

Sub-Commission 3

1. The eucharist and the priestly ministry
2. The ministry of the Word and sacraments
3. The cure of souls and the use of the sacrament of absolution
4. The priesthood of bishops and presbyters.
5. The ordained ministry within the church.

1. The eucharist and the priestly ministry.

Even before the end of the first century A.D. the action of the ^{presbyters} clergy in eucharistic worship was described in I.Clement as "offering the gifts" of the church.

In Justin Martyr the prophecy of Malachi (~~11.14~~) is taken as a prophecy of the world-wide extension of the christian eucharist. In view of the fact that, from earliest times, the eucharist was the celebration of the memorial of the death of the Lord, the sacrifice of the eucharist was related to the sacrifice of Christ. The question as to what that relation is, however, was not settled.

As a consequence of this development the president of the eucharistic assembly, who offered the gifts of the eucharistic meal, came to be described in priestly terms. In later christian literature the sacrificial aspect of Christ's unique self-offering was ascribed to the celebrant of the eucharist, which was seen as a 'memorial' of the paschal mystery of Christ.

Christians of the first and second centuries, in celebrating the eucharist, were aware of the unity of the eucharist and Christ's sacrifice. ^{eg. Ignatius} ~~In order to protect this unity Ignatius declares that the eucharist can be celebrated only by a bishop or by one whom he has delegated. The bishop is seen by Ignatius as the representative of Christ.~~

This understanding of the eucharist as a memorial of the unique sacrifice of Christ leads to ~~his seeing~~ ^{being seen} the president of the eucharist ^{as} representing sacramentally the only priest of the ^{Covenant} New Testament, Jesus Christ himself. This sacramental representation, ~~according to Ignatius,~~ is the source of the priestly quality of the ordained ministry. At the end of the second century this aspect of ministry is well established.

By the high middle ages the process was complete by which the ministry assumed a predominantly ritual-priestly function.

In the 16th century the reformers generally expressed acute anxiety about the doctrine of sacrifice associated with the eucharist and, in consequence, ~~with~~ ^{about} any sacrificial understanding of the rôle of the minister in the eucharistic action. Priestly language, where ^{used (eg. by Rich. and Hooker)} ~~accepted at all,~~ was approved on the understanding that 'priest' was the equivalent of 'presbyter'. Two main grounds of objection on the part of the reformers were that the language of sacrifice and priesthood often seemed to them to imply that some repetition or addition to the sacrifice of Christ was involved, or that, this especially in the case of Lutherans, the eucharist was some kind of 'work' by which man merited grace. ^{In the first generations of the} ~~Among the English reformers~~ ~~however, the former objection predominated, and sacrificial language for both eucharist and ministry was used, if at all,~~ sparingly and often with an identification of sacrifice solely with the thankful offering of Christian life.

skt

Not all the charges brought against late medieval eucharistic theology and practice can be sustained. In particular we must now acknowledge that the pre-Reformation church affirmed the identity of the Mass and Calvary ~~a good deal~~ more firmly than has sometimes been alleged. Though some, e.g. Biel, seem to have come near to attributing to the Mass a certain value independent of the sacrifice of the Cross, and distinctions between the 'principal offerer' (Christ) and the celebrating priest could easily run into dangerous waters, the preponderant theological opinion was ~~certainly~~ that the Mass was in an unbloody manner one and the same sacrifice as that of Calvary and that it was Christ who offered himself to the Father therein.

But though formally correct in rejecting the notion of repetition of Calvary or adding to it, and in avoiding the idea of the Mass as a human 'work', Catholic theology did not and, except in a few instances could not, explain how the Mass and Calvary were one and the same, how it was that Christ was 'principal offerer', etc. This was the crucial deficiency. Without such an explanation the time-honoured assertions, repeated again and again, of the unity of Mass and Calvary, etc. failed to satisfy the Reformers.

There is a legitimate christian insight into the quality of christian ministry preserved by the word 'priest', once it is seen that the sacrificial character of the eucharist does not derogate from the all sufficiency of Calvary. Because we are

"taken up in his self-offering" (paragraph 5, Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine, Windsor, 1971), ^{and because of} ~~we~~ accept the sacrificial nature of the eucharist, ^{we affirm} ~~and~~ the priesthood of the celebrating minister. ~~We believe that~~ The priesthood of the minister is related analogously to the priesthood of Christ as the sacrifice of the eucharist is related to the sacrifice of Christ. ~~Just as Christ the risen Lord is given to us under the sacramental signs of the eucharist, so Christ the High Priest is present to us in the man ordained to be a priest in the Church of God.~~

2. The ministry of the word and sacraments

A tension between word and sacrament is fundamental to the christian ministry. The Reformers of the 16th century claimed to have restored a tension which they believed the medieval church had relaxed, and it has been commonly believed that herein lay a major distinction between our communions.

We believe that there is no antithesis between ~~the claims of~~ word and sacrament and that ~~our two communions are at one in their desire to accept the demands of both.~~ (For) the ministry of the word has a priestly aspect, and the administration of the eucharist, in the midst of the people of God, is the supreme proclamation of the Gospel. ~~The aim of this ministry is to put men in communion with God.~~

3. The cure of souls and the ^{power of the keys} ~~use of sacramental absolution~~

Until recent times the manner in which sacramental absolution was given and practised in the Roman Catholic Church appeared very different from the practice of Anglicanism. Our differences certainly have theological implications, but do not penetrate to the deepest levels of doctrine. Both the Pontifical and the Ordinal explicitly confer the sacramental power of absolution upon the presbyterate. ~~Both have seen this as the pastoral exercise of the 'power of the keys', which consists fundamentally in the proclamation of the Gospel.~~

4. The priesthood of bishops and presbyters

The priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ is unique, so that there is but one priest to whom we can ascribe an office which is, in an unqualified way, redemptive and mediatorial. Through ~~sacramental~~ ordination the priesthood of Jesus Christ is represented to us in the person of those who are his ministers and whom we call priests. It is through this sacramental act that the commission of Christ is passed on. Both Roman Catholics and Anglicans would agree with the following position:

When I consecrate a godly and well-learned man to the office and work of a bishop in the church of God, I do not act as a representative of the church, if by that is meant the whole body of contemporary Christians. The authority by which I act is that of Christ himself, entrusted to his apostles and to those to whom they committed it. I receive it neither from the church nor apart from the church, but from Christ in the church. (William Temple)

Bishops and priests share in the same priesthood. In each case their office is derivative and dependent upon the high-priesthood of Jesus Christ.

5. The ordained ministry within the church

We affirm together the divine institution of the Christian ministry. We recognise the fact of its development from the age of the apostles in divers forms, ~~at least~~ three of which ^{are upheld} ~~survive~~ and are ~~reverently~~ used within both our traditions, those of bishop, presbyter and deacon.

The ministers of the church are themselves subordinate to the church, and no man may take such office of ministry upon himself. We observe within both our communions the principle of episcopal ordination, and there are no ministers of either church who have not been made such by a bishop. We affirm episcopacy as an effective sign of continuity and unity in the church of Christ, even though from the earliest period of Anglicanism there has been debate regarding the relationship of episcopacy to the nature of the church itself.

We recognise that the sacrament of orders is a God-initiated act ^{only} and that this sacrament must be celebrated and fulfilled/w^{ithin} the community of the church.