

Every line indicates points of emphasis by the author.

ARC III

"THE MINISTER OF THE EUCHARIST"
By Professor William J. Wolf
Episcopal Theological School

(The purpose of this paper is to serve our Roman Catholic-Anglican dialogue as we pursue further our study of the Church as a eucharistic fellowship. The writer, as will be painfully obvious, is a specialist neither in Biblical nor historical studies. He wishes also to acknowledge his indebtedness to an article by Father Joseph Lecuyer. (Le Celebrant: Approfondissement theologique de sa fonction, Maison-Dieu, 61 (1960)).

It is no longer possible to use traditional manuals of theology to compile a paper on "The Minister of the Eucharist." This is fortunate for the Church of Christ, but unfortunate for the writer of a paper. The revolution in historical knowledge and the developing ecumenical orientation of the Churches have rendered obsolete much that once seemed very clear and uncomplicated. Catholics have recognized increasingly the wide diversities of ministry in the New Testament and are less likely to read back later developments into the earliest period. Protestants have shown a new openness in recognizing within the New Testament the seeds of later development and in realizing that the ministry cannot be frozen into a supposedly determinable New Testament pattern. There remains the task of trying to achieve ever more accurate scientific-historical studies in which the investigators hold their theologies and ideologies to a minimum.

[REDACTED]

If we could imagine ourselves without the revolution in historical studies as a complicating factor for a contemporary study of "The Minister of the Eucharist" we

should still be brought face to face with new difficulties given the ecumenical orientation of our day.

Faith and order discussions have a way of bogging down when the Christian Ministry is the topic. In every plan for church union the most intractable problem is the ordained Ministry and even when agreement is reached over its future shape and interpretation, new discord usually arises over the transitional period. To what degree are we not only faithful guardians of tradition but also the prisoners of disciplinary canons that were forged in an era of polemic when the Churches had not yet accepted each other as in some sense Churches?

It may be that our Roman Catholic-Anglican Commission can make some progress in studying the Ministry in the context of the Eucharist. Both of our Churches have been and are being renewed in spirit by the liturgical movement. Our deepened appreciation of the Eucharist may help us to fresh insights about "the Minister of the Eucharist."

Jesus Christ is the Minister of the Eucharist

That there is such a sacrament as the Eucharist in the Church and that special ministers are needed for its celebration may be seen quite simply in the foundational act of Christ at the Lord's Supper. St. Paul describes that act as follows:

"For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."... For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." (I Cor. 11: 23-26 R. S. V.)

The simple command "Do this in remembrance of me" must remain the source of all theological activity designed to develop the conception of the Minister of the Eucharist. The Minister of the Eucharist is Jesus Christ. No more primary affirmation than this can be made. He remains host at his own Table and graciously incorporates into his sacrifice the sacrificial worship of his faithful people. He, the

Head of the Body the Church, unites the members to himself in an act described by St. Augustine as constituting the "totus Christus." This activity of the High Priest and Mediator has been described in the following terms in The Statement of Faith and Order of the Episcopal Church in the U. S. A.

"This sacrament is a corporate act of the Church towards God, wherein it is united with its Lord, victorious and triumphant, Himself both Priest and Victim in the sacrifice of the Cross. In it the faithful continue a perpetual memory of the precious death of Christ who is their Advocate with the Father and the propitiation for their sins, according to His precept, until His coming again. For first they offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; then next they plead and represent before Father the sacrifice of the Cross, and by it they confidently entreat remission of sins and all other benefits of the Lord's passion for all the whole Church; and lastly they offer the sacrifice of themselves to the Creator of all things which they have already signified by the oblations of the bread and wine which are His creatures."

(This Faith and Order Statement was prepared by the Commission on Approaches to Unity for the Lambeth Conference of 1948 and for the General Convention of 1949. In 1961 the General Convention instructed its Commission "to make the historic position of this Church as defined in these several statements the framework for all church unity conversations in which it shall be engaged.")

Jesus Christ, the High Priest of the New Covenant, chooses to act through the Ministers of the Eucharist. He empowers them to be ministers of Christ. This activity may be analyzed in at least four dimensions:

1. The celebrant represents Christ.
2. The celebrant represents the apostolic ministry of the Church now continued especially in the historic episcopate.
3. The celebrant represents the congregation as he voices its eucharistic joy.
4. The Minister of the Eucharist is also the Christian layman who in his role of co-offerer is also "co-minister."

I. The Celebrant Represents Christ

According to the Gospel accounts Jesus saw that an upper room was prepared to celebrate the Passover with his disciples. Then focusing the attention of the disciples

in worship like the Jewish head of the family, Jesus spoke prayers and blessings over bread and wine, also performing ritual actions of taking, breaking, giving, etc. So the celebrant today like Christ then presides over the Eucharist. He is responsible for the movement and progress of the whole liturgy. In order truly to represent Christ the celebrant must faithfully and unfailingly use Christ's words of institution and the elements ordained by Him in the context of the Church's order of service.

St. Cyprian made this principle explicit in his Sixty-Third Letter: "He alone fulfills the role of priest in place of Christ who does what Christ has done and he offers to God the Father, in the Church, the truth and fullness of the sacrifice only in so far as he offers it as he sees that Christ has himself offered it."

The function of the celebrant is described in patristic literature as that of "president" (St. Justin et al.). We may well have here a clue to the way in which monepiscopacy arose out of the apparently fluid ministries of the New Testament. The sanctuary in the house church as well as in the later basilica was semi-circular, the celebrant (or "president") sitting behind the table with the "elders" of the congregation sitting on either side of him, following the curve in the wall. The deacons stood either in front of the table or at the side so that they could serve the people.

Here plainly the arrangement of the Last Supper is duplicated with the bishop as "liturgical president" clearly and visibly representing Christ as seated in his place. Here is a simple reproduction or representation that makes the president's Eucharist the very Eucharist of Christ himself. It now becomes possible to appreciate the enthusiasm of St. Ignatius for monepiscopacy.

"We ought to look upon the Bishop as upon the Lord Himself... and the presbyters after the likeness of the Apostles." "Do ye all follow your Bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and the presbytery the Apostles... Let that be held a lawful Eucharist which is under the Bishop or one to whom he shall have committed it. Wheresoever the Bishop shall appear, there let the people be; even as wherever Jesus is, there is the Catholic Church." (ad Eph. 6; ad Magnes. 6.)

The picture of the bishop as sitting in the place of Christ as celebrant yields a further dimension related to his historic task as chief pastor in the diocese. It is his responsibility to determine the conditions of admission to the Holy Table or of exclusion from it. This disciplinary function begins to acquire a new dimension and heavy responsibilities in an ecumenical era when Christians of other communions may seek admission to the Eucharist. Are there ecumenical occasions when he or the conference of bishops should actively invite reception of the communion by communicants of other Christian bodies?

"The leader of the celebration of the Eucharist cannot in fact be conceived merely as the person who effects the consecration ex opere operato, but as the authoritative leader of the community celebration with the right and duty of admitting to or excluding from the altar-community as the perfect realization of the unity of the visible Church " (Karl Rahner Bishops: Their Status and Function pg. 52)

If the celebrant represents Christ as obeying his command to preside at the Eucharist, he obviously must not simply play a role as a mere actor in a play, but the celebrant must seek to fashion his whole life in the style of Christ's life. The Gospel of St. John records the story of the footwashing as a prelude to the Last Supper. The celebrant is not to magnify his office to gain power or display over others but in order to serve them both in the eucharistic action and in his total orientation of life.

"And he said to them, 'the Kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather let the greatest among

6.

you become as the youngest; and the leader as one who serves. For which is the greater, one who sits at table, or one who serves? Is it not the one who sits at table? But I am among you as one who serves." (Luke 22:25-27). Liturgy is service as in the meaning in Greek of Leitourgia.

In order to serve God's people, as president of the eucharistic action, the celebrant ought not to let his personal piety obtrude upon the congregation, but should seek to evoke a true participation of all those present in corporate worship of the Church. He is responsible for the mutually supporting roles of bishop, priest, deacon, and layman in the eucharistic action.

"Thus all things are done religiously, acceptable to His good pleasure, dependent on His will. . . . Special functions are assigned to the high priest; a special office is imposed upon the priests; and special ministrations fall to the Levites. The layman is bound by the rules laid down for the laity." (St. Clement, Letter to Corinthians, ch. 40.)

Exhortations to the celebrant to imitate the humility and love of Christ, as necessary as they are, do not, however, reach the deepest theological level. The celebrant represents Christ not merely as an external sign of likeness, but sacramentally by mediating in himself the presence of Christ. The celebrant personifies Christ in the sense that Christ graciously makes himself "really present" not only in the consecrated elements, but in the entire eucharistic action and in particular in his celebrant. In this way every Eucharist becomes Christ's Eucharist and the many Eucharists of the Church become the One Eucharist of Christ. It is fitting that a faith in the Incarnation of Christ should express itself through the instrumentality of priests considered as expressing themselves the incarnational principle.

Father Louis Bouyer underlines the significance of the celebrant:

"But in the New Covenant, it is the bishop, or the priest whom he has designated when he is not present himself, who is to say the Eucharist. Let us remember the phrase of St. Ignatius: 'Let no Eucharist be accounted valid except that which is ratified by the bishop.' But what is it that assigns this Leitourgia to the bishop, making it definitely his work that nobody can perform

it in his stead except those co-workers whom he himself has endowed with the power to do so? There is no doubt that the answer is: because the bishop holds the place of our Lord amongst us. Not only is he considered the 'locum tenens' of Christ, but it is Christ Himself, personally Who is considered as being present and as acting in and through the bishop, so that what the bishop does, Christ does. And, consequently, whenever and wherever the Eucharist is performed in the Church, there is always but one single Eucharist, that of Christ Himself.

"But how is it that the bishop's Eucharist is to be considered as Christ's own Eucharist? And why is it so important that there should be no other Eucharist but Christ's one Eucharist in the New Covenant? The answer to the first question is that the bishop is the apostolos of Christ: he whom Christ has sent in such a way that He Himself is in him. And the answer to the second question is that Christ is the apostolos of the Father, He whom the Father has sent so that He Himself is in Him. This is to say, finally, that the great point of the Christian Eucharist is that in it the thanksgiving of man is one with the Word of God: it is the Word of God made Man Who now out of man's thanksgiving makes the Mystery: 'Christ in you, the hope of glory.'" (Liturgical Piety pp. 143-4.)

Another way of expressing the celebrant's role as representative of Christ is to see him as a sacramental expression of the High Priest who has once for all time given Himself for all as developed in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Upon the celebrant is placed the responsibility for pronouncing the words and prayers of consecration so that the congregation, assisting also in the work of consecration by their prayers, may receive in due course the Body and Blood of Christ. The action of the High Priest in the Last Supper and on Calvary was the supreme act of reconciliation; the celebrant is meant to be aware that he is sacramentally representing that reconciling and unifying sacrifice. "Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same loaf." (I Cor. 10:17). The celebrant is concerned for the oneness of the whole Church of Christ, not just for peace in his own ecclesial community. What does this mean in the ecumenical orientation of our day in which God calls us to

obedience? Should Anglicans in their prayer for the Whole State of Christ's Church pray explicitly for the Pope? Should Roman Catholics in the mass pray explicitly for other Churches? If the Eucharist must be understood not only as expressing a given unity, but as God's activity of making many to become one should the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches under carefully prepared conditions celebrate actions of inter-communion as an act of openness toward that union which God alone can give?

At the Last Supper Jesus set his action in a meaningful context by commentary and prayers intelligible to the disciples. Likewise the celebrant who represents Christ at the Eucharist has an obligation to preach the Gospel in the context of the rite and at times to provide in preaching a commentary on the meaning of the liturgical action that will edify the worshippers. Just as Christ was both the Word of God and that word born, dying, rising and ascending (Word and Act) so the celebrant is an image of the Christ and by being an image of Christ charged to preach the Gospel of the New Covenant "until He come again." Only so will the integrity of the sacrament as the verbum visibile (St. Augustine) be set forth. The celebrant's instrumental function can be summarized in a passage from the twelfth chapter of Hebrews.

"But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel.

"See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. . . Therefore let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe for our God is a consuming fire." (Hebrews 12: 22-29.)

One of the most powerful indications of the principle sacerdos alter Christus is seen in the priest's saying at the consecration not "This is the body of Christ," but "This is my body" and in pronouncing absolution: "I absolve you." This is

only understandable in the light of St. Thomas' description of the priest's role as agere in persona Christi.

The oneness of the Church's sacrifice with that of Christ himself has been underlined by Pope Paul VI in his encyclical Mysterium of Faith and in his quotation from St. John Chrysostom:

"This sacrifice, no matter who offers it, be it Peter or Paul, is always the same as that which Christ gave His disciples and which priests now offer: The offering of today is in no way inferior to that which Christ offered, because it is not men who sanctify the offering of today; it is the same Christ who sanctified His own. For just as the words which God spoke are the very same as those which the priest now speaks, so too the oblation is the very same." (Mysterium Fidei, St. Paul Editions, pg. 17)

II The Celebrant Represents the Apostolic Ministry of the Church Now Continued Especially in the Historic Episcopate

"Do this in remembrance of me" was said explicitly to the Apostles who were the only ones present. The celebrant of the Eucharist represents then not only Christ, but also the Apostolic Ministry. The responsibilities assigned to the celebrant, as presiding in the place of Christ, also devolve upon the celebrant whether bishop or priest, in his capacity as successor to the Apostles. The fact of the Apostolic succession through the bishops considered as a body in succession to the college of the apostles early came to guard continuity in office and consecration. The bishop's role, not only as celebrant of the Eucharist, but as chief minister of ordination, chief pastor of a diocese, and chief teacher and witness to the faith expressed itself in the historic episcopate viewed as the highest grade in the sacrament of ordination.

Nearly all of the points noted under the celebrant, as minister of Christ, are to be interpreted further in the celebrant's role as a representative of the Church's ministry. Not only is he to do what Christ did, but he is to do it obediently to the

particular rite established by the Church, and in obedience to the specific directives of his bishop as chief liturgical officer. He represents Christ, not as a free-lance, but as a responsible minister of the Church's Apostolic Ministry. He prays for his bishop in the rite and if the bishop is present sees that the parts of the Eucharist especially assigned to the bishop are faithfully followed.

The dependence of the celebrant on the Church's ministry does not cease with the ordination given him. To be sure, following St. Thomas, we hold that the heretical, schismatic, or deposed priest retains the power to consecrate validly, so that he would not be reordained on being reinstated but his ministry although technically valid cannot be accepted. Anglican bishops have refused to accept ordinations performed by isolated bishops in valid orders, if those "wandering bishops" have acted apart from the authorization of a Christian communion. (cf. Report of 1920 Lambeth Conference, Resolution 28).

Father Bouyer has been quoted earlier to show how through the apostolic ministry the many Eucharists become the one Eucharist of Christ in his Church. It may be useful for our discussion at this point to quote at length from the official Statement of Faith and Order of the Episcopal Church on The Episcopate and the Priesthood.

~ The Episcopate. Anglican formularies deal with the episcopate as a fact rather than a doctrine. It is, however, a fact deeply rooted in history. The Lambeth Quadrilateral is, accordingly, employing a defining phrase when it speaks of the 'historic episcopate.' Acceptance of episcopacy as a basis of reunion necessarily means acceptance of it, not as a bare fact, but a fact accompanied by its historical meaning.

"The maintenance of a ministerial succession, by way of ordination with the laying-on-of-hands, is a familiar fact in the life of most Christian communions. All such ministerial successions are in some sense historic, differing from one another, however, in form and in the degree to which succession

is continuous in history. Anglican formularies pronounce no judgments on other ministerial successions. They do claim, however, for the churches of the Anglican Communion for which they speak, that these churches have preserved both the form and the succession which traces back to the 'Apostles' time,' and they make the preservation of this succession a matter of scrupulous discipline. They define ministers within this historic stream as 'Ministers of Apostolic Succession.'

"It should be clear, therefore, that while acceptance of the historic episcopate may not involve acceptance of any one formulation of the doctrine of the ministry, it does involve acceptance, in the form of a fact, of the three-fold ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons, and the acceptance of it also as accompanied by the claim that it is a ministerial succession tracing back to the 'Apostles' time.'

"The Lambeth Conference Report of 1930 enlarges upon this claim as follows:



"When we speak of the Historic Episcopate, we mean the Episcopate as it emerged in the clear light of history from the time when definite evidence begins to be available. . . . Without entering into the discussion of theories which divide scholars, we may affirm shortly that we see no reason to doubt the statement made in the Preface to our Ordinal that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church: Bishops, Priests and Deacons. Whatever variety of system may have existed in addition in the earlier age, it is universally agreed that by the end of the second century episcopacy had no effective rival. . . . Among all the controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries the episcopal ministry was never a subject of dispute. . . . If the Episcopate as we find it established universally by the end of the second century, was the result of a process of adaptation and growth in the organism of the Church, that would be no evidence that it lacked divine authority, but rather that the life of the Spirit within the Church had found it to be the most appropriate organ for the functions which it discharged. In the course of time the Episcopate was greatly affected by secular forces, which bent it to many purposes alien to its true character and went far to obscure its spiritual purpose. . . . The Historic Episcopate, as we understand it, goes behind the perversions of history to the original conception of the Apostolic Ministry.

"The concept of the episcopate can, accordingly, receive definition as an historical fact. It can also receive clarification from a description of its functions.

"To quote from the Lambeth Report of 1930: 'When we say that we must insist on the Historic Episcopate but not upon any theory or interpretation of it, we are not to be understood as insisting on the office apart from the functions. What we uphold is the Episcopate, maintained in successive generations by continuity of succession and consecration, as it has been throughout the history of the Church from the earliest times, and discharging those functions which from the earliest times it has discharged.

"When we refer to the Historic Episcopate we are concerned with the essentials and purposes of the office of bishop and not with the incidental attributes of the office or the details of the administration of the Church, which have changed from time to time and may continue to change.

"The most obvious function of the Historic Episcopate - the one which in the course of its varied history, has been most scrupulously guarded - is its vocation of transmitting the ministerial succession. The bishop is thus the organ of ministerial continuity. He is also the personal organ of the Church's unity. The very name bishop (episcopos) implies the function of pastoral care, of oversight. He is addressed in the Church's traditional liturgies as Father-in-God. He is also addressed as the Church's Shepherd. He represents the Church catholic to his flock, as the localized minister cannot do. Expressive of the Bishop's function of ministering the Word and of pastoral oversight' is the opening prayer of the Anglican Form of Ordaining or Consecrating a Bishop.

"Almighty God, who by thy Son Jesus Christ didst give to thy Holy Apostles many excellent gifts, and didst charge them to feed thy flock; Give grace, we beseech thee, to all Bishops, the Pastors of thy Church, that they may diligently preach thy Word, and duly administer the godly Discipline thereof.

"The fourth point of the Lambeth Quadrilateral was rephrased by the Lambeth Conference of 1920, in its Appeal to All Christian People, as follows: 'A ministry acknowledged by every part of the Church as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also the commission of Christ and the authority of the whole Body.'

"We close this section by further quoting from this Appeal

"May we not reasonably claim that the Episcopate is the one means of providing such a ministry? It is not that we call in question for a moment the spiritual reality of the ministries of those Communion which do not possess the Episcopate. On the contrary, we thankfully acknowledge that these ministries have been manifestly blessed and owned by the Holy Spirit as effective means of grace. But we submit that considerations alike of history and of present experience justify the claim which we make on behalf of the Episcopate. Moreover, we

would urge that it is now and will prove to be in the future the best instrument for maintaining the unity and continuity of the Church. But we greatly desire that the office of a Bishop should be everywhere exercised in a representative and constitutional manner, and more truly express all that ought to be involved for the life of the Christian Family in the title of Father-in-God. Nay more, we eagerly look forward to the day when through its acceptance in a united Church we may all share in that grace which is pledged to the members of the whole body in the apostolic rite of the laying-on-of-hands, and the joy and fellowship of a Eucharist in which as one Family we may together, without any doubtfulness of mind, offer to the one Lord our worship and service.

" The Priesthood and the Diaconate. The office of a priest (presbyter) is to minister to the people committed to his care; to preach the Word of God; to baptize; to celebrate the Holy Communion; to pronounce absolution, or remission of sins, and blessing in God's name. Thus he exercises part of the Apostolic office, and it is significant that in the Anglican Ordinals, as in the general practice of the Western Church, which is itself based on very early usage, priests are associated with the bishop in laying-on-of-hands at the ordination of priests." (Statement of Faith and Order, pp 15-18.)

III The Celebrant Represents the Congregation as He Voices Its Eucharistic Joy

The celebrant has been analyzed in his role of president. The word "president" implies the eucharistic assembly without which presidency would be a meaningless term. There is a danger in describing the role of a priest as representative of the episcopate in apostolic succession that the laity will be forgotten. The Christian layman is a member of the royal priesthood of Christ and has received in baptism and confirmation a priestly ordination as authentic and sacramental in its way as the ordination or consecration given to priest or bishop. Patristic literature occasionally speaks of the priest as "a tongue." He is meant to be the tongue of the eucharistic assembly. He voices their prayers, helps them to offer their share in the bloodless sacrifice of the eucharist. The congregation is as necessary to the celebrant as the celebrant is to the congregation. Mother McGowan's rationale for concelebration underlines the corporate nature of the

Eucharist which is the necessary correction to any over-clericalized concentration upon "the minister of the Eucharist."

"The concelebrated Mass will manifest visibly to both priests and laymen that the Mass is the sacrifice of the Mystical Body of Christ. The mystery of unity and diversity - - one Christ in many members - - will be brought before the eyes of all in this one Mass celebrated by many priests. The hierarchial nature of the Church composed of diverse members, bishop, priests and laymen, will be made evident in a Mass where the bishop is the primary celebrant, priests are sacrificial, sacramental concelebrants, and laymen are co-offerers through the priests who are their pastors. The eucharistic piety of both priests and laymen will be deepened by participation in a concelebrated Mass. False individualism in devotion will be counteracted by this emphasis on the community nature of the eucharistic sacrifice. Christ in the Eucharist will no longer be approached merely as one made present to be adored, but as one who as our head offers and is offered by us his members made one by this sacrament of unity." (Jean C. McGowan Concelebration pg. 113)

Should the implication of this passage be extended to carefully planned and prepared acts of concelebration between the Roman Catholic and Anglican communions?

IV The Minister of the Eucharist is also the Christian Layman who in his Role of Co-Officer is also Co-Minister

In order to allow the role of the celebrant as representative of the congregation greater fullness it may be necessary to state a theology of apostolic succession that integrates this dimension of the Church's life much more fully with the Church as a whole. This would have important implications for the role of the layman in the Eucharist and for a consideration of the ordained ministries of the non-episcopal Churches with respect to the Eucharist, two very important questions unfortunately beyond the scope of this paper. A beginning in this direction might be the perspective of the Statement on Faith and Order of the Episcopal Church.

"The Church as the Body of Christ, sharing His Life, has a ministerial function derived from that of Christ. In this

function every member has his place and share according to his different capabilities and calling. The Church is set before us in the New Testament as a body of believers having within it, as its recognized focus of unity, of teaching and of authority, the Apostolate, which owed its origin to the action of the Lord Himself. There was not first an Apostolate which gathered a body of believers about itself; nor was there a completely structureless collection of believers which gave authority to the Apostles to speak and act on its behalf. From the first there was the fellowship of believers finding its unity in the Twelve. Thus the New Testament bears witness to the principle of a distinctive ministry, as an original element, but not the sole constitutive element, in the life of the Church." (pg. 15)

Another way to the recovery of the integrity of life and worship for the layman is that he shall understand his function at the Eucharist not in passive terms, but in active participation. He is a "co-offerer" and as such a "co-minister of the eucharist." There are passages in the Constitution on the Liturgy and in De Ecclesia which point in this direction, although they do not employ the phrase "co-minister." This paper began with the fundamental affirmation that illuminates every subsequent statement: The minister of the Eucharist is Christ. In another sense, the minister of the Eucharist is the bishop and his priest. In still another sense, the minister of the Eucharist is the Christian layman prepared for his role through his incorporation into the Church as the People of God through baptism/confirmation.

"Taking part in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, which is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life, they (i. e., the faithful) offer the divine victim to God and offer themselves along with it. Thus, both by the act of oblation and through Holy Communion, all perform their proper part in this liturgical service, not indeed, all in the same way but each in that way which is appropriate to himself. Strengthened anew at the holy table by the Body of Christ, they manifest in a practical way that unity of God's People which is suitably signified and wondrously brought about by this most awesome sacrament." (De Ecclesia, ch. II, 11, Third Paragraph)

Deeper appreciation of this point may help in the reconciliation of the People of God on its pilgrim way. Let the Churches of Apostolic Succession deepen their

recognition of the sacramental life and Ministry within the non-episcopal Churches even as these latter deepen their understanding of the Apostolic Ministry and the Historic Episcopate. Let all reconceptualize the Papacy as the God-given office of unity in the Church of Christ. "But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift . . . until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:7-13)