *in persona Christi* theology but quite possibly one of its direct progenitors.

¹⁷⁷ *Comm. 1 Cor.* 11.10. ET: "A woman therefore ought to cover her head, because she is not the likeness of God but is under subjection. Because transgression began with her, she ought to indicate this by covering her head in church out of reverence for the [priest/bishop]. Nor should she speak, because the [priest/bishop] takes the place of Christ. In front of him, and because he is the representative of Christ, she ought to appear as she would before a judge, as one under subjection."

10 John Chrysostom (349–407 CE, Constantinople)

John of Antioch is not known as an innovator in theological matters, but rather as a faithful and supremely effective communicator of already established orthodox doctrine. It is therefore all the more significant to find in his writings views about the status of presbyters very similar to those of Ambrosiaster and Jerome in the West, namely that there is virtually no theological difference between presbyters and bishops, except the power to ordain. Both orders share in the same theological reality that is simply called "priesthood."¹⁷⁸ This priesthood is a singular reality—so much so that in Chrysostom's treatise *De sacerdotio* he generally does not feel the need to specify which order is being referred to; what is of paramount importance is the dignity of *priesthood itself*.¹⁷⁹ By the end of the fourth century then, both in the East and in the West, the sacerdotalization of presbyters is complete. However, it should be remarked that despite the title of John's treatise, its predominant imagery is not exclusively sacerdotal or cultic. In fact the first use of sacerdotal terminology occurs only in the second book (of six).¹⁸⁰ The predominant imagery is that of the *shepherd*, drawn from the command of Christ to Peter in John 21:16, "Tend my sheep." John's purpose is less to develop a theory of priesthood for its own sake

¹⁷⁸ See *Hom. in 1 Tim.* 11.1, in PG 62.553. "Presbytres et évêques (souvent désignés l'un et l'autre par le vocable 'hiereus') sont du même sacerdoce. La seule différence qui existe entre eux, c'est le pouvoir d'ordonner." Albert Houssiau and Jean-Pierre Mondet, *Le Sacerdoce du Christ et de ses serviteurs selon les Pères de l'Église*, Collection Cerfaux-Lefort 8 (Louvain-la-Neuve: Centre d'histoire des religions, 1990), 176.

¹⁷⁹ "Mucho más que fijarse en el episcopado o en el presbiterado el autor dirige su atención hacia el sacerdocio quizás porque, como afirma, 'no hay mucha diferencia entre los presbíteros y los obispos.' Lo verdaderamente importante es que el hombre se dé cuenta de la extraordinaria dignidad del sacerdocio. Toda la preocupación del autor converge hacia la aclaración teórica y práctica de este punto." Pío Gonçalo Álvés de Sousa, *El sacerdocio ministerial en los libros De sacerdotio de san Juan Crisostomo*, Colección teológica de la Universidad de Navarra 9 (Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 1975), 243.

¹⁸⁰ *Sac.* 2.3. In *Sur le sacerdoce: dialogue et homélie*, ed. and trans. Anne-Marie Malingrey, Sources chrétiennes 272 (Paris: Cerf, 1980). Subsequent citations of *Sac.*, both in the original and in French translation, refer to this edition.

as to stress the moral and spiritual qualities that the priesthood requires. One must look elsewhere for elements of an analysis of the role of the minister in sacramental rites.

Chrysostom is a major source for the history of Eucharistic theology; he has been called the *Doctor eucharistiae*. One of the most frequently cited patristic texts regarding the mode of Eucharistic conversion comes from his homily on the betrayal of Judas. Here the power to change the elements into the Body and Blood of Christ is seen to reside in the original words pronounced by Christ at the Last Supper and now repeated by the priest, in such a way that the person of Christ is directly implicated in every liturgical celebration:

Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν ὁ ποιῶν τὰ προκείμενα γενέσθαι σῶμα καὶ αἷμα Χριστοῦ, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ὁ σταυρωθεὶς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν Χριστός. Σχῆμα πληρῶν ἔστηκεν ὁ ἱερεὺς, τὰ ῥήματα φθεγγόμενος ἐκεῖνα· ἡ δὲ δύναμις καὶ ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστι. Τοῦτό μου ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα, φησί. Τοῦτο τὸ ῥῆμα μεταρρυθμίζει τὰ προκείμενα· καὶ καθάπερ ἡ φωνὴ ἐκείνη ἡ λέγουσα· Αὐξάνεσθε, καὶ πληθύνεσθε, καὶ πληρώσατε τὴν γῆν, ἐρρέθη μὲν ἅπαξ, διὰ παντὸς δὲ τοῦ χρόνου γίνεται ἔργῳ ἐνδυναμοῦσα τὴν φύσιν τὴν ἡμετέραν πρὸς παιδοποιίαν· οὕτω καὶ ἡ φωνὴ αὕτη ἅπαξ λεχθεῖσα καθ' ἐκάστην τράπεζαν ἐν ταῖς Ἐκκλησίαις ἐξ ἐκείνου μέχρι σήμερον καὶ μέχρι τῆς αὐτοῦ παρουσίας, τὴν θυσίαν ἀπηρτισμένην ἐργάζεται.¹⁸¹

This passage was subjected to varying and often conflicting interpretations in the context of later theological controversies between Greeks and Latins concerning the question of the "moment of consecration," that is, of the relative importance of the epiclesis and the words of institution in bringing about the transformation of the Eucharistic offerings.¹⁸² But the passage is equally pertinent for an understanding of the role of the

¹⁸¹ *Prod. Iud.* 1.6. In PG 49.380. ET: "It is not man who causes what is present to become the Body and Blood of Christ, but Christ Himself who was crucified for us. The priest is the representative when he pronounces those words, but the power and the grace are those of the Lord. 'This is my Body,' he says. This word changes the things that lie before us; and as that sentence 'increase and multiply,' once spoken, extends through all time and gives to our nature the power to reproduce itself; even so that saying 'This is my Body,' once uttered, does at every table in the Churches from that time to the present day, and even till Christ's coming, make the sacrifice complete." In Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 3, *The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature*, reprint, 1960 (Notre Dame, Ind.: Christian Classics, 1995), 481.

¹⁸² See McKenna, *Eucharistic Epiclesis*, 53–56.

minister in bringing about the sacrament. The main thrust of the argument is to stress the *ministeriality* of the priest's actions,¹⁸³ that is, the idea that he is accomplishing something that is beyond his personal power and must engage the power of the One who instituted the Eucharist. Representation of Christ attaches specifically to the recitation of the words over the bread and over the cup. The same idea is presented in a homily on 2 Timothy, in the context of a discussion of whether the value of a sacrament is affected by the holiness or social status of the priest:

Ἡ προσφορὰ ἡ αὐτὴ ἐστὶ, καὶν ὁ τυχὼν προσενέγκῃ, καὶν Παῦλος, καὶν Πέτρος· ἡ αὐτὴ ἐστὶν, ἣν ὁ Χριστὸς τοῖς μαθηταῖς ἔδωκε, καὶ ἣν νῦν οἱ ἱερεῖς ποιοῦσιν· οὐδὲν αὐτῇ ἐλάττων ἐκείνης, ὅτι καὶ ταύτην οὐκ ἄνθρωποι ἀγιάζουσιν, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ὁ καὶ ἐκείνην ἀγιάσας. Ὡσπερ γὰρ τὰ ῥήματα, ἅπερ ὁ Θεὸς ἐφθέγγετο, τὰ αὐτὰ ἐστὶν, ἅπερ ὁ ἱερεὺς καὶ νῦν λέγει· οὕτω καὶ ἡ προσφορὰ ἡ αὐτὴ ἐστὶ, καὶ τὸ βάπτισμα ὅπερ ἔδωκεν.¹⁸⁴

In discussions of the Eucharist, Chrysostom consistently argues for an identity between the Last Supper and the church's celebration. Christ is the principal subject of the action, now as then.¹⁸⁵ The priest stands in a relationship of representation to the person of

¹⁸³ "Ὁ τότε ταῦτα ποιήσας ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ δεῖπνῳ, οὗτος καὶ νῦν αὐτὰ ἐργάζεται. Ἡμεῖς ὑπηρετῶν τάξιν ἐπέχομεν· ὁ δὲ ἀγιάζων αὐτὰ καὶ μετασκευάζων, αὐτός." *Hom. in Mt.* 82.5; in PG 58.744. ET: "He that then did these things at that supper, this same now also works them. We occupy the place of servants. He who sanctifieth and changeth them is the same." In George Prevost and M.B. Riddle, trans., *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew*, vol. 10 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1956).

¹⁸⁴ *Hom. in 2 Tim.* 2.4. In PG 62.612. ET: "The Offering is the same, whether a common man, or Paul or Peter offer it. It is the same which Christ gave to His disciples, and which the Priests now minister. This is nowise inferior to that, because it is not men that sanctify even this, but the Same who sanctified the one sanctifies the other also. For as the words which God spake are the same which the Priest now utters, so is the Offering the same, and the Baptism, that which He gave." In Gross Alexander, John A. Broadus, and Philip Schaff, trans., *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, vol. 13 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1956). Subsequent English translations of *Hom. in 2 Tim.* are taken from this edition. This is one of the passages cited by LG 21 in support of *in persona Christi* theology.

¹⁸⁵ "Ἴνα μάθῃς ὅτι οὐδὲν πλεόν ἔχει ἐκείνη ἢ τράπεζα τῆς μετὰ ταῦτα. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ σήμερον αὐτός ἐστὶν ὁ πάντα ἐργαζόμενος καὶ παραδιδούς, ὥσπερ καὶ τότε." *Hom. in 1 Cor.* 27.4; in PG 61.229. ET: "The first table had no advantage above that which cometh after it. For even to-day also it is He [Christ] who doeth all, and delivereth it even as then." In Talbot W. Chambers, trans., *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians*, vol. 12 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1956). See also *Hom. in Mt.* 50.3; in PG 58.507.

Christ. In Chrysostom's treatment of *baptism*, however, the representation is not primarily Christic. Although there are a few scattered exceptions,¹⁸⁶ the main thrust of John's argument is that the whole, indivisible Trinity is at work in the imparting of baptism. The priest acts as an instrument of all three divine Persons, acting together.

Ἐπιφωνοῦντος γὰρ τοῦ ἱερέως· Βαπτίζεται ὁ δεῖνα εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος, τρίτον τὴν κεφαλὴν καθήσιν καὶ ἀνίησιν, διὰ τῆς μυστικῆς ταύτης τελετῆς τὴν τοῦ Πνεύματος παρασκευάζων ἐπιφοίτησιν δέξασθαι. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ ἱερεὺς ἐστὶ μόνος ὁ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἐφαπτόμενος ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ τοῦ Χριστοῦ δεξιὰ. Καὶ τοῦτο καὶ ἔξ αὐτῶν τῶν ῥημάτων τοῦ Βαπτίζοντος δείκνυται· οὐδὲ γὰρ λέγει· Βαπτίζω ἐγὼ τὸν δεῖνα ἀλλά· Βαπτίζεται ὁ δεῖνα, δεικνὺς ὅτι αὐτὸς μόνον διάκονος γίνεται τῆς χάριτος καὶ τὴν χεῖρα τὴν ἑαυτοῦ παρέχει, ἐπειδὴ εἰς τοῦτο παρὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος τέτακται. Ὁ δὲ πάντα πληρῶν ἐστὶν ὁ Πατὴρ καὶ ὁ Υἱὸς καὶ τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα, ἡ Τριάς ἡ ἀδιαίρετος.¹⁸⁷

There is at least as much of an association of the priest with the Holy Spirit as with Christ: "Ἡ γὰρ ἱερωσύνη τελεῖται μὲν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τάξιν δὲ ἐπουρανίων ἔχει πραγμάτων. Καὶ μάλα γε εἰκότως· οὐ γὰρ ἄνθρωπος, οὐκ ἄγγελος, οὐκ ἀρχάγγελος, οὐκ ἄλλη τις κτιστὴ δύναμις, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ὁ Παράκλητος ταύτην διετάξατο τὴν ἀκολουθίαν καὶ ἔπι μένοντας ἐν σαρκὶ τὴν τῶν ἀγγέλων ἔπεισε φαντάζεσθαι

¹⁸⁶ "Κἀκεῖνοι [οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ τῆς σαρκὸς] μὲν ἱερέα βλέπουσιν ἄνωθεν ἐπιτιθέντα τὴν χεῖρα τὴν δεξιὰν τῆς κεφαλῆς ἀπτόμενον, οὗτοι [οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ τῆς πίστεως] δὲ τὸν Ἀρχιερέα τὸν μέγαν ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν θεωροῦσι τὴν δεξιὰν τὴν ἀόρατον ἐκτείνοντα καὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἀπτόμενον. Οὐ γὰρ ἄνθρωπος ἐστὶν ὁ τότε βαπτίζων, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ὁ Μονογενὴς τοῦ Θεοῦ Παῖς." *Catech. 1, 3.3*. In *Trois catéchèses baptismales*, ed. and trans. Auguste Piédagnel and Louis Doutreleau, Sources chrétiennes 366 (Paris: Cerf, 1990). FT: "ceux-là [les yeux du corps] voient le prêtre élever, puis imposer la main droite et toucher la tête, ceux-ci [les yeux de la foi] contemplent le Grand Prêtre qui étend invisiblement sa main droite du haut des cieux et qui touche la tête. Car celui qui baptise alors n'est pas un homme, mais le Fils Unique Enfant de Dieu, en personne."

¹⁸⁷ *Catech. 3, 2.26*. In *Huit catéchèses baptismales inédites*, rev. ed., ed. and trans. Antoine Wenger, reprint, 1970, Sources chrétiennes 50bis (Paris: Cerf, 2005). FT: "Lorsque le prêtre prononce sur l'intéressé: 'Est baptisé un tel au nom du Père et du Fils et du Saint-Esprit,' il lui plonge à trois reprises la tête dans l'eau et la relève, disposant le sujet par ce rite mystérieux à recevoir la visite de l'Esprit Saint. Car ce n'est pas le prêtre seulement qui touche sa tête, mais aussi la droite du Christ. Cela ressort des paroles mêmes de l'officiant: il ne dit pas: 'Je baptise un tel,' mais: 'Est baptisé un tel,' montrant qu'il est seulement le ministre de la grâce et qu'il ne fait que prêter sa main, parce qu'il a été ordonné à cette fonction de la part de l'Esprit. Celui qui accomplit tout, c'est le Père, le Fils et le Saint-Esprit, l'indivisible Trinité."

διακονίαν."¹⁸⁸ "ἔστηκε γὰρ ὁ ἱερεὺς, οὐ πῦρ καταφέρων, ἀλλὰ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον."¹⁸⁹

Referring to the power to bind and loose given by Christ to his apostles in Matthew 18:18, John comments: "καὶ ἅπερ ἂν ἐργάσωνται κάτω οἱ ἱερεῖς, ταῦτα ὁ Θεὸς ἄνω κυροῖ καὶ τὴν τῶν δούλων γνώμην ὁ δεσπότης βεβαιοῖ."¹⁹⁰ In the development that follows, remission of sins (John 20:23) is a power received from Christ or from God. It is "to God" that priests reconcile penitents in 3.6. Likewise, it is "God," not Christ specifically, who is the principal agent of ordination: "τοῦτο γὰρ ἡ χειροτονία ἐστίν. Ἡ χεὶρ ἐπίκειται τοῦ ἀνδρός, τὸ δὲ πᾶν ὁ Θεὸς ἐργάζεται, καὶ ἡ αὐτοῦ χεὶρ ἐστὶν ἡ ἀπομένη τῆς κεφαλῆς τοῦ χειροτονουμένου, ἐὰν ὡς δεῖ χειροτονῆται."¹⁹¹

Finally, discussing the distribution of divine graces in general, John assigns the effective agency to "God." The priest's part is only to "perform a symbol": "Οὐκ ἔστι τοιαῦτα ἃ χαρίζεται ὁ Θεὸς, ὡς ὑπὸ ἱερατικῆς ἀρετῆς ἀνύεσθαι· τὸ πᾶν τῆς χάριτός ἐστι· τούτου ἐστὶν ἀνοῖξαι μόνον τὸ στόμα, τὸ δὲ πᾶν ὁ Θεὸς ἐργάζεται·

¹⁸⁸ *Sac.* 3.4. FT: "En effet, le sacerdoce s'exerce sur la terre, mais il se place parmi les choses célestes. Et c'est à juste titre; car ce n'est pas un homme, ni un ange, ni un archange, ni aucune autre puissance créée, mais le Paraclet lui-même qui a institué cet ordre en persuadant à des hommes qui sont encore dans la chair d'imiter le service des anges."

¹⁸⁹ *Sac.* 3.4. FT: "En effet, le prêtre est là, debout, faisant descendre non plus le feu, mais l'Esprit Saint."

¹⁹⁰ *Sac.* 3.5. FT: "Et tout ce que les prêtres font ici-bas, Dieu le sanctionne là-haut. Le maître confirme la sentence de ses serviteurs."

¹⁹¹ *Hom. in Act.* 14.3. In PG 60.116. ET: "for this is the meaning of χειροτονία, (i.e. "putting forth the hand,") or ordination: the hand of the man is laid upon (the person,) but the whole work is of God, and it is His hand which toucheth the head of the one ordained, if he be duly ordained." In *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 11 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1956).

σύμβολον οὗτος πληροῖ μόνον."¹⁹² There is representation of God in this text, but not of Christ. Moreover, the term σύμβολον applies to the sacramental actions of the priest, not to his person. Although the footnote in *Lumen gentium* 21 (possibly relying on Lecuyer's 1957 work *Le Sacerdoce dans le mystère du Christ*, p. 296) takes this text to mean that the priest is a symbol of Christ, this interpretation does not seem warranted.

An overall assessment of the Chrysostomian theology of priesthood requires a more nuanced presentation of his views on sacerdotal representation-of-Christ. It is almost exclusively in discussions of the Eucharistic consecration that John presents the priest as representing Christ, and this interpretation flows naturally and logically from the observation that during the recitation of the anaphora, the priest quotes Christ's words at the Last Supper. In baptism, by contrast, it is the whole Trinity that is at work; and this interpretation too flows logically from the observation that baptism is performed in the Name of the three divine Persons. In other rites and ceremonies, it is simply "God" who acts in and through the actions of the priest. It appears, then, that John is proceeding inductively or mystagogically, drawing his theology out of the ritual words and gestures themselves. He is not proceeding deductively. It would be a distortion of his thought to make him a proponent of a strictly Christic theory of priesthood. Nevertheless, in the passages cited pertaining to the Eucharist, there are significant antecedents to *in persona Christi* theology.

¹⁹² *Hom. in 2 Tim.* 2.4. In PG 62.212. ET: "The gifts which God bestows are not such as to be effects of the virtue of the Priest. All is of grace. His part is but to open his mouth, while God worketh all: the Priest only performs a symbol."

11 Theodore of Mopsuestia (ca. 350–428 CE)

The discovery of a Syriac version of Theodore's *Homiliae catecheticae* in the early twentieth century greatly contributed towards a more balanced understanding of his authentic thought, although the debate on his alleged role as heresiarch of Nestorianism is still ongoing. Today he is widely regarded as a pioneer of the genre of the liturgical commentary. He displays a unified and synthetic vision of the sacramental life of the church, which adopts as an overarching framework Origen's tripartite exegetical distinction of shadow (Old Testament), image (New Testament), and reality (eschaton). In his first homily on baptism, Theodore expounds this idea. A key difference between the shadow and the image is that only the latter actually *represents* the reality:

L'ombre révèle la proximité d'un corps, puisqu'il est impossible que sans un corps se produise une ombre; mais elle ne représente pas le corps qu'elle révèle, chose que l'image est de nature à faire. Quand on voit l'image, en effet, on sait quel est celui qui est représenté, à cause de l'exactitude de la ressemblance, si par hasard on connaît celui qui est représenté; tandis que par l'ombre, jamais on ne pourra savoir quel est celui dont elle est l'ombre, car l'ombre n'a aucune ressemblance de représentation avec le corps dont elle provient.¹⁹³

Thus representation is an inherent characteristic of all the sacraments of the new covenant. Following this line of thought, Theodore describes the "priests of the new covenant" as "icons" of Christ, the high priest (the Greek word εἰκών is preserved in the Syriac translation, indicating that this is a technical theological term).

Et puisque Notre-Seigneur le Christ s'est offert lui-même pour nous en sacrifice, et ainsi devint effectivement pour nous un grand-prêtre, 'c'est une image (εἰκών) de ce pontife-là qu'il nous faut penser que représente celui-ci, qui maintenant est proche de cet autel.' Ce n'est pas son propre sacrifice qu'il offre là, où ce n'est pas

¹⁹³ *Hom. cat.* 12.2. In Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Les homélies catéchétiques de Théodore de Mopsueste: Reproduction phototypique du ms. Mingana syr. 561 (Selly Oak Colleges' Library, Birmingham)*, ed. Raymond Tonneau and Robert Devreesse, *Studi e testi* 145 (Rome: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1949), 325, 327. Subsequent citations refer to this edition.

lui non plus qui est véritablement le grand-prêtre; mais c'est comme en une sorte d'image (εἰκὼν) qu'il accomplit la 'liturgie' de ce sacrifice ineffable.¹⁹⁴

Moreover, what could be called the objective liturgical representation of the high priest by the minister is meant to elicit in the faithful an interior, subjective representation: "Comme en une sorte d'image, nous représentons en notre cœur, par le moyen du pontife, le Christ Notre-Seigneur que nous voyons en un sacrifice de soi-même nous sauver et vivifier. Par le moyen des diacres, qui font le service de ce qui s'opère, nous esquissons en notre intelligence *les puissances invisibles en service* (Hebr. 1, 14) qui officient à cette liturgie ineffable."¹⁹⁵

Representation of Christ extends beyond the Eucharistic celebration. It attaches to other sacramental rites performed by priests:

Car cela même, croyons-nous, que Notre-Seigneur le Christ a effectivement accompli et accomplira, c'est, croyons-nous, ce qu'accomplissent par les sacrements ceux que la grâce divine a élus prêtres de la nouvelle alliance, par la descente de l'Esprit-Saint sur eux, en vue de la confirmation et de la sécurité des 'fils' du sacrement. (...) Tous les prêtres de la nouvelle alliance (διαθήκη), c'est le même sacrifice qu'ils offrent, continuellement, en tout lieu et en tout temps: parce qu'unique aussi est le sacrifice qui fut offert pour nous tous, (celui) du Christ Notre-Seigneur, qui pour nous accepta la mort et par l'oblation de ce sacrifice acheta pour nous la perfection.¹⁹⁶

Theodore's catechetical homilies manifest a well-developed, internally consistent sacerdotal representation-of-Christ theology, flowing out of the priest's role in offering Christ's own sacrifice at the altar but extending to other sacramental actions. The reference to his work in the footnote to *Lumen gentium* 21 is fully justified. This is indeed an antecedent to *in persona Christi* theology.

¹⁹⁴ *Hom. cat.* 21.

¹⁹⁵ *Hom. cat.* 24. Cf. *Hom. cat.* 15.0.

¹⁹⁶ *Hom. cat.* 19.

12 Augustine (354–430 CE, Hippo)

It is difficult to overstate the importance of Augustine's thought in shaping the Western Christian tradition. In the areas of ecclesiology and sacramental theology in particular, he laid an essential foundation for all subsequent developments, even if the adoption of Aristotelian philosophy by the scholastics would lead the medieval Western church to discard the Augustinian position on some specific points. His fundamental vision of the church, which served him well in the struggle against the Donatists, can be characterized as synthetic. In taking flesh, the Word has not only taken on a human nature, but has freely chosen to join to himself a social reality, that is the church. Henceforward, the Head is never present without his members; ecclesiology is inseparable from Christology, and vice-versa. It is the *Christus totus*, the whole Christ, that is present in each and every manifestation of the church, including the sacraments.

Regarding the concept of priesthood, Augustine has no difficulty in embracing the biblical usage, in contrast to his African forerunner Cyprian, who was hesitant to apply sacerdotal terminology to the laity. Quite simply, if Christ is a priest, then his members are all priests together with him. Commenting on Revelation 20:6, he writes: "Non utique de solis episcopis et presbyteris dictum est, qui proprie iam uocantur in ecclesia sacerdotes; sed sicut omnes christos dicimus propter mysticum chrisma, sic omnes sacerdotes, quoniam membra sunt unius sacerdotis; de quibus apostolus Petrus: 'Plebs,' inquit, 'sancta, regale

sacerdotum."¹⁹⁷ (In passing, we note that Augustine is familiar with the by-then traditional convention of giving the title of *sacerdos* to both bishops and presbyters.¹⁹⁸)

Following Hebrews, Augustine sees a mutual implication between priesthood and sacrifice. "Pro nobis tibi sacerdos et sacrificium, et ideo sacerdos quia sacrificium."¹⁹⁹ In the new covenant there is only one sacrifice, which is the one that Christ made of himself once for all, and offers perpetually in heaven. Christians have no other sacrifice to offer. "Si nullum sacrificium est, nullus sacerdos. Si autem habemus sacerdotem in caelis, qui pro nobis interpellat Patrem (...) securi sumus, quia habemus sacerdotem; ibi offeramus et hostiam."²⁰⁰ The multiple ritual celebrations of the church on earth are not a multiplication of sacrifices but daily signs of the one sacrifice of Christ. In celebrating the Eucharist, the church offers herself in union with her Head. Following the logic of the Incarnation, the heavenly sacrifice and the earthly sacrifice can be distinguished but not separated. "Et sacerdos est, ipse offerens, ipse et oblatio. Cuius rei sacramentum cotidianum esse uoluit

¹⁹⁷ Augustine, *Ciu.* 20.10. In *De civitate Dei libri XI-XXII*, ed. B. Dombart and A. Kalb, Corpus Christianorum: Series latina 48 (Turnhout: Brepols editores pontificii, 1955). Subsequent citations of *Ciu.* in the original refer to this edition. ET: "This does not refer only to the bishops and presbyters, who are now distinguished by the name of 'priests' in the Church. Rather, just as we call all Christians 'Christ's' in virtue of their mystical anointing (*chrisma*), so do we call them all 'priests' because they are all members of the one Priest. The apostle Peter therefore says of them that they are 'A holy people, a royal priesthood.'" In *The City of God Against the Pagans*, trans. R.W. Dyson, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Subsequent English translations of *Ciu.* are taken from this edition.

¹⁹⁸ Bradshaw notes that Augustine is more reticent than other patristic writers to use *sacerdos* as a title for the bishop: "Augustine (...) uses *sacerdos* more cautiously than his contemporaries, at least in part because of his need to insist on the unique priesthood of Christ in his debate with the Donatists (e.g., *Parm.*, 2.8.15-16)." Bradshaw, *Search for the Origins*, 203.

¹⁹⁹ Augustine, *Conf.* 10.43.69. In *Confessions*, vol. 1, *Introduction and Text*, ed. James J. O'Donnell (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992). ET: "For us he stood to you as priest and sacrifice, and priest because sacrifice." In *The Confessions*, trans. Maria Boulding, The Works of Saint Augustine (Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City, 1997).

²⁰⁰ Augustine, *En. Ps.* 130.4. In *Enarrationes in Psalmos 101-150*, vol. 3 of *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, ed. Eligius Dekkers and Jean Fraipont, Corpus christianorum: Series latina 40 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1956). ET: "If there is no sacrifice, there is no Priest. But if we have a High Priest in Heaven, who intercedeth with the Father for us (...) we are safe, for we have a Priest; let us offer our sacrifice there." In *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, vol. 8 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: First Series*, trans. A. Cleveland Coxe (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1956).

ecclesiae sacrificium, quae cum ipsius capitis corpus sit, se ipsam per ipsum discit offerre."²⁰¹

Whereas other Latin fathers such as Cyprian and Ambrose identified the bishop as the singular subject of the Eucharistic offering, Augustine again and again identifies the *church* as the collective subject of this offering.

Tota ipsa redempta ciuitas, hoc est congregatio societasque sanctorum, uniuersale sacrificium offeratur Deo per sacerdotem magnum, qui etiam se ipsum obtulit in passione pro nobis, ut tanti capitis corpus essemus, secundum formam serui. Hanc enim obtulit, in hac oblati est, quia secundum hanc mediator est, in hac sacerdos, in hac sacrificium est (...) Hoc est sacrificium Christianorum: 'multi unum corpus in Christo.' Quod etiam sacramento altaris fidelibus noto frequentat ecclesia, ubi ei demonstratur, quod in ea re, quam offert, ipsa offeratur.²⁰²

As numerous twentieth-century theologians have pointed out (de Lubac,²⁰³ Tillard,²⁰⁴ et al.), there is in Augustine's theology a correlation and a mutual interpenetration between the ecclesial body of Christ and his sacramental body. Augustine's unified ecclesiological-sacramental vision does not lead him to isolate the actions of the ordained minister in the bringing about of the Eucharist, as other fathers do (Cyprian, Chrysostom). For this reason it is not possible to find instances in his writings of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ specifically in relation to the presider at the Eucharist.

²⁰¹ *Ciu.* 10.20. ET: "He is both the priest who offers and the sacrifice which is offered; and He intended that there should be a daily sign of this in the sacrament of the Church's sacrifice. For the Church, being the body of which He is the Head, is taught to offer herself through Him."

²⁰² *Ciu.* 10.6. ET: "The whole of the redeemed City—that is, the congregation and fellowship of the saints—is offered to God as a universal sacrifice for us through the great High Priest Who, in His Passion, offered even Himself for us in the form of a servant, so that we might be the body of so great a Head. For it was this form that He offered, and in it that He was offered, because it is according to it that He is our Mediator. In this form He is our Priest; in it, He is our sacrifice. (...) This is the sacrifice of Christians: 'We, being many, are one body in Christ.' And this also, as the faithful know, is the sacrifice which the Church continually celebrates in the sacrament of the altar, by which she demonstrates that she herself is offered in the offering that she makes to God."

²⁰³ Henri de Lubac, *Corpus mysticum: L'Eucharistie et l'Église au moyen âge: Étude historique*, Théologie, 2nd rev. ed., 3 vol. (Paris: Aubier, 1949).

²⁰⁴ Jean-Marie-Roger Tillard, *Chair de l'Église, chair du Christ: aux sources de l'ecclésiologie de communion*, Cogitatio fidei 168 (Paris: Cerf, 1992).

In fact, Augustine rejects in vehement terms the proposition, made by the Donatist Parmenian, that the bishop is a *mediator* between God and people. He sees this claim as absolutely incompatible with the unicity of Christ's roles as mediator, head of the church, and bridegroom:

Si enim episcopus mediator est inter populum et deum, quoniam multi sunt episcopi, sequitur ut multi mediatores intellegantur. Vt ergo legatur epistula Parmeniani, deleatur epistula Pauli apostoli dicentis: 'Vnus enim deus, unus et mediator dei et hominum, homo Christus Iesus.' (...) Immanis itaque illa superbia est, quae constituere audet episcopum mediatorem, coniugium Christi sibi uindicans adulterina fallacia.²⁰⁵

Because it usurps the place of Christ, the only possible result of this self-exaltation on the part of a bishop can only be to separate God and people. The true mediator does not need prayers to be offered for his sins, whereas bishops certainly do require such intercession, which indicates that their condition does not elevate them above the rest of the faithful. Augustine finds confirmation in the apostle John's use of the first person plural in 1 John 2:1-2 ("*We* have an advocate . . . propitiation for *our* sins.") A more appropriate metaphor for the bishop, then, is the "friend of the bridegroom." Whatever authority bishops may exercise over their churches, they remain members of the body of Christ. The title of priests does not elevate them above the other faithful, who with them compose the body of the one Priest: "Nos autem in nomine Christi, etsi non uobiscum sumus praepositi

²⁰⁵ Augustine, *S. Dolbeau* 26.52. In *Vingt-six sermons au peuple d'Afrique*, ed. François Dolbeau, Études augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 147 (Paris: Institut d'études augustiniennes, 1996). Subsequent citations of *S. Dolbeau* 26 in the original refer to this edition. ET: "You see, if the bishop is the mediator between the people and God, it follows that we must take it there are many mediators, since there are many bishops. So then, in order to read the letter of Parmenian, let us censor the letter of the apostle Paul, where he says, 'For there is one God, and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5). (...) Truly monstrous, therefore, is that pride which has the audacity to set up the bishop as mediator, guilty of the adulterous fallacy of claiming for itself the marriage of Christ.'" In *Sermons: Newly Discovered Sermons*, trans. Edmund Hill, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century 3/11 (Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City, 1997). Subsequent English translations of *S. Dolbeau* 26 are taken from this edition.

ecclesiarum, uobiscum tamen sumus membra corporis Christi: unum caput habemus, non multa (...). Omnes ad corpus sacerdotis nobiscum pertinetis, id est quia fideles estis omnes; praecipue tamen illi appellantur sacerdotes qui sunt praepositi ecclesiae, non ideo tamen ceterum corpus non est corpus sacerdotis."²⁰⁶ Augustine's denial of a mediatorial role for the bishop stands in opposition not only to the views of the Donatists, but equally to those of earlier and later patristic sources, including the *Didascalia*, Gregory of Nazianzus, Dionysius the Areopagite, and Maximus the Confessor.

In relation to the minister of baptism, Augustine is famous for stressing very strongly that every correct performance of the sacrament is in fact the work of Christ, even should it take place outside the visible bounds of the catholic church. Despite his deep respect and admiration for Cyprian, who championed the opposite view, he argues with great rhetorical flourish that the wickedness or heresy of the minister does not impede the action of Christ. "Si baptismus Christi erat, Christus baptizauit. Non timeo adulterum, non ebriosum, non homicidam, quia columbam attendo, per quam mihi dicitur: 'Hic est qui baptizat.'"²⁰⁷ In its focus on Christ's direct involvement in the sacramental action, Augustine's theology of baptism is certainly in continuity with earlier tradition. But curiously, and in contrast to most of the other church writers studied so far in this dissertation, Augustine does not think that Christ transmitted the power to baptize to his

²⁰⁶ S. Dolbeau 26.53. ET: "As for us bishops, even though it is not together with you that we are the rulers of Churches, still it is together with you, in the name of Christ, that we are members of the body of Christ. (...) You all belong to the body of the one priest together with us bishops, which is because we are all of us the faithful. However those who are in charge of Churches are particularly called priests; this doesn't mean, all the same, that the rest of the body is not the body of the priest."

²⁰⁷ *Io. eu. tr.* 5.18. In *Homélies sur l'Évangile de saint Jean I-XVI*, ed. and trans. M.-F. Berrouard, Bibliothèque augustinienne 71 (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1969). Subsequent citations of *Io. eu. tr.*, both in the original and in French translation, refer to this edition. FT: "S'ils ont reçu le baptême du Christ, c'est le Christ qui les a baptisés. Je ne crains ni l'adultère, ni l'ivrogne, ni l'homicide, parce que je considère la colombe qui me dit: *C'est lui qui baptise.*"

apostles, but rather that he *reserved* this power to himself alone, even though they would be the ones actually performing baptisms; and that the unity of the church depends on this point. "Per hanc enim potestatem, quam Christus solus sibi tenuit et in neminem ministrorum transfudit, quamvis per ministros suos baptizare dignatus sit, per hanc stat unitas ecclesiae, quae significantur in columba (...). Si enim, ut iam dixi, fratres mei, transferretur potestas a Domino ad ministrum, tot baptismata essent quot ministri essent, et iam non staret unitas baptismi."²⁰⁸ Not only the moral worthiness but even the faith of the minister leaves the value of baptism completely unaffected, as long as baptism is correctly performed. "Petrus baptizet, hic est qui baptizat; Paulus baptizet, hic est qui baptizat; Iudas baptizet, hic est qui baptizat."²⁰⁹ By attributing to the sacrament itself an efficacy that is so completely independent of both the faith and the holiness of the minister, Augustine opens the door to the possibility that even the unbaptized or unbelievers might be able to perform a genuine baptism—a step that the Western church would eventually take, in the Carolingian period.²¹⁰ If there is any representation-of-Christ by the minister of baptism, then, it is not a strictly *sacerdotal* representation.

Furthermore, it can be asked to what extent it is even correct to speak of a representation of Christ by the *minister*, according to Augustine's logic. The minister's

²⁰⁸ *Io. eu. tr.* 6.6. FT: "Par ce pouvoir, en effet, que le Christ s'est réservé à lui seul et qu'il n'a communiqué à aucun de ses ministres, bien qu'il ait daigné baptiser par leur ministère, par ce pouvoir se maintient l'unité de l'Église, qui est symbolisée par la colombe (...). En effet, comme je l'ai déjà dit, mes frères, si ce pouvoir passait du Seigneur au ministre, il y aurait autant de baptêmes que de ministres, et l'unité du baptême ne subsisterait plus."

²⁰⁹ *Io. eu. tr.* 6.7. FT: "Que Pierre baptise, c'est lui qui baptise; que Paul baptise, c'est lui qui baptise; que Judas baptise, c'est lui qui baptise."

²¹⁰ Nicholas I, "Responses *Ad consulta vestra* to the Bulgarians (13 Nov. 866)," in Heinrich Denzinger, *Symboles et définitions de la foi catholique*, ed. Peter Hünermann and Joseph Hoffmann, *Le Magistère de l'Église* (Paris: Cerf, 1996), no. 646. The pope cites four passages from Augustine's *Bapt.* to support the position that even a Jew—whether converted to Christianity or not—can perform an authentic baptism if they invoke the Name of the Trinity or that of Christ.

participation in the realization of the sacrament seems to be reduced to a minimal level. As Jean Pintard observes, "Quand nous lisons dans le commentaire sur l'Évangile de saint Jean le célèbre passage: 'Ceux que Jean a baptisés (...),' le sacrement apparaît bien comme un acte du Christ, mais le rôle du ministre s'efface."²¹¹ In comparison with other church writers such as Cyprian and Ambrose, Augustine appears to downplay considerably the importance of the minister. This can be explained by at least three factors. The first of these is the ideological struggle against the Donatists, who exalted the personal sanctity and power of their own clergy over against the Catholics'. The second is Augustine's views on the absolute priority of grace over nature in the work of salvation. The third is his personal spiritual journey, which led him to value humility as a virtue of paramount importance, especially for those in positions of authority.²¹²

In summary, Augustine's unified Christological-ecclesiological vision focuses on the "big picture": the *ecclesia* as the subject of the Eucharistic offering, rather than focusing on the role of the ordained minister. Although he uses and accepts the traditional use of sacerdotal titles for bishops and presbyters, his theology of priesthood is primarily attentive to the priestly quality of the whole body of believers. Therefore he does not speak of the "priest" in the singular as a representative of Christ. He stresses so strongly that Christ is the one and only minister of baptism (assuming a correct ritual performance) that there remains no necessity for a priest, or even a believer, to administer it. We can only conclude that Augustine's writings do not contain direct antecedents of *in persona Christi* theology.

²¹¹ Jacques Pintard, *Le sacerdoce selon Saint Augustin: Le Prêtre dans la cité de Dieu*, In *lumine fidei* (Paris: Mame, 1960), 238.

²¹² See Michele Pellegrino, *The True Priest: The Priesthood as Preached and Practised by St. Augustine*, trans. Arthur Gibson (Montreal: Palm, 1968), 84–86, 156–66.

Hence it is understandable that the twentieth-century magisterium never cites him as a witness in support of *in persona Christi*, despite his towering importance in shaping the Western tradition.

13 Dionysius the Areopagite (fl. ca. 500 CE, Syria)

The writings of the theologian that were passed on under the pseudonym of Dionysius the Areopagite were destined to be vastly influential over the development of the theology of ordained ministry in both East and West. Thomas Aquinas is estimated to have quoted him 1,700 times.²¹³ His introduction of the concept—and the very word—of "hierarchy" would be readily adopted and eventually pass into common parlance, even to describe secular organizational structures.²¹⁴ In the Dionysian worldview, the whole purpose of both the celestial and the ecclesiastical hierarchies is the gradual ascent of the human person from the realm of sensible, created things to union with God and deification (θεϊωσις). To attempt to bypass these hierarchies is not only an act of insubordination but an exercise in futility: there is simply no other way to ascend to God. Implicitly, ordinary human realities and activities (work, marriage, sexuality, family life, etc.) are not means of sanctification; to reach God requires engaging with the cultic, ritual actions of the "higher" orders.

²¹³ Jaroslav Pelikan, "The Odyssey of Dionysian Spirituality," in Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid and Paul Rorem, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York, N.Y.: Paulist, 1987), 21.

²¹⁴ "The Dionysian writings profoundly shaped the idea of hierarchy in the Christian tradition, whether a churchly hierarchy of clerical officers or a heavenly hierarchy of angelic beings. (...) Not only did Dionysius influence the evolution of this concept, but he also created the word *hierarchy* itself, which, with its cognates (like *hierarchical*) simply did not exist until the anonymous author invented it to express and to crystallize such thoughts about order." Paul Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius: A Commentary on the Texts and an Introduction to Their Influence* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1993), 19.

Dionysius' landmark work, Περὶ τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἱεραρχίας (*The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*) overabounds with sacral/sacerdotal terms—some of them newly minted by the author. The hierarchy described in this treatise is meant to encompass the entire church with its three triads: three sacraments, three ranks of clergy, and three ranks of laity.²¹⁵ The clerical triad is the traditional one, consisting of bishops, presbyters, and deacons. However, the titles used for each rank all contain the root ἱερ- (> ἱερός, sacred). The author's preferred title for the bishop is ἱεράρχης, "hierarch"; the presbyter is referred to by the more familiar title ἱερέυς;²¹⁶ the deacon is called a ἱερουργός. Each order has its own specific function in the process of bringing believers upwards towards the divine: "Δέδεικται τοίνυν ἡ μὲν τῶν ἱεραρχῶν τάξις τελειωτικὴ καὶ τελεσιουργός ἡ δὲ τῶν ἱερέων φωτιστικὴ καὶ φωταγωγός, ἡ δὲ τῶν λειτουργῶν καθαρτικὴ καὶ διακριτικὴ."²¹⁷ Knowledge of God flows downward from the top rung of the hierarchical ladder to the next lower level, and so on.²¹⁸ In this paradigm the bishop appears as an

²¹⁵ This is a thoroughly androcentric ecclesiology, as women are not mentioned at all, even among the monastics or the laity.

²¹⁶ "The technical term *elder* (*presbyter*) does not otherwise appear in the entire corpus, at least not to indicate a churchly office. The term for priest in the text itself, as opposed to in a title, is never *presbyter* but rather *hiereus*." Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius*, 50.

²¹⁷ Dionysius the Areopagite, *E. h.* 3.5.7, in *De coelesti hierarchia, De ecclesiastica hierarchia, De mystica theologia, Epistulae*, vol. 2 of *Corpus Dionysiacum*, ed. Günter Heil and Adolf Martin Ritter, *Patristische Texte und Studien* 36 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991). Subsequent citations of *E. h.* in the original refer to this edition. ET: "We have shown that the order of bishops has the power of perfecting and consecrating, that the order of priests has the power of illuminating and conducting to the light, that the task of the deacons is purifying and discriminating." In Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, Thomas D. Campbell (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981). Subsequent English translations of *E. h.* are taken from this edition.

²¹⁸ "The hierarch is *the* mediator of divine things, and transmits some of his authority and knowledge to the order below him (the priests) and through them to the next order, and so on. Thus the three activities—purification, illumination, and perfection—are fully in his domain. Perfection is his alone, but the lower two activities or powers are shared with the priests, and the lowest power of purification is also shared with the deacons." Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius*, 22. Cf. *E. h.* 5.1.4.

exalted but solitary figure, much like Moses on Mt. Sinai: "The hierarch receives revelation and authority from God as mediated by angels but never from or through other humans."²¹⁹

When divine realities or works are mentioned in *E. h.*, there is seldom any distinction of Persons. "God" and "the Deity" are the most common names; even the earthly deeds and words of Jesus are attributed to "God." For example, in the context of his commentary on the synaxis, Dionysius characterizes the liturgy as an anamnesis of "the holy works of God," followed by a citation of Christ's command in Luke 22:19: "Τὸ θεομίμητον δὲ πῶς ἂν ἡμῖν ἐτέρως ἐγγένοιτο μὴ τῆς τῶν ἱερωτάτων θεουργιῶν μνήμης ἀνανεουμένης ἀεὶ ταῖς ἱεραρχικαῖς ἱερολογίαις τε καὶ ἱερουργίαις; Τοῦτο ποιοῦμεν ὡς τὰ λόγια φησιν εἰς τὴν αὐτῆς ἀνάμνησιν."²²⁰ It is not always possible, therefore, to pinpoint unambiguous instances of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ. Nevertheless, there are enough passages containing explicit references to Christ or Jesus to suggest that there is indeed a distinct presence of Christ in the ritual actions of the hierarch who presides over the synaxis. The inner dynamic of the entire liturgical celebration is an extension of the dynamic of the Incarnation: Just as in Jesus Christ the invisible Deity became perceptible to humanity, the hierarch now makes Christ present under sensible signs.²²¹ By repeating the actions of Christ, the hierarch both makes these present and becomes symbolically assimilated to the person of Christ. "Ἐἶτα τῆς θεομιμήτου ταύτης ἱερουργίας ἄξιός αἰτήσας γενέσθαι καὶ τῇ πρὸς αὐτὸν Χριστὸν ἀφομοιώσει τὰ θεῖα τελέσαι καὶ διαδοῦναι πανάγνωσ καὶ τοὺς τῶν ἱερῶν μεθέξοντας ἱεροπρεπῶς

²¹⁹ Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius*, 23.

²²⁰ *E. h.* 3.3.12. ET: "How could the imitation of God become ours otherwise, if the memory of the most holy works of God were not perpetually renewed in the sacred words and ceremonies of the hierarchy? We do this, as Scripture says, to commemorate that divine work."

²²¹ *E. h.* 3.3.13.

μετασχεῖν ἱερουργεῖ τὰ θεϊότατα καὶ ὑπ' ὄψιν ἄγει τὰ ὑμνημένα διὰ τῶν ἱερῶς προκειμένων συμβόλων."²²² The representative role of the bishop in the Eucharist is consistent with his role as the "source and summit" of the hierarchy.

The focus on the celebrant is partly because in the central action of the Eucharist he is in some way doing what Christ did: the divine works that Christ did for us are in some way repeated by the celebrant. Another reason for the focus on the celebrant is Denys's understanding of the personal character of the passing on of sacred knowledge and communion: the hierarch himself contemplates and is united with God and the acts of his love, and it is the hierarch who extends these to the holy people.²²³

Another significant instance of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ occurs in the context of a commentary on the "mysteries of clerical consecration" (i.e. ordination). Christ is identified as a priest himself, chosen by the Father, and as the first of all priestly consecrators. Moreover, his consecration of the Twelve is presented as the origin of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Thus the hierarch who ordains clergy is both imitating Christ and drawing on his priestliness.

Ἐν ἁλλὰ καὶ ὁ θεαρχικὸς ἡμῶν καὶ πρῶτος ἱεροτελεστής [ἔγεγονε γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο δι' ἡμᾶς ὁ φιλανθρωπώτατος Ἰησοῦς] οὐχ ἑαυτὸν ἐδόξασεν, ὡς τὰ λόγια φησιν, ἀλλ' ὁ λαλήσας πρὸς αὐτόν: Σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδέκ. Διὸ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπὶ τὴν ἱερατικὴν τελείωσιν ἄγων τοὺς μαθητὰς καίπερ ὑπάρχων ὡς θεὸς τελετάρχης ὅμως ἐπὶ τὸν παναγέστατου αὐτοῦ πατέρα καὶ τὸ θεαρχικὸν πνεῦμα τὴν τελεταρχικὴν ἀνατίθησιν ἱεραρχικῶς τελεσιουργίαν παραγγέλλων τοῖς μαθηταῖς.²²⁴

²²² *E. h.* 3.3.12. ET: "Then, having prayed to become worthy of this holy rite of divine imitation, of celebrating the divine rites by being made like Christ Himself, of distributing them with all purity, and that those who will partake of these sacred things may receive them worthily and piously, he consecrates the most divine things and presents the consecrated mysteries to the eyes of all by a reverent exposition of the symbols."

²²³ Andrew Louth, *Denys the Areopagite*, Outstanding Christian Thinkers (Wilson, Conn.: Morehouse-Barlow, 1989), 62.

²²⁴ *E. h.* 5.3.5. ET: "Our first and supremely divine Consecrator, (out of His love for [humankind], Jesus became even this for us), did not glorify Himself, but one who spoke of Him said: 'Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech.' Therefore, when he led His disciples to priestly consecration, even though as God He is chief consecrator, He nevertheless referred this consecratory act hierarchically to His most holy Father and to the supremely divine Spirit."

Admittedly, the object of most sacerdotal representation in Dionysius' treatise is "God" or "the Deity" (e.g. *E. h.* 1.5). However, the instances of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ cited above, despite being couched in the author's pan-sacral jargon and convoluted phraseology, do justify his inclusion among the theologians who contributed to the emergence of *in persona Christi* theology.

14 Narses of Edessa (ca. 399–502 CE)

Narses (also known as Narsai) is considered one of the leading theologians of the (Assyrian) Church of the East. On Christological questions he was at the Nestorian end of the spectrum. His liturgical homilies, extant in Syriac only, are of great importance for the history of the rites of Christian initiation. One of these, *Homilia 32*, is of great value for its witness to the theology of priesthood beyond the bounds of Chalcedonian orthodoxy.²²⁵ It presents a highly Christic interpretation of the ordained priesthood. The latter was first bestowed by Christ upon his apostles, who then passed it on to their successors:

He perfected the Law by the law of the words of His preaching; and He gave a priesthood instead of the priesthood, that He might pardon all. Twelve priests He chose Him first, according to the number of the tribes; and instead of the People He called all peoples to be His. (...) They began to make priests spiritually, even as they had received from the High Pontiff who consecrated them. After His pattern they made priests, and were multiplied, after His likeness; and they delivered the order to their disciples, that they might do according to their (the apostles') acts.²²⁶

Furthermore, this apostolic priesthood is representative of Christ: "After His likeness He taught them to perform the priest's office; for He (performs it) in heaven, and

²²⁵ "Homily 32 of Narsai (...), who taught at Edessa and Nisibis around mid-fifth century, is a precious patristic treatise on priesthood." Cooke, *Ministry to Word and Sacraments*, 101n42.

²²⁶ Narses of Edessa, *Hom. 32*, in *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai*, ed. and trans. Richard H. Connolly, Texts and Studies 8.1 (Cambridge, U.K.: University Press, 1909).

they on earth mystically. (...) As priests they performed on earth a mystery of the institution of the Kingdom of the height."²²⁷ The principal exercise of the priestly office is the reconciliation of sinners, although the Eucharist and other rites are also mentioned. This passage meets the criteria for antecedence to *in persona Christi* theology.

15 Severus of Antioch (d. 538 CE)

This Syrian patriarch was at the Monophysite-leaning end of the Christological spectrum. His works are mainly extant in Syriac translation. Marliangeas²²⁸ cites him as an early witness of *in persona Christi* theology. In terms reminiscent of Ambrose's theory of Eucharistic change, Severus attributes the transformation of the elements to the power of the words of Christ: "It is not the offerer himself who, as by his own power and virtue, changes the bread into Christ's body, and the cup of blessing into Christ's blood, but the God-befitting and efficacious power of the words which Christ who instituted the mystery commanded to be pronounced over the things that are offered."²²⁹ The first theological consequence drawn from this is that the ordained minister who pronounces those words is in a subordinate, ministerial role:

The priest who stands before the altar, since he fulfils a mere ministerial function, pronouncing his words as in the person of Christ, and carrying back the rite that is being performed to the time at which He began the sacrifice for His apostles, says over the bread, 'This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me': while over the cup again he pronounces the words, 'This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.'

²²⁷ *Hom.* 32.

²²⁸ Marliangeas, *Clés pour une théologie du ministère*, 48.

²²⁹ Severus of Antioch, *Ep.* 3.3, in *The Sixth Book of the Select Letters of Severus Patriarch of Antioch in the Syriac Version of Athanasius of Nisibis*, vol. 2, (*Translation*) Part I, ed. and trans. Ernest Walter Brooks, reprint, 1903, Text and Translation Society (Farnborough, UK: Gregg International Publishers, 1969). Subsequent citations refer to this passage and to this edition.

This power-*lessness* of the minister serves to protect the objective efficacy of the sacramental rites that he performs. In terms reminiscent of Augustine's theory of ministerial agency (which pertained to baptism), Severus asserts further that the holiness or wickedness of the priest has no effect on the value of the sacrifice: "But the priest who stands, since he fulfils a mere subsidiary function only, makes no addition whatever to the rites that are performed, although he be an angelic and heavenly man in his character, nor does he detract anything from the divine grace, if he has lived a degraded and low life."

A second theological consequence is that the proper subject of the Eucharistic sacrifice is Christ himself, who is said to "offer" it in the present: "Accordingly it is Christ who still even now offers, and the power of His divine words perfects the things that are provided so that they may become His body and blood." This text deserves to be included among the antecedents of *in persona Christi* theology, although the absence of the Greek original makes it impossible to verify the exact shades of meaning intended by the author.

16 Gregory the Great (ca. 540–604 CE, Rome)

Gregory's ministry as bishop of Rome coincided with a particularly tumultuous period in the history of that city (famine, floods, plague, Lombard invasions), and as a result of the weakening of the power of the state, he was thrust into the position of having to take charge of the temporal welfare of its citizens as well as his pastoral office.²³⁰ His *Regula*

²³⁰ "En Occident l'affaiblissement de l'État romain donne aux évêques d'immenses pouvoirs civils, ils ont de fait la direction matérielle des cités: entretien des aqueducs, défense des murailles, participation à la défense militaire et à l'organisation du système défensif [. . .], rôle politique direct dans les ambassades et dans les négociations pour obtenir des trêves ou des accords de paix." Bruno Judic, "Introduction," in Gregory the Great, *Règle pastorale*, ed. Floribert Rommel, introd. by Bruno Judic, trans. Charles Morel, Sources chrétiennes 381–382 (Paris: Cerf, 1992), 84–85.

pastoralis (better known in English as *Pastoral Care*), composed ca. 591 CE in the months following his election as pope, was enormously influential in forming the medieval ideal of the *cura animarum*. "What Benedict's Rule was to the monks of the Middle Ages, the Pastoral Rule of Gregory the Great was to the clergy of the world."²³¹ It is a kind of handbook that sets out what moral and spiritual qualities are required in pastors (with frequent references to 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9), and how they are to admonish various categories of people. The bishop's most important tasks are preaching and imparting moral instruction; the treatise contains no specific discussion of sacramental celebrations such as baptism or the Eucharist. Sacerdotal terminology is scarce in *Regula pastoralis*. The most frequent term for the bishop is *rector*, followed by *pastor*.²³²

In Gregory's *Dialogues*, the term *sacerdos* is used in the singular as a proper designation for both presbyters²³³ and bishops.²³⁴ The treatment of the Eucharist as a propitiatory sacrifice at the end of his *Dialogues* attributes a central, efficacious role to the priest: "Quis enim fidelium habere dubium possit ipsa immolationis hora ad sacerdotis uocem caelos aperiri, in illo Iesu Christi mysterio angelorum chorus adesse, summis ima sociari, terram caelestibus iungi, unum quid ex uisibilibus atque inuisibilibus fieri?"²³⁵

²³¹ Hubertus R. Drobner, *The Fathers of the Church: A Comprehensive Introduction*, trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007), 518.

²³² Judic, "Introduction," 82.

²³³ Gregory the Great, *Dial.* 1.12.1; 2.8.4; 3.22.1; 3.30.1,5; 3.37.1; in *Dialogues*, vol. 2, (*Livres I-III*), ed. Adalbert de Vogüé, trans. Paul Antin, Sources chrétiennes 260 (Paris: Cerf, 1979).

²³⁴ *Dial.* 3.11.6.

²³⁵ Gregory the Great, *Dial.* 4.60.3, in *Dialogues*, vol. 3 (*Livre IV*), ed. Adalbert de Vogüé, trans. Paul Antin, Sources chrétiennes 265 (Paris: Cerf, 1980). FT: "Qui donc parmi les fidèles pourrait douter qu'à l'heure précise de l'immolation les cieux s'ouvrent à la voix du prêtre, qu'à ce mystère de Jésus-Christ les chœurs des anges sont présents, le très haut s'unit au très bas, le terrestre et le céleste se rejoignent, le visible et l'invisible se fondent en un?" In *ibid.*

Despite the reference to the mystery of Christ, this passage falls short of ascribing representativity to the priest.

17 Isidore of Seville (ca. 560–636 CE)

Isidore exercised his episcopal ministry in Spain under the Visigothic regime. He is principally known for the highly influential encyclopedic work, *Etymologiae*, but his *De ecclesiasticis officiis* is more directly pertinent to the question of ordained ministry. It is also a useful source for the Mozarabic liturgy. The identity of the Eucharistic sacrifice with that offered by Christ at the Last Supper is affirmed in *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 1.18.1. However, in a way reminiscent of Augustine's treatment of the Eucharist, it is *Christiani* ("Christians") who are identified as the collective subject of the celebration; no specific attention is paid to the role of the ordained minister in the offering of this sacrifice. "Sacrificium autem, quod a Christianis deo offertur, primum Christus dominus noster et magister instituit quando commendavit apostolis corpus et sanguinem suum priusquam traderetur."²³⁶

It is true that by presenting Aaron as the type of the bishop and Aaron's sons as types of the presbyters, Isidore appears to be making sacrifice the prerogative of the clergy: "Si enim filii Aaron presbiterorum figuram faciebant et Aaron summi sacerdotis, id est episcopi, Moyses cuius? Indubitanter Christi, et uere per omnia Christi, quoniam fuit

²³⁶ Isidore of Seville, *Eccl. off.* 1.18.1, in *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, ed. Christopher M. Lawson, Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina 113 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1989). Subsequent citations of *Eccl. off.* in the original refer to this edition. ET: "Christ our Lord and teacher first instituted the sacrifice, which is offered by Christians to God, when he entrusted his body and blood to the apostles before he was handed over." In *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, trans. Thomas L. Knoebel, Ancient Christian Writers 61 (New York: Newman, 2008). Subsequent English translations of *Eccl. off.* are taken from this edition.

similitudo mediatoris dei qui est inter deum et hominem Iesus Christus, qui est uerus dux populorum, uerus princeps sacerdotum et dominus pontificum."²³⁷ Notwithstanding this Old Testament typology, however, when it comes to accounting for the origins of the New Testament priesthood Isidore points to Peter as the exemplary figure: "In nouo autem testamento post Christum sacerdotalis ordo a Petro coepit. Ipsi enim primum datum est pontificatum in ecclesia Christi."²³⁸ In this passage, Isidore identifies the priesthood with the apostolic ministry, exercised primarily through the power to bind and loose and through preaching. There is no necessary correlation in his mind, therefore, between priesthood and sacrifice.²³⁹ Later he argues that presbyters are true priests precisely because in the Pastoral Epistles, Paul calls them bishops. "They could not have been given the same title as the bishop of the city, who was certainly a priest, were they not also such."²⁴⁰

What is unmistakably clear from the above-cited text is that Christ is the point of origin of the priesthood of the apostles and their successors, the bishops of the church. But the activities proper to Christian priesthood, for Isidore, are principally preaching and the power to bind and loose—the latter of which undoubtedly involves representation of God, but not specifically of Christ. Consequently, Isidore fails to meet the second criterion for antecedence to *in persona Christi* theology.

²³⁷ *Eccl. off.* 2.5.4. ET: "For if the sons of Aaron were acting as a type of the presbyters and Aaron of the high priest, that is, of the bishop, then of whom was Moses? Without doubt, of Christ, and truly Christ in every way, because he was the symbol of the mediator of God who is between God and [humankind]—Jesus Christ, who is the true leader of the peoples, the true chief priest and lord of the bishops."

²³⁸ *Eccl. off.* 2.5.5. ET: "In the New Testament, however, after Christ the order of priesthood began with Peter. For to him the pontificate in the church of Christ was given first."

²³⁹ Power, *Ministers*, 83–84.

²⁴⁰ Power, *Ministers*, 84.

18 Maximus the Confessor (ca. 580–662 CE, North Africa/Byzantium/exile)

Of aristocratic lineage, Maximus left his high administrative post in Constantinople to embrace monastic life, and later became an abbot. The chief struggle of his life was against the heresy of Monothelism. In his theological writings he was strongly influenced by, and became one of the chief proponents of, the theology of Dionysius the Areopagite (whom he deemed to be orthodox). Gregory of Nazianzus is another of his chief sources. Although Maximus wrote no separate treatise on the priesthood, his *Mystagogia*—a brief but dense interpretation of the rites of the Byzantine synaxis—is of great interest for its interpretation of the role of the "high priest." Unlike Dionysius, Maximus restricts his commentary to rites that could be observed by the assembly, and does not describe what the bishop does in the sanctuary, behind the holy doors.²⁴¹ Significantly, the three movements of the bishop during the liturgy are all interpreted as symbolic of Christ. (1) "Τὴν μὲν οὖν πρώτην εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν Ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως κατὰ τὴν ἱερὰν σύναξιν εἴσοδον, τῆς πρώτης τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ διὰ σαρκὸς εἰς τὸν κόσμον τοῦτον παρουσίας τύπον καὶ εἰκόνα φέρειν, ἐδίδασκε."²⁴² (2) "μεθ' ἧν παρουσίαν, ἡ εἰς οὐρανούς αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν ὑπερουράνιον θρόνον ἀνάβασίς τε καὶ ἀποκατάστασις συμβολικῶς τυποῦται, διὰ τῆς ἐν τῷ ἱερατείῳ τοῦ ἀρχιερέως

²⁴¹ "Denys l'Aréopagite cite surtout les rites dans lesquels le rôle du grand-prêtre et des ministres est prépondérant, alors que Maxime passe sous silence les rites qui ont lieu dans le sanctuaire, lieu dont il déclare qu'il est réservé aux grand-prêtre et ministres. Contrairement à Denys l'Aréopagite, Maxime cite uniquement des rites auxquels le peuple participe, ou qui sont audibles et visibles de la nef." Marie-Lucie Charpin-Ploix, "Introduction," in Maximus the Confessor, *La Mystagogie*, trans. Marie-Lucie Charpin-Ploix, Les Pères dans la foi (Paris: Migne, 2005), 46.

²⁴² Maximus the Confessor, *Myst.* 8., in PG 91.688C. ET: "The first entrance of the [high priest] into the holy Church for the sacred synaxis is a figure and image of the first appearance in the flesh of Jesus Christ the son of God and our Savior in this world." In *Selected Writings*, trans. George C. Berthold, Classics of Western Spirituality (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist). Subsequent English translations of *Myst.* are taken from this edition.

εἰσόδου, καὶ τῆς εἰς τὸν θρόνον τὸν ἱερατικὸν ἀναβάσεως."²⁴³ (3) In *Mystagogia* 14, the descent of the bishop from his throne after the reading of the gospel to dismiss the catechumens symbolizes the second coming of Christ who will separate the righteous from the wicked. This same symbolism is recalled in *Mystagogia* 23 and 24.²⁴⁴ Despite the complex and overlapping symbolic meanings that Maximus derives from his interpretation of the synaxis, no other moment or aspect of the liturgy is directly connected to the person of Christ except for the above-mentioned movements of the bishop. This suggests that the representation of Christ is uniquely associated with the bishop's liturgical presidency. The symbolic connection between Christ and the presider of the synaxis is reinforced by the title ἀρχιερεύς which is used for both of them. However, it must be admitted that the above-cited passages do not connote representation-of-Christ in the strong sense of making Christ present here and now. They are closer to the artistic sense of representation: the bishop's actions call to mind certain aspects of the mystery of Christ (past and future). By themselves, these instances would not meet the criteria for antecedence to *in persona Christi* theology.

This conclusion is reinforced by the observation that in Maximus's worldview, symbolic representations are fluid, overlapping, and sometimes interchangeable. Thus in the same work he also affirms that the church as a whole represents God: "Κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον καὶ ἡ ἀγία τοῦ Θεοῦ Ἐκκλησία, τὰ αὐτὰ τῷ Θεῷ περὶ ἡμῶς ὡς ἀρχετύπῳ

²⁴³ *Myst.* 8, in PG 91.688D. ET: "After this appearance, his ascension into heaven and return to the heavenly throne are symbolically figured in the [high priest's] entrance into the sanctuary and ascent to the priestly throne." Both Christ and the bishop ascend to a "throne": there is a tight parallelism between the two.

²⁴⁴ *Myst.* 24. ET: "The descent of the bishop from the throne and the dismissal of the catechumens signifies in general the second coming from heaven of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ and the separation of sinners from the saints."

εἰκὼν ἐνεργοῦσα δειχτήσεται."²⁴⁵ Moreover, the Church configures her members to Christ: "μίαν πᾶσι κατὰ τὸ ἴσον δίδωσι καὶ χαρίζεται θεῖαν μορφήν καὶ προσηγορίαν, τὸ, ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ καὶ εἶναι καὶ ὀνομάζεσθαι."²⁴⁶

In Maximus's letters, the priesthood is quite often seen as representative of God or the Deity. In some texts, however, there are expressions that *assimilate* the priest to Christ, in the sense that they attribute to the priest certain Christological features, titles, or roles, even though Christ is not explicitly mentioned. In other words, the priest represents God, but exactly *as Christ does*. Referring to a bishop whom he held in high esteem, Maximus writes that in him God may be seen "σωματικῶς" (bodily; cf. Col. 2:9): "τὴν ἱερωσύνην ὁ Θεὸς ἐπὶ γῆς ἀνθ' ἑαυτοῦ χειροτονήσας προὔβαλετο. Ἐφ' ᾧ τε καὶ σωματικῶς ὀρώμενος, καὶ τὰ αὐτοῦ μυστήρια τοῖς ὀρᾶν δυναμένοις μὴ διαλίπη φαινόμενα."²⁴⁷ Another letter speaks of the priesthood as the "χαρακτήρ" (stamp, imprint) of the Deity—a term used of Christ in Hebrews 1:3 and by many Fathers (especially in the Arian controversy). "ὅπως καὶ ἡ ἀληθῆς ἱερωσύνη χαρακτήρ οὖσα διὰ πάντων τῆς μακαρίας θεότητος τοῖς ἐπὶ γῆς."²⁴⁸ Likewise, the priesthood is compared to an "εἰκὼν" (icon) that draws human beings to God: "πρὸς ὃν, ὥσπερ ἐν εἰκόνι γραφήν εὐφυῶς τὴν μίμησιν ἔχουσιν ὑπάρχειν λέγοντες τὴν ἱερωσύνην, καὶ αὐτὴν τῷ ἴσῳ κατὰ τὴν

²⁴⁵ *Myst.* 1, in PG 91.665C. ET: "It is in this way that the holy Church of God will be shown to be working for us the same effects as God, in the same way as the image reflects its archetype."

²⁴⁶ *Myst.* 1, in PG 91.665D. ET: "To all in equal measure it [the church] gives and bestows one divine form and designation, to be Christ's and to carry his name."

²⁴⁷ *Ep.* 21, in PG 91.604D. FT: "Sur terre Dieu Lui a confié le sacerdoce en Son nom, en lequel on Le voit encore corporellement; et Ses mystères ne laissent pas de se manifester à ceux qui peuvent voir." In *Lettres*, trans. Emmanuel Ponsoye, *Sagesses chrétiennes* (Paris: Cerf, 1998). Subsequent French translations of *Ep.* are taken from this edition.

²⁴⁸ *Ep.* 31, in PG 91.625A. FT: "De même le sacerdoce authentique figure pour tous sur la terre la bienheureuse divinité."

χάριν συμπαθείας νόμω, πάντων ἑλκτικὴν εἶναι τῶν ὑπὸ τὴν αὐτὴν φύσιν διαγορευούσι."²⁴⁹ Although the immediate reference is to a painted icon, the term has obvious Christological connotations (Col. 1:15 etc.). Finally, the goal of the "true" priesthood is identified in very soteriological terms as "to be deified and to deify": "ὥσπερ καὶ τῆς ἀληθοῦς ἱερωσύνης, τὸ διὰ τούτων θεοποιεῖσθαί τε καὶ θεοποιεῖν."²⁵⁰ Finally, there are in Maximus's letters genuine instances of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ; but in these the priest is much more than a delegate or subordinate of Christ: he is *another Christ*: "πολυτίμως δι' ἑαυτοῦ τιμήσαντι ἄνθρωπον· ὄντινα Δεσπότη καὶ Κύριον κατὰ πάντα μιμούμενος, ἄλλον ἐκεῖνον κατὰ χάριν τοῦ Πνεύματος σεαυτὸν τοῖς ὀρώσι κατέστησας."²⁵¹

The above study of the Dionysian corpus found clear-cut instances of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ along with implicit or ambiguous instances in which the object of representation *may* be Christ, referred to as "God" (which would be completely unproblematic from a Monophysite perspective!). In a similar way, the writings of Maximus the Confessor contain genuine antecedents of *in persona Christi* theology, along with texts where the object of representation is God, or the Deity, but the *mode* of representation would appear to assimilate the priest with Christ.

²⁴⁹ *Ep.* 30, in PG 91.624B. FT: "[les exégètes des mystères divins] disent que le sacerdoce a une étroite ressemblance, telle une icône peinte, avec [Dieu] et affirment qu'il attire tous ceux qui sont de sa nature."

²⁵⁰ *Ep.* 31, in PG 91.625B. FT: "déifier ou être déifié, [est la fin] du vrai sacerdoce."

²⁵¹ *Ep.* 30, in PG 91.624D. FT: "C'est ce Maître et Seigneur [le Christ] que tu imites, et tu te tiens aux yeux qui te voient, par la grâce de l'Esprit, comme un autre Lui-même."

19 Bede the Venerable (ca. 673–735 CE, England)

Bede, a monk and presbyter in Jarrow (Northumbria), was the faithful heir of a long-standing patristic tradition of typological exegesis applied to the cultic institutions of the Old Testament. Those who are appointed as teachers of the faith are prefigured by the sons of Aaron, just as Christ the high priest is prefigured by Aaron himself. The church's priests are sons of the true high priest—at least, so long as they preserve their moral integrity. "Non omnium est sacramenta fidei praedicare in populo, sed eorum solummodo qui et castitate fidei et executione boni operis ad filios summi sacerdotis Domini uidelicet et saluatoris nostri pertinere probantur."²⁵² Even though the new priesthood is no longer based on physical descent, its continuation in time is assured by divine grace: "Numquam deerunt spiritalis et filii Israhel qui in domum Domini dona pietatis offerant et filii Aaron, id est ueri sacerdotis nostri, qui illis lucem uerbi ministrent."²⁵³ Bede explicitly connects the priesthood of ministers of his own time back to the apostles and their successors, thus making Christ the origin of the church's priesthood. "Cum autem in persona *Aaron* Dominum saluatorem figuraliter insinuat accipimus, quid *filios* Aaron qui et ipsi in sacerdotium uncti sunt, nisi apostolis Christi apostolorumque successores et cunctos fidelium magistros significare dicamus?"²⁵⁴ The passages just cited meet the first criterion

²⁵² Bede, *Tab.* 3.6. In *Le Tabernacle*, ed. David Hurst, trans. Christophe Vuillaume, Sources chrétiennes 475 (Paris: Cerf, 2003). Subsequent citations of *Tab.*, both in the original and in French translation, refer to this edition. FT: "Il n'appartient pas à tout le monde d'annoncer les mystères de la foi au milieu du peuple, mais à ceux-là seuls qui ont donné la preuve, par la pureté de leur foi et l'accomplissement de bonnes œuvres, qu'ils font partie des fils du grand Prêtre, notre Seigneur et Sauveur."

²⁵³ *Tab.* 3.8. FT: "Jamais ne feront défaut les fils spirituels d'Israël pour offrir les dons de piété dans la maison du Seigneur, ni les fils spirituels d'Aaron—c'est-dire de notre véritable Prêtre—pour procurer à ces derniers la lumière de la parole."

²⁵⁴ *Tab.* 3.12. FT: "Néanmoins, si l'on admet que le Seigneur et Sauveur est évoqué par la figure d'*Aaron* en personne, quelle signification donnerons-nous aux *fils* d'Aaron qui ont eux aussi reçu l'onction du sacerdoce, sinon qu'ils représentent les apôtres du Christ et les successeurs des apôtres, ainsi que tous ceux qui instruisent les fidèles?"

of antecedence to *in persona Christi* theology. However, to call priests "sons of Christ the high priest" does not sufficiently indicate how or even whether they represent him, other than by the mere fact of sharing in his priestly office. Consequently, the second criterion of antecedence is not met.

20 John Damascene (ca. 650–753 CE)

John, a monk and presbyter, is known as a brilliant synthesizer of orthodox doctrine and ardent defender of the veneration of icons. The third part of his masterwork, Πηγὴ γνώσεως (*Fountainhead of Knowledge*), which came to be known as *De fide orthodoxa* or *Expositio fidei*, was highly influential and widely disseminated throughout the early medieval Christian world. Translations were made into Arabic, Old Slavonic, Georgian, Armenian, and eventually Latin. The latter version was a major source for the scholastics, including Thomas Aquinas. In the fourth section of *De fide orthodoxa*, John addresses a variety of loosely related topics,²⁵⁵ including baptism (*F. o.* 82) and the Eucharist (*F. o.* 86). Penance is briefly mentioned as a kind of baptism (*F. o.* 82). He does not discuss the ministries of the church or the rites of ordination. Even in the discussions of baptism and the Eucharist, no mention is made of the minister(s) involved. The only use of sacerdotal terminology in this context is in reference to Christ: The priest Melchizedek was "τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ ἀρχιερέως Χριστοῦ τύπος ἦν καὶ εἰκόνισμα."²⁵⁶ Sacramental efficacy in

²⁵⁵ See Andrew Louth, *St John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 179–89.

²⁵⁶ John Damascene, *F. o.* 86, in *Die Schriften Des Johannes von Damaskos*, vol. 12, *Expositio fidei*, ed. Bonifatius Kotter, Patristische Texte und Studien 12 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1973). ET: "a type and figure of the true Archpriest who is Christ." In *Writings*, trans. Frederic H. Chase, Fathers of the Church 37 (Washington, D.C.: Fathers of the Church, 1958).

bringing about the change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ is ascribed to the creative power of the Word of God and to the Holy Spirit. There are no antecedents to *in persona Christi* theology in *De fide orthodoxa*.

John's silence about ordained ministry extends to his other famous work, his three treatises *On the Divine Images* (which are actually three versions of the same defence of the veneration of icons²⁵⁷). In his third treatise, in the list of the seven forms of προσκύνεσις ("veneration"), he makes no mention of members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The first form is to be given to the Mother of God, the saints and the apostles, who are called "those upon whom God rests"; the fifth form is given to fellow Christians; the sixth form is given to all those who exercise authority. Although in recent years the idea of the priest as an icon of Christ has become a commonplace of Eastern Christian theologies of ministry, brought forward especially in the context of debates about the ordination of women,²⁵⁸ this idea had not emerged in the thought of the early Byzantine theologians.²⁵⁹

21 Preliminary Conclusions

Our study of theological sources has covered a wide variety of authors, spanning over five centuries, and representing considerable socio-cultural and theological diversity. One unifying factor is that almost all of them were bishops, who would have had a vested interest in legitimizing their own authority in the face of competing claims; and virtually

²⁵⁷ Louth, *St John Damascene*, 200.

²⁵⁸ Cf. Kallistos Ware, "Man, Woman, and the Priesthood of Christ," in *Man, Woman, and Priesthood*, ed. Peter Moore (London: SPCK, 1978), 79–84.

²⁵⁹ It should also be noted that among the patristic authors studied in this dissertation who do think of the priest as a representative of Christ, none of them gives any consideration to the *gender* of the priest as an element or prerequisite of this representation.

all of them present ordination as an imparting of supernal authority in some form. In some cases this authority appears virtually unlimited, indistinguishable from God's own authority. It is rare to find a theologian (such as Augustine) who seeks to place limits on clerical authority.

With respect to sacerdotal terminology, from Tertullian onward there is growing agreement that the title of ἱερεὺς/*sacerdos* is a legitimate designation of the Christian bishop. Some authors also use the term ἀρχιερεὺς/*summus sacerdos* for the bishop, though a significant number prefer to reserve this title to Christ exclusively (Origen, Cyprian, Gregory, Ambrose). Although there is some evidence of the sacerdotal designation of presbyters as early as the third century (Origen), it is only by the late fourth century that this designation becomes unquestionably clear (Ambrosiaster, Chrysostom). From then onward, however, there is no hesitation. This linguistic development correlates with what is known of the increasing autonomy of presbyters, who by the end of the patristic period, rather than functioning as a college, had assumed individual leadership (both liturgical and pastoral) of most local communities throughout Christendom. None of the authors studied uses sacerdotal terminology for the order of deacons. It is unquestionable that given the pervasively biblical worldview of the Christians of the patristic period, the universal adoption of sacerdotal titles for the church's leaders strongly reinforced the latter's claims to respect and obedience on the part of the lay faithful, even when the doctrine of the church as a "royal priesthood" continued to be upheld.

To be carefully distinguished from the use of sacerdotal terminology is the issue of the relative importance of sacral-cultic categories for an interpretation of ordained ministry in the church. On this issue there is a wide spectrum among the authors studied. At one end

of the spectrum lies the hyper-sacralized vision of Dionysius, in which the mediation of the divine through a series of discrete intermediaries is the entire *raison d'être* of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. At the other end of the spectrum lies the *Second Oration* of Gregory of Nazianzus, in which a very exalted vision of the dignity of the ordained ministry is elaborated without much recourse to sacral-cultic categories. The majority of authors fall closer to the middle of the spectrum: the sphere of the cult and the sacred is an important element of episcopal/presbyteral ministry, but is not the primary or overarching element. This stands in marked contrast to the medieval Western theology of priesthood, in which the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice would become the defining factor.

There is an equally wide diversity of opinions concerning the attribution of sacerdotal status to the laity. Tertullian (a layman) stands alone in his view that the privileges and the ethical obligations pertaining to the priesthood are the common possession of all the faithful, such that ordination is not an absolute requirement for the performance of sacramental actions (baptism and the Eucharist). In reaction to the unique challenges to episcopal authority they had to face, Cyprian, and later Ambrose, show reluctance in using sacerdotal terms to refer to the laity, resulting in a one-sidedly clericalist theology. Augustine attempts to correct the clericalism of the Donatists (but indirectly that also of other catholic fathers) by stressing that both clergy and laity belong to the one body of Christ-the-priest; and that this body can only have one head, which is Christ.

The theological sources contain much more representational language than was found in the liturgical sources studied in the last chapter. A simple majority (ten out of nineteen) of the church writers studied attribute some form of representativity to the ordained priest. These "representationalists" can be subdivided into two families, A and B:

Family A: Cyprian, Pacian, Ambrose, and Ambrosiaster, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Narses of Edessa, Severus of Antioch

Family B: Dionysius the Areopagite, Maximus the Confessor

In Family A, the priest is consistently portrayed as representing Christ. In Family B, the object of representation is occasionally Christ, but more frequently "God" or "the Deity." John Chrysostom straddles both families, in that he portrays the priest as representing Christ at the Eucharist, but as representing the Trinity in administering baptism and other sacramental actions. Although it might be tempting to label Family A "Western" and Family B "Eastern," the geographical origins of the writers in each group clearly preclude this simplistic distinction. The only perceptible cultural-linguistic specificity among the representationalists is that the concept of vicarious action by the priest (acting in Christ's stead or place) is found only in Western sources. Contrary to conventional assumptions, the concept of "iconic" representation by the priest is found not only in Eastern authors (Theodore of Mopsuestia, Maximus the Confessor) but in Western ones as well (Ambrose of Milan, Ambrosiaster).

Augustine is a special case; he cannot simply be classified among the "non-representationalists." He stresses very strongly the agency of Christ in the sacraments (especially baptism), but precisely as a result of this emphasis, the role of the minister is reduced to a minimal level. He is vehemently opposed to any arrogation by the minister of prerogatives that, in his view, belong exclusively to Christ (including the power to baptize and the role of mediator between God and people).

Notwithstanding all the variations just mentioned, it can safely be concluded that (1) there are enough genuine instances of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ in the theological sources of the patristic period, and (2) there is enough logical consistency

among these instances, that it can be considered a strong, recognizable current of thought. The alternative interpretation, found in Family B, according to which the priest represents God or the Deity, is an equally "high" theology of ordained ministry, even though it may not be considered strictly equivalent to sacerdotal representation-of-Christ.

CONCLUSION

1 Preliminary Remarks

The starting-point of the present dissertation was the need for historical research to verify the anchoring of classic *in persona Christi* theology in the ancient Tradition of the church. It was observed that the twentieth-century Roman Catholic magisterium provided little patristic evidence to support the traditional status of *in persona Christi* theology, either because such evidence was thought unnecessary in principle, or because it was considered to be so evidently favourable that an accumulation of citations would have been redundant. The magisterium's use of *in persona Christi* theology has grown more emphatic since the Second Vatican Council, in proportion to the increasingly critical stance taken by theologians towards the classic Western teaching on priesthood. Recent scholarship, while providing extensive insights into the meaning of the expressions *in persona Christi* and *in persona Ecclesiae* from the thirteenth century onwards, does not provide adequate studies of the idea of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ in the patristic period. Consequently, it has been difficult to evaluate some of the historical claims made by contemporary critics of *in persona Christi* theology, who dispute the latter's prevalence in the ancient sources.

One of the most important methodological choices that have guided the present study from the outset was to restrict the enquiry to documentary sources that use sacerdotal titles as proper, literal designations of ordained ministers. The reason for this choice is that in its classic expression—in the writings of Thomas Aquinas—, *in persona Christi* theology was essentially a theory of *priesthood* and of *priestly action*: the church's bishops and presbyters are able to represent Christ sacramentally precisely because ordination makes them priests *of Christ*. But recognizing (1) the historical fact that sacerdotal titles were only

gradually adopted by the Christian churches to designate their ministers, and (2) the possibly ambiguous meaning of sacerdotal titles, especially in the earliest sources, a further criterion was added: To qualify positively as an antecedent, a given source would need to exhibit a sufficiently Christianized, i.e. *Christic*, understanding of priesthood.

Another, equally important methodological choice was to require that a given source identify the object of sacerdotal representation unequivocally as *Christ*, the incarnate Son, Logos, or Wisdom of God. Some readers may find this criterion unnecessarily restrictive. Supporters of the magisterium's current use of *in persona Christi* theology frequently cite Ignatius of Antioch's designation of the bishop as "τύπος τοῦ πατρὸς" (type/image of the Father)¹ as an early witness—even though in the same passage it is deacons who are to be "respected as Jesus Christ." It may be conceded that in the broad sense, *any* representation of divine Persons may qualify as an antecedent. In the strict sense, however, it is impossible to equate representation of the Father (or of the Trinity) with representation of the Son. In principle, these are *alternative* interpretations of the meaning of ordained ministry, even if they happen to occur in the same author. Moreover, their anthropological, soteriological, and ecclesiological implications are quite different, as it is only the Logos who may properly be said to have become incarnate, to have suffered on the Cross, to possess a glorified human nature, and to be the high priest of Christians, that is to say, the one through whom all cultic activity is acceptably offered to God. But because the classic Western theology in general has been criticized for being too narrowly Christocentric (to

¹ *Trall.* 3.1. Puzzlingly, this passage is cited in support of the idea that bishops and presbyters make visible the presence of *Christ* as head of the church, in *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1549.

the point of "Christomonism"), it is vitally important to verify whether there is any patristic support for representation of Christ specifically.

One of the difficulties encountered in locating explicit instances of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ has been that the theology of priesthood was simply not one of the central preoccupations of Christian writers during the patristic period. They almost never discussed it for its own sake. Treatises exclusively devoted to the subject of priesthood were few in number, and despite their popularity and later influence, their main concerns were to inculcate respect for officeholders' status, to stress the requirement of moral integrity both in candidates for the priestly office and for those already ordained, and to exhort pastors to zeal in their duties (chief among which was the passing on of correct doctrine). Regarding the sacraments, most of the fathers' theological interest and energy were directed towards baptism, rather than the Eucharist. The offering of the eucharistic sacrifice had not assumed the central, paradigmatic role in defining the ordained ministry that it would acquire in the early medieval period.

A properly theological argumentation about the priesthood was needed only when there was controversy with rival groups² regarding the legitimacy of ministers, when factions within a local church challenged the authority of their own bishop, or when there were disputes regarding the proper administration of certain sacraments. The typical theological response to external or internal challenges to the legitimacy or authority of catholic ministers in the patristic era was to emphasize the elevated status granted by their

²Besides the Gnostics and the Montanists, very few dissident Christian groups went so far as to reject the church's ministerial structure as a matter of principle. Virtually all the communities labelled heretical or schismatic by the *Catholica* (Arians, Donatists, Novatians, etc.) had their own ministers, whether the latter were deemed to perform true sacraments or not.

ordination. That God was the one granting this new dignity was a universal assumption. The most immediate problem created by this theological strategy was how to account for the all-too-prevalent moral failings of ministers, beginning with those who betrayed their Christian faith under threat of persecution. A definitive, completely satisfactory solution to the enduring problem of unworthy ministers would prove elusive for many centuries beyond the patristic era (with additional complications created in the medieval period by the practice of simony). However, several fathers provided important elements of the solution, which constituted genuine advances in sacramental theology: the distinction between sacramental liceity and validity, the concept of sacramental character as an explanation for the unrepeatability of baptism and ordination.

2 Findings

Genuine antecedents to *in persona Christi* theology may be found in the works of just over half (ten out of nineteen) of the theological sources studied, if one includes both the church writers who consistently portray the ordained priest as a representative of Christ (classified as Family A in the last chapter) and those who, in addition to representation-of-Christ, also contain alternative interpretations of priestly representation (classified as Family B): Cyprian of Carthage, Pacian, Ambrose of Milan, Ambrosiaster, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Dionysius the Areopagite, Narses of Edessa, Severus of Antioch, and Maximus the Confessor. The wide temporal and geographical span represented by these authors, as well as their authoritative status for later generations of Christians, is a guarantee that the emergence of the idea of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ was not an isolated phenomenon and did indeed constitute an element of the church's

common Tradition, long before the scholastic period. In light of this body of evidence, the appearance of *in persona Christi* theology in Thomas Aquinas and the other scholastics appears not as a radical innovation but as an appropriation, a further elaboration of an idea that was deeply anchored in the patristic heritage.

Most of the instances of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ in our sources were found in passages that explicate the role of the priest in the celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy; and these are also the strongest and most explicit instances of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ (in Cyprian, Ambrose, Ambrosiaster, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia). The citation of some of these texts by the Second Vatican Council (LG 21) in support of *in persona Christi* theology is fully justified. In each of these cases the import of the concept is to establish Christ as the true—albeit invisible—offerer of the sacrifice, in the present. But sacerdotal representation-of-Christ is also used in non-eucharistic contexts: in reference to the priest's role as judge (Cyprian), in baptism (Pacian, Ambrose), in reconciling penitents to the church (Ambrose, Narses), in administering sacraments in general. In addition, there is in at least one of the sources (Ambrosiaster) the notion that representation-of-Christ is a permanent, ongoing function of priests, one that is coextensive with their priesthood, and one that should elicit a corresponding attitude of respect on the part of the faithful. A similar idea is suggested by Ambrose's description of the church's priests as "images" of the true and eternal Priest.

Conversely, though, the fact that sacerdotal representation-of-Christ was *not* found in the works of the other nine authors studied (Tertullian, Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nazianzus, Augustine, Gregory the Great, Isidore, Bede, and John Damascene) calls for careful evaluation, especially since the distribution of these sources is just as broad,

temporally and geographically, as that of the first group of authors. It is essential to avoid a fallacious use of the *argumentum ex silentio*. A few cautionary remarks are in order. (1) In theory, silence on sacerdotal representation-of-Christ may be the result of mere isolation or of ignorance of other authors' views on the subject. That being said, in the Constantinian era, theological writings were freely and widely circulated in the Mediterranean world, and tended to generate passionate interest and discussion. Ignorance is an especially unlikely explanation in the case of Augustine, who had been personally formed by Ambrose and who was a great admirer of Cyprian. (2) Silence on sacerdotal representation-of-Christ does not necessarily imply disagreement or rejection of the idea. A non-representationalist is not an *anti*-representationalist. There is no evidence of sustained opposition to the representationalist position. (3) In most cases, silence on sacerdotal representation-of-Christ may result from a lack of interest in exploring the theological implications of ordained ministry in the face of more pressing theological issues, such as the successive Christological controversies, or more pressing pastoral concerns, such as the moral rectitude of the clergy. (4) In the case of an author such as Cyril of Jerusalem, who comments extensively on the rites of initiation while hardly ever mentioning the person of the minister, it is likely that the sanctifying power of the sacramental rites themselves was seen as far outweighing the importance of the role played by the human minister. What mystagogy sought to convey was how the rites elevated the participants into the very mystery of God. The dynamic of such catechesis was upward: from the visible to the invisible. (5) In the case of Augustine, a few reasons were already given above (ch. 4, 12) for his tendency to downplay the importance of the minister. He was very concerned—and rightly so—to hold in balance the soteriological primacy of Christ, the one Priest of the new

covenant, the priestly dignity of the entire people of God, and the ministerial role of ordained priests. The history of theology has shown, and never more so than in the sixteenth-century Reformation and its aftermath, that it is difficult to achieve a perfect balance among these three elements.³

It is more difficult to account for the silence of the liturgical sources (with the exception, as noted above in ch. 3, 9, of a few scattered instances in two of the ancient church orders, the *Didascalia* and the *Apostolic Constitutions*). In the case of the ancient church orders, it might be reasonable to suppose that silence is an indication of ignorance: sacerdotal representation-of-Christ may not have been a predominant or even central element of ordained ministry in the consciousness of those who compiled these earliest liturgical sources. But ignorance is not as plausible an explanation in the case of the Western rites of ordination, which would all have been composed by authors who had some exposure to the Christocentric ideas of ministry in authors such as Cyprian, Pacian, Ambrose, and Ambrosiaster (not to mention Augustine). The Roman prayers of ordination are full of sacerdotal imagery, yet lack any reference to the person of Christ, which leaves the lingering suspicion that its authors may not have perceived either the radical discontinuity effected by Christ, or the consequent need to reinterpret the concept of priesthood.

Another discrepancy that may not be ignored is the presence, in the *Didascalia* and the *Apostolic Constitutions*, of an alternative form of representation, in which the bishop-

³ The three affirmations that need to be held to be simultaneously true were succinctly formulated by a French priest, Long-Hasselmanns, in notes first published after his death by Congar: "(1) Unus sacerdos. (2) Omnes sacerdos. (3) Aliqui presbyteri." ET: "(1) There is One alone who is a Priest. (2) All are priest [note the singular]. (3) Some are presbyters." Yves-M.-J. Congar, "Un essai de théologie sur le sacerdoce catholique: La thèse de l'Abbé Long-Hasselmanns," *Revue des sciences religieuses* 25 (1951): 275.

deacon pair represents the First and Second Persons of the Trinity. The influence of the Ignatian letters may be the remote origin of this typology. Its disappearance in later liturgical sources, as well as its complete absence from the theological sources, may be accounted for by its subordinationist implications. In the course of the fourth century, the reaction against Arianism led to the elimination of any hint of inferiority on the part of Christ, and the introduction of liturgical elements that stress the full equality of Christ with the Father. Christ came to be seen more as the object than the subject of the church's worship.

In several of the theological sources (John Chrysostom, Dionysius the Areopagite, Maximus the Confessor), sacerdotal representation-of-Christ coexists alongside representation of "God" or "the Deity." (We classified these above as Family B.) In theologians of this calibre, the fluctuation between different objects of representation should not be seen as a contradiction or as the result of less-than-rigorous logic. In the case of Chrysostom, as was already noted earlier, he is proceeding more empirically, and taking the words used in different sacramental rites as indications of the source of their efficacy: Christ in the case of the Eucharist, the Trinity in the case of baptism. In the case of Dionysius and Maximus, theirs is a totalizing vision in which the earthly liturgy is a comprehensive reflection of the entire story of salvation; hence all heavenly realities must be manifested in the various elements of the celebration. Symbolism is fluid and overlapping rather than static.

To put things in a more systematic perspective, the patristic theologies of priestly ministry are points of intersection between their authors' understanding of the following themes:

- (a) the subject of the church's liturgy
- (b) the object of liturgical worship
- (b) the subject of sanctifying action
- (c) the source of ecclesiastical authority
- (d) the importance of ordained ministry for the authenticity of the church
- (e) the capacity of human persons to mediate divine activity

Variations and differences of emphasis among the sources studied on the issue of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ can best be explained by more fundamental differences pertaining to the latter's theological presuppositions in each of the areas just listed.

3 Sources Cited by Thomas Aquinas in Support of *in persona Christi*

In attempting to trace the existence of possible patristic antecedents to the *in persona Christi* theology of Thomas Aquinas and the other scholastics, it is not necessary (or often possible) to demonstrate conclusively that there existed an immediate, literary relationship between the latter's works and patristic sources. The scholastics took upon themselves the task of systematizing the entire heritage of the early church, but much of this had come down to them in mediate form: through *catenae*, *florilegia*, Gratian's *Decretum*, or other kinds of compilations. Many of the valuable patristic texts that we have analysed in earlier chapters of the present dissertation were not directly accessible to Thomas Aquinas and to medieval scholars in general, for instance the Ignatian letters, Justin Martyr's *1 Apology*, the *Apostolic Tradition*, the catecheses of John Chrysostom and of

Theodore of Mopsuestia.⁴ An additional complication is that in the manuscripts that were available to medieval scholars, authorship was often mistakenly attributed, as with the works of Ambrosiaster.

Nevertheless, if there should happen to be a more immediate connection between a particular antecedent and Thomas's use of *in persona Christi* language, this would be highly pertinent to the argument of the present dissertation. It will be helpful, then, to examine the citations found in the most significant instances of *in persona Christi*, which are to be found in the *Summa*, and above all in the *Tertia Pars*, which deals with Christ and the sacraments. As previously noted, Thomas quotes abundantly from the Dionysian corpus, on which his master Albert had written commentaries. He also cites John Damascene, but not in the sacramental section of the *Tertia Pars*.⁵

When discussing the governance of the church or the administration of sacraments in general, Thomas turns to scriptural prooftexts—2 Corinthians 2:10, and occasionally 2 Corinthians 5:20—whenever he considers it necessary to back up the idea of *in persona Christi* because of the implications he wishes to draw out from it: *ST*, II^a-IIae q. 88 a. 12 co. (prelates have authority to dispense from vows); III^a q. 8 a. 7 co. (prelates can be called "heads" of the church in a derivative sense); III^a q. 22 a. 4 (Christ does not benefit from his own priesthood). However, when expounding his ideas about the joint role of the words of consecration and of the priest in bringing about the Eucharist (in *ST*, q. 78; q. 82; q. 83), Thomas does not appeal to these Pauline texts. Rather, he appeals (1) repeatedly, to the famous text of Ambrose: *De sacramentis* 4.14 (III^a q. 78 a. 1 s. c.; q. 78 a. 4 s. c.); (2) to the

⁴ Pierre-Marie Gy, "La documentation sacramentaire de Thomas d'Aquin," *Recherches de sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 80, no. 3 (1996): 425.

⁵ Gy, "Documentation sacramentaire," 425.

words of consecration themselves, taken to be absolutely truthful inasmuch as they are the very words of Christ (III^a q. 78 a. 5 s. c.); (3) to words extracted from the presbyteral ordination rite known to him, "accipe potestatem offerendi sacrificium in Ecclesia tam pro vivis quam pro mortuis," and which he considers to constitute the "form" of the sacrament of Order (III^a q. 82 a. 1 ad 1); (4) to a text of Augustine as cited in Gratian's *Decretum*, 3.2.53: "Semel immolatus est in semetipso Christus, et tamen quotidie immolatur in sacramento"⁶ (III^a q. 83 a. 1 s. c.). Of these four authorities, only the first directly supports the idea that the priest acts *in persona Christi* in consecrating the Eucharist. (The second supports the idea of transubstantiation; the third supports the idea that ordination imparts spiritual power that authorizes a priest to consecrate the Eucharist; the fourth supports the idea that Christ is what is offered in the Eucharist.)

While 2 Corinthians 2:10 is the principal authority used by Thomas to support the idea of ordained ministers representing Christ in governing and sanctifying the church in general, it is Ambrose's explanation of the mechanics of Eucharistic change in *De sacramentis* 4.14 that provides the main patristic support for Thomas's use of *in persona Christi* in the strongest sense.⁷

⁶The original text of Augustine reads: "Nonne semel immolatus est Christus in se ipso et tamen in sacramento non solum per omnes paschae sollemnitates sed omni die populis immolatur?" *Ep.* 98.9, in *S. Aureli Augustini Hipponensis episcopi epistulae*, vol. 2, *Ep. XXX-CXXIII*, ed. Alois Goldbacher, *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum* 34 (Vienna: Tempsky, 1898). ET: "Was not Christ offered in His Person only once, yet in the sacred mysteries He is offered for [humankind] not only on every Easter Sunday but every day?" In *Letters*, vol. 2 (83–130), trans. Sr. Wilfrid Parsons, *Fathers of the Church* 18 (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1953).

⁷This observation reinforces the appropriateness of the reference to *Sacram.* 4.14 in *Lumen gentium*.

4 Response to Contemporary Critiques of *in persona Christi*

In the first chapter of the present dissertation (ch. 1, 3), contemporary critiques of *in persona Christi* theology were arranged into four typical positions, ranging from mild to severe criticism. It will be helpful to attempt a response to these critiques, in the light of the patristic evidence on sacerdotal representation-of-Christ accumulated thus far.

Position 1 (A directly Christological basis for ministry is a departure from the more holistic ecclesial and pneumatological theology of the first millennium): Sacerdotal representation-of-Christ is in no sense to be seen as a total explanation of the meaning of ordained ministry. The variations among the sources studied amply demonstrate this for the patristic period. That being said, it is misleading to claim that a directly Christological basis for ministry found in scholastics such as Thomas Aquinas represents a radical departure from the theology of the "first millennium." Church fathers such as Cyprian and Ambrose were not always careful to situate the role of the ordained ministry within the *ecclesia*, nor did they always mention the role of the Holy Spirit in sacramental efficacy, even though they most certainly possessed well-articulated ecclesiologies and pneumatologies. The antecedents of *in persona Christi* theology found in the present study tend to focus on the words, actions, and authority of the individual *sacerdos*, and give these a directly Christic basis. Problems arise only if such antecedents are extracted from the broader context of their authors' theologies, and made to stand alone as complete explanations of the meaning of ordained ministry.

Position 2 (Ordained priests can only represent Christ because they first represent the church): The sources studied are familiar with the idea of bi-directional representation (representing God to the people and the people to God), since this is the definition of

mediation. Some authors (Gregory of Nazianzus, Maximus the Confessor) would see this mediatory role as the very essence of priesthood (*pace* Augustine). However, none of the patristic authors attempts to oppose the two aspects of representation, to subordinate one to the other, or to explain one as a consequence of the other, although the aspects could be spoken of separately. In any case the rites of ordination are evidence of the conviction that the authority of ministers is directly bestowed by God and is not a form of delegation by the community.

Position 3 (The priest's action *in persona Christi* is purely self-effacing and instrumental, not representative): Besides Augustine, the patristic authors studied do not hesitate to use language that assimilates or identifies the minister with the person of Christ. If anything, the patristic expressions of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ attribute an even higher, even more Christ-like status to the priest than Thomas's use of *in persona Christi* language. Representation-of-Christ has obvious and immediate implications for the status of the minister in the community, as evidenced for example by the citations of Ambrose and Ambrosiaster above. The priest is not a merely passive instrument, but a voluntary one.

Position 4 (An exclusive representation of Christ by the ordained can only be a denial of the equality of all disciples, both male and female): Expressions of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ in patristic literature are never accompanied by denials of the capacity of other persons to represent Christ. Although the representation of Christ by the baptized was not the focus of the present dissertation, some expressions of the general patristic conviction that the baptized are configured to Christ—and share in his priestly anointing—were noted along the way, in the works of Origen, Ambrose, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Augustine. Representation-of-Christ is not presented in the sources as the

differentiating factor between the common and the ordained priesthoods.⁸ Nor is the reasoning applied in reverse, to argue that only those who have the *pre-existing* capacity to symbolize Christ may be admitted to ordination. It is ordination, not some pre-existing characteristic, that enables bishops and presbyters to represent Christ in their ministerial roles. Consequently, patristic antecedents to *in persona Christi* theology should not be taken as inherently detrimental to the fundamental equality of men and women.

5 The Contemporary Magisterial Use of *in persona Christi*

The finding that antecedents of *in persona Christi* theology are strongly attested in the literature of the patristic period may appear to endorse the use of this concept by the contemporary Roman magisterium. It should be noted, first of all, that upon closer scrutiny, several of the patristic citations cited in magisterial documents do not in fact support *in persona Christi* (as we have shown).⁹ Secondly, the silence of the ancient liturgical sources, together with the presence of alternative interpretations of the meaning of ordained ministry by several church writers, should not be lightly dismissed. An exclusively Christic interpretation of priesthood is by no means to be taken for granted in the patristic period. Thirdly, the position of Augustine—that great Doctor of the Western church—should serve as a warning that the role of the minister needs to be held in balance with, on the one hand, the primacy of Christ as the One High Priest of the new covenant (which is also the

⁸ Nor is there any trace of the later contrast between a purely "interior, spiritual" priesthood of the baptized and an "exterior, visible" priesthood of the ordained.

⁹ The following citations do not identify Christ as the object of priestly representation: in Pius XII's MD 69, the reference to John Chrysostom, *Hom. in Io.* 86; in LG 21's last footnote, the interpretation of John Chrysostom's *Hom. in 2 Tim.* 2.4 as signifying that the priest is a "symbol of Christ" (although there is some representation-of-Christ elsewhere in this text); in the same footnote, the reference to Ambrosiaster, *Comm. Ephes.* 4.11-12.

teaching of Hebrews) and, on the other hand, the sacerdotal quality of the whole people of God. The absence of any explicit antecedents to *in persona Christi* in the work of Augustine should not be glossed over. For all the reasons just enumerated, while there is no reason to jettison *in persona Christi*, it should no longer continue to be treated as self-evident in the contemporary context. If clearer and more demonstrable evidence of its status in the ancient tradition were provided in magisterial teaching, this could only facilitate the process of reception. Moreover, it would open up new possibilities for dialogue with ecclesial communities that, for various reasons, have difficulty accepting positions derived exclusively from Thomistic theology.

6 Areas Requiring Further Study

The extant body of patristic literature is so vast that no study of even so specific a concept as sacerdotal representation-of-Christ may pretend to be exhaustive. A selection of sources had to be made, on the basis of what contemporary scholars consider to be the main landmarks in the history of the rites of ordination (ch. 3) and the theology of priestly ministry (ch. 4). Many more sources could be added. In particular, it could be asked what theology of priestly representation (if any) emerges from other liturgical texts, such as the ancient anaphoras, the rites of initiation, blessings, etc. Among the theological sources, more attention could and should be paid to conciliar and canonical texts, the letters and decrees of popes such as Leo I, Innocent I, and Gregory the Great. For each of the authors that were included in our study, a more complete reading of their works, together with more consultation of the secondary literature, would undoubtedly create a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the place of sacerdotal representation-of-Christ in their thought.

The present study was intentionally restricted to the patristic period. One could and should, however, raise the question of how the theology of priestly representation may have continued to develop between the eighth century and the ascendancy of scholasticism in the thirteenth century. It is well known, for example, that the outward forms and ceremonies of many sacraments (initiation, penance, Eucharist) underwent massive transformations in the West between the end of the patristic era and the high Middle Ages. These are other new developments in Christian thought and society (such as the extraordinary success of monasticism) may have contributed to the emergence of the more eucharistically centered and radically Christic theology of ministry that became characteristic of the Western church. This period, which also saw a philosophical shift from neo-Platonism to Aristotelianism, would also merit careful study if we are to develop a fuller picture of the evolution of a representational theology.

Our survey of the liturgical and theological sources of the patristic period, applying hermeneutical criteria drawn from the historical-critical method, has accumulated strong evidence in favour of the existence of genuine antecedents to *in persona Christi* theology in ancient Christian tradition. Sacerdotal representation-of-Christ is a clearly recognizable current of thought that is not restricted to a single time period or cultural-linguistic sphere; nor was it a controverted idea. In the theological sources where it is found, representation-of-Christ is used in a stable, internally coherent manner which possesses rhetorical force, as evidenced by its persuasive effect on later generations of theologians (cf. Aquinas's citations of Ambrose). This theology is at home especially in discussions of the presider's role at the Eucharist, as this role is clearly patterned on that of Christ at the Last Supper.

Alternative theologies of priestly representation were also found in the literature, but in many cases it was possible for these to coexist with representation-of-Christ, even in the mind of a single author. Although more work remains to be done to account for the variations that were identified—and in particular, for the silence of the liturgical sources—there is no doubt that these findings need to be included in future discussions of *in persona Christi* theology.

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