

PRIESTHOOD: ANOTHER REALM OF THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

DEBATE ON THE MEANING OF THE CANTERBURY STATEMENT, SECTION 13

by

THE EDITOR

THE Statement on the Doctrine of the Ministry (agreed by the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission—ARCIC—at Canterbury on 6th September, 1973) was discussed at length in the Spring issue of this JOURNAL, pp. 17-36. It deals with the nature of the priesthood, notably in sections 8 and 9, which we should recall to mind now:

8. In NT a variety of images is used to describe the functions of (the ordained) minister. He is *servant*, both of Christ and of the Church. As *herald* and *ambassador* he is an authoritative representative of Christ and proclaims his message of reconciliation. As *teacher* he explains and applies the word of God to the community. As *shepherd* he exercises pastoral care and guides the flock. He is a *steward* who may only† provide for the household of God what belongs to Christ. He is to be an *example* both in holiness and in compassion.

9. An essential element in the ordained ministry is its responsibility for "oversight" (episcopé). This responsibility involves fidelity to the apostolic faith, its embodiment in the life of the Church today, and its transmission to the Church of tomorrow. Presbyters are joined with the bishop in his oversight of the Church and in the ministry of the word and the sacraments; they are given authority to preside at the eucharist and to pronounce absolution. . .

In section 13 the distinction between the priesthood of the baptised and the ordained priesthood is discussed, and on this distinction surely turns the whole pivot of this latest Agreed Statement. At the end of the section is a sentence which has given much cause for debate; and, set in its context, it reads thus:

In the eucharist, thanksgiving is offered to God, the gospel of salvation is proclaimed in word and sacrament, and the community is knit together as one body in Christ. Christian ministers are members of this redeemed community. Not only do they share through baptism in the priesthood of the people of God, but they are—particularly in presiding at the

† Is this "only" not misplaced? Do the drafters mean "only provide" or "only what belongs to Christ"?

eucharist—representative of the whole Church in the fulfilment of its priestly vocation of self-offering to God as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12.1). *Nevertheless their ministry is not an extension of the common Christian priesthood but belongs to another realm of the gifts of the Spirit.* It exists to help the Church to be “a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people” (1 Pet. 2.9).

The phrase “another realm of the gifts of the Spirit” has been variously interpreted, in ways that at first sight cannot easily be brought into harmony; and it seemed for a while that we had here an equivocation of words unbacked by sufficient univocation of meaning from the signators of the Statement, which suggested that differences had been glossed but not resolved.

Part of the difficulty is that the word “priesthood” has several analogously connected meanings. There is the unique priesthood of Christ, the High Priesthood which is final and incommunicable in its essence, though of course not in its effects. Then there is the ordained minister’s sacramental relation with Christ as High Priest; and the Greek word *hiereus* belonging to the cultic order, though it is never used in NT, has attached to the minister—the Latin word being *sacerdos*. Then there is the ordained minister’s representative role vis-à-vis the baptised people of God, and the yet-to-be-baptised—the Greek word *presbyteros* being used. Then there is the common (commune) priesthood of the baptised—not of the laity, as is sometimes said, since the ordained minister is not to be excluded from this. The first is unique to Christ, the last three are found in the ordained minister: he embraces *ordo*, jurisdiction, baptism. He is at once an elder of the community, working for it and unto it in both a priestly and human manner; a sacramental president at the altar leading the worship of the community; and a member of that community. As a Christian he is of “the royal priesthood”; as a minister he is the focus and representative of the common priesthood; as liturgical president he offers bread and wine as the symbol of the people’s self-offering. It is arguable that if this offering is regarded as a sacrifice (this is the theory of the two sacrifices of the Mass), then the minister is a priest not only analogously (as related to Christ’s priesthood) but literally (as representing whom he represents at that moment)—he has a priesthood distinct from that of the people. However in this context we should recall the words of the Conciliar document *Lumen Gentium* n. 28: “At the eucharistic assembly, acting in the person of Christ, priests make the proclamation of his mystery; they unite the aspirations of the faithful to the sacrifice of their Head; in the sacrifice of the Mass, until the coming of the Lord, they present and apply the sole sacrifice of NT, the single offering Christ makes of himself as an unblemished victim to the Father.”

When the Canterbury Statement was published, it appeared *inter alia* in two booklets. The first was published by the Catholic Information Office: the official text together with an introduction and commentary by the Right Rev Alan C. Clark, Bishop of Elmham, RC Co-Chairman of

ARCIC.¹ He represented the Catholic interpretation and tradition. The second was published by Grove Books, emanating from St John’s College, Bramcote, Nottingham: the official text with historical appendix, theological commentary and “Notes on Apostolic Succession” by Rev Dr Julian Charley, Vice-Principal of St John’s College.² He represented the Evangelical Anglican tradition, coming from the London College of Divinity, an Evangelical theological college which moved in 1970 to Bramcote.

The two commentaries do not perfectly harmonise in their interpretation of the meaning of the sentence in question in section 13; and it seems important to examine them side by side, then allow the two commentators to have their say in the matter, then allow other signators to give their view on it, then allow outside views. The Editor has written to a number of the Canterbury Statement signators, most of whom have offered replies for publication. One way of handling these would be to break up replies into the subject matter as it progresses; but that risks jeopardising the exact meaning of the signator. So the other method has been adopted, to print what has been received as it stands, putting the whole matter into the clearest possible order of sequence with interlinking comment. In reading this as a whole, it is important to recall that the contributors have not seen each other’s responses, but will see them together for the first time along with the reader: that must be said to safeguard them. They may well want to engage in public correspondence as a result of seeing the whole.

In his commentary on the Canterbury Statement, section 13, Bishop Clark begins with the eucharistic celebration:

It is the whole Church which celebrates the eucharist, but within that celebration the priest has a special role which is his alone. This, however, should not be interpreted as detaching him from the community he is ordained to serve and to which he belongs by baptism. Nevertheless his priestly ministry is no mere extension or development of the general Christian priesthood, but derives from a particular and distinct gift of the Spirit. The ordained ministry is not to be interpreted as the ministry of the people of God developed to its highest possibilities in a particular layman. It belongs, on the contrary, “to another realm of the gifts of the Spirit”. Roman Catholic teaching expresses this difference as one of *essentia, non gradu*, but it does not thereby affirm more than is contained in the Statement. (p. 34.)

¹ Catholic Information Office (Infoform), Avante House, 9 Bridge St., Pinner, Mx. Bishop Clark was trained at the English College, Rome. After taking his Doctorate of Theology at the Gregorian University, Rome, he became first a tutor of philosophy and then for a decade (1954-64) Vice-Rector of the English College. During 1962-5 he was a Vatican Council peritus.

² Grove booklet on Ministry & Worship No. 22, “Agreement on the Doctrine of the Ministry”, 20 pence. Trained for the C of E ministry at Ridley Hall, Cambridge, Rev Julian Charley gained a First in theology at New College, Oxford. After seven years at All Souls Church, Langham Place (1957-64) he joined his present College, becoming Vice-Principal in 1969. He lectures in biblical theology and Church history.

Here the fundamental argument turns on the difference between kind and degree, *essentia* and *gradus*. The two priesthoods are not comparable, that of the sacerdotal ministry not being simply a greater intensification of the priesthood of the baptised. It is to be judged as different in kind, in a different class or species, so to say. There is no extension, no development from below: the difference is unbridgeable—or rather, bridged only by a further sacrament of the Church, namely Holy Orders (i.e., *ordo*).

In his commentary on the Canterbury Statement, section 13 (his section entitled “5. The Specific Use of Priestly Language”), Dr Julian Charley remarks that the term *priest* is deeply entrenched in the Catholic tradition; but that it has largely been eschewed by Protestants because of its associations. Both traditions are moving to the more correct word *presbyter*.

Dr Charley insists that the priestly sacrifice of Christ was unique and final, so that there can be neither addition nor repetition. What continues is not the one sacrifice but the unique High Priesthood of Christ: so “any suggestion of the sacrifice of Christ being somehow continued in heaven and represented by priests at altars on earth is positively excluded”. Both this and the earlier Windsor Statement bear this out: see its section 5, where the once-for-all sacrifice on the Cross is made effective in the life of the Church, the memorial being of the totality of God’s reconciling action in Christ—the Church participates in the benefits of the Passion, entering into the movement of self-offering.

NT writers—except one—never call ministers *priest* (*hiereus*, *sacerdos*): they use a considerable range of descriptive terms, but never that. Why, since it was familiar to Jews and Greeks alike? It is indeed often found in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but otherwise it is made clear that the Christian ministry is not merely a modification of the OT priesthood: the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is retroactive, the old system was symbolic, the new is final in that Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father. That is sufficient reason why in NT Christian ministers are never called *priests*.

Yet in the early Church the term was eventually coined, in relation to the Eucharist. The presiding minister is “representative of the whole Church”, whose priestly calling involves a self-offering to God as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12.1); and insofar as the minister helps the Church fulfil this priestly vocation, the term *priest* may be justified for him. Nevertheless the Statement properly denies the ministry of the ordained man (including his sacramental ministry) to be “an extension of the common Christian priesthood”.

From here on Dr Julian Charley’s words must be quoted exactly: “In the strictest sense it is not a ‘priesthood’ at all, but ‘belongs to another realm of the gifts of the Spirit’. To press this yet further, we find Christian ministers in the New Testament, *not* in the categories of priesthood in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but rather in the gifts to the Church of the ascended Lord portrayed in the Epistle to the Ephesians. It ought to be

clear from what has been said that, although it is possible to provide a justification for the use of priestly terms to describe the ministry, the grounds on which it is based are not very secure. History shows how much unhappy confusion arose from its adoption. I guess that in the end we shall see that the New Testament writers were wise to avoid it.” (p. 23.)

Dr Charley makes one further point, both in his Commentary and his letter to us. In print he cites the Chairmen in their Preface as saying “nothing essential has been omitted”—and yet, when the Statement speaks of the sacrifice of Christ, “it never describes the Eucharist as a sacrifice”. And again: “There is a straight acknowledgement of the absence from the New Testament of priestly epithets for the ministry . . . all that is said about the priestly role of Christ is ‘reflected’ in the presiding minister.” In his letter, he says this—

“I would particularly want to emphasise that the original Statement [viz. the Windsor Statement on the Eucharist] never calls the Eucharist itself a sacrifice: it only speaks of the sacrifice of Christ. Nevertheless this was signed as a consensus Statement that covers the essence of our faith by both Roman Catholics and Anglicans. The fact that this new Statement [viz. the Canterbury Statement on Ministry & Ordination] emphasises the lack of sacrificial priesthood language for the ministry in the New Testament is a further step on from the first Statement. Together they seem to me most significant. As one of the actual drafters, I think I know precisely what was meant by this. I believe the importance of the omissions in what is said to be the essence of our faith are as significant here as the positive statements. Similarly it is very significant that the Statement on the Eucharist located the atonement in the Cross and not in the incarnation as the previous draft had done. This has very far-reaching implications for Eucharistic theology in terms of continuous offering, etc.”

Bishop Clark responded to our invitation to make a personal comment, in these terms:

Julian Charley and I have tacitly agreed to let others review our respective commentaries and give their own appraisal of the apparent conflict of interpretation of what is justly regarded as a crucial section (section 13) in the “Ministry and Ordination”. We are both conscious that, as with all doctrinal statements, different theologies may be used to articulate its content—but not to the extent that they are in obvious contradiction.

The first point is that we both subscribe without equivocation to the doctrine of faith expressed in the Statement. The *reality* which is described as the Ordained Ministry, is there defined in terms of *episcopé*. The function of this ministry is to serve the Christian community in order that, as members with the Head, they may exercise their common priesthood of praise, thanksgiving, and service to the honour and glory of God. As this ministry is directed to the building-up of a eucharistic community, totally radicated in the Eucharist, it follows that the unique priesthood of Christ will be reflected in the part played by the ordained

minister in that celebration. For, as the Statement says, this stands "in a sacramental relation to what Christ himself did in his own sacrifice" and what he now does in the eucharistic memorial over which he presides through his ministers.

But there is a further important point to be made and which the Editor of the *Clergy Review* has richly developed in his editorial and in a signed article in the May 1974 number of this periodical.³ Julian Charley, in my opinion, is making something of the same point. We are talking about something new and wondrous when we try to describe the community of the New Israel, which is the Church, that the category of "priesthood" must be used with especial care if we are not to suggest that it adequately describes the function of the ordained minister.

It is against this background that the Statement asserts that the charism of the ordained ministry belongs to "another realm of the gifts of the Spirit". This does not disconnect it from the activity of the whole Church which it subsists to serve but specifies it as distinct from that activity in its origin. It is a special gift of Christ who, through the Spirit, designates certain members of the Church for this total service. Dr Charley's comment, which has caused disquiet, needs to be judged as part of a total argument—otherwise it is open to the charge of misleading the reader.

As for my own comment, my intention was to show how the Statement rejected one part of the Reformation polemic. On reflection I think that the Editor of *Theology* has over-interpreted that intention.⁴ I would not regard a "priesthood from above" as an adequate description of the reality both Charley and I were endeavouring to identify. Nevertheless, I see clearly that my comment could give this impression, and Canon Dunstan was right to draw the attention of the Commission to "the rules of play" in theological explanations of an Agreed Statement.

There are those, even among the signators, who feel that Bishop Clark has gone too far in introducing the idea of ministerial *priesthood* into his interpretation of the paragraph. And similarly some say Dr Charley understates the meaning of the paragraph. One thing is clear, that insofar as priesthood is a reality that survives in Christianity, it surely derives from Christ to the whole of God's people. To the extent that everything Christian can therefore be called priestly, one can apply the term to the ordained ministry. Perhaps, then, what really needs to be affirmed in this light is not so much that ordination confers a special priesthood, but that it empowers the recipient to exercise a special and official ministry.

³ Cf Fr Michael Richards, Editor of *The Clergy Review*, 1974 articles:
Jan: Editorial—"Ministry, Sacrifice, Celibacy and the Future".
Apr: Editorial—"Blind Guides?"
May: Editorial—"Beyond Priesthood: the Ministry of the Spirit"
Article—"Priesthood and Ministry: a bibliographical survey".
Cf also Geoffrey Wainwright, "Ministry and Ordination: a Methodist Comment", *Clergy Review*, March, 1974.

⁴ Professor G. R. Dunstan (King's College, London) in his February 1974 Editorial.

With this in mind, the following is the comment of Bishop Christopher Butler, O.S.B., a signator:

I understand this paragraph as affirming that the ordained ministry is not just something that develops from inside the People of God, but as having a specific nature of its own so that it adds something to what has been already given in baptism. What it adds is a supernatural gift. I think this interpretation is borne out by other things in the Statement; for instance, what is said in section 14 and the description of ordination in section 15 as a sacramental act.⁵ Note also the inference that could be drawn from the Statement that ordination is unrepeatable in both our Churches. Such is my interpretation of the passage in question and this, I think, is what it should mean.

What now follows is a categorical criticism of Dr Charley. The first letter comes from not one of the Anglican Delegates but their Consultant, Rev Dr H. R. Halliburton, the Vice-Principal of St Stephen's House, Oxford (the High Anglican house for training for the ministry). He begins by commenting on Dr Charley's section V. The Specific Use of Priestly Language (pp. 22-3) as "not good theology. It is full of loose and undistributed statements (e.g. 'priest, as a description of the ministry . . . has largely been eschewed by Protestants because of its associations'—what associations?)". He continues:

Second, as I understand the Statement, what we were trying to say by the phrase "It . . . belongs to another realm of the gifts of the Spirit . . ." was that the minister of the Christian Church is not a super layman; the minister is called by God through the Church and endowed with special gifts to do a special job. Where I think the Statement itself may be misleading is in its attempt to deduce the reasons for a priestly title from the idea of the priestly ministry of the whole Church. So far as one can tell from e.g. the Old Testament, the title "priest" (*cohen*) was devised or borrowed to describe the man who looked after the cultus and taught and preserved the Law. And I for one would be quite content to say that in the course of Christian tradition this title, though eschewed in the NT, was eventually adopted to describe the man who was specially appointed and had special gifts to look after the sacramental life of the Church and to teach and proclaim the Gospel. The Fathers often compared the Christian ministry with the OT ministry; but basically their interest was to see in the OT types of the Christian ministry rather than a fulfilment of the Aaronic and Levitical priesthood which for them was generally in Christ. Hence the OT patterns illustrate points such as

⁵ Sec. 14: "Ordination denotes entry into this apostolic and God-given ministry. . . Every individual act of ordination is therefore an expression of the continuing apostolicity and catholicity of the whole Church. . . Not only is their vocation from Christ but their qualification for exercising such a ministry is the gift of the Spirit: 'our sufficiency is from God, who has qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit' (2 Cor 3.5f). . ."
Sec. 15: "In this sacramental act, the gift of God is bestowed upon the ministers, with the promise of divine grace for their work and for their sanctification. . . The gifts and calling of God to the ministers are irrevocable. For this reason, ordination is unrepeatable in both our Churches."

order, (I Clement), special religious function (Hippolytus), hierarchy and leadership of the assembly; on no occasion, so far as I know, is there any reference to the minister of any order doing what Evangelicals fear most, i.e. standing as an essential intermediary to plead with the Father for forgiveness and salvation (though obviously they lead the congregation in the assembly before God and as organs of the body are essential to its life). Yet for all this they are still called priests.

My conclusion therefore would be that (a) the Statement ought to have made clear that "priest" is an ancient Christian title used to describe the specially called and appointed ministers who were responsible for the cult and the teaching of the Gospel; and that it is confusing *theologically* to tie this up either with the priesthood of Christ (which is of a different order) or with the priesthood of the Church. I hope this is not heresy.

And (b) that Julian Charley has been tactless and slightly careless in saying that the Ministry is "in the strictest sense not a 'priesthood' at all". What he means is that the Christian priesthood does not fulfil the same function as Christ's priesthood. This is perfectly correct. Only *by analogy* as Christ heads the Church in her worship and mediates the truth of God to man, so the Christian minister can be seen to lead the local congregation in worship and to guard and teach the truth of the Gospel.

Dr Halliburton's underlying fear is that the Evangelical wing of the Anglican Church is obsessed with the title "priest" partly because it does not sufficiently carefully ponder the relevant passages of both the OT and the Fathers in their commentary on the matter.

Further criticisms of Dr Charley come from Fr Michael Richards, Editor of *The Clergy Review*, who is not a signator at all, but has written or seen into his pages in the last months a number of articles on the subject of ministry (see note 3). He writes:

It seems to me that Bishop Clark and Julian Charley are fundamentally at one; when however Dr Charley elaborates his theme, il va un peu trop vite en besogne and I am unable to follow him. The ordained ministry does not emerge from ("is not an extension of") the common priesthood of the people of God; and it cannot be adequately described in terms of degree—bigger, better, greater, higher priests! Thus far Vatican II, the Canterbury Statement and its signators are in harmony. But "in the strict sense it is not a priesthood at all" (thus Julian Charley): No. In the first place, ordained ministers are still priests, like everyone else: they are priest-bishop, priest-presbyter, priest-deacon. Their ordination is situated *within* the common priesthood of all the faithful, and so is a priesthood in the strict sense, i.e. in the priesthood of Christ.

Secondly, it is "one of the gifts of the Spirit" all right (I don't like "another realm" and haven't met anyone who does), but this must not be taken to mean that it is not a distinct, definable gift, setting apart for particular work in the Church of an "institutional" kind. It is precisely the sacrament of Holy Orders: the ordained ministers bring into harmony all other members of the true Church, each having a minister

given to them by the Spirit. I Corinthians 12, the Pastoral Epistles, and above all Romans 15.16 ("His grace has made me a minister of Christ Jesus to the gentiles; my priestly service is the preaching of the Gospel of God, and it falls to me to offer the gentiles to him as an acceptable sacrifice, consecrated by the Holy Spirit"), that verse most significantly seized upon by the fathers of Vatican II, need to be brought to bear here, as well as the Epistle to the Ephesians.

And the order which this sacrament serves is above all achieved in the eucharist; if the ordained minister did not have the exclusive responsibility of presiding and thus making holy the people of God, there would indeed be disorder! I believe this doctrine will satisfy Evangelicals as well as others, because it gets rid of certain narrowly sacerdotal notions which human beings, being human, have always tried to re-import into theology and devotion. NT is more radical than that, and so of course is Catholic theology.

On the whole, however, signators have settled for the judgment that there is no fundamental divergence between Bishop Clark and Dr Charley. The Anglican Secretary of ARCIC, Rev Colin Davey (Assistant Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury's Counsellors on Foreign Relations), writes as follows:

There is no divergence of opinion among the members of the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission, or between Bishop Clark and Julian Charley, over the "denial of development from below". All are agreed that the priesthood of the ordained minister is not an extension or development from the priesthood of the people of God. The Appendix to the Canterbury Statement⁶ shows that the Commission's Gazzada document on "Ministry in the New Testament" spoke of "the office and function of ministers, which 'originate in the specific purpose of Christ for his Church' and are not simply a particular expression of the 'priesthood of all believers'". The distinction between these two kinds of priesthood is further expressed by describing the ministry of the ordained as belonging "to another realm of the gifts of the Spirit" than the general priesthood of the people of God.

There is no divergence either over the legitimacy of using the term 'priest', provided proper safeguards are made and misunderstandings avoided. Julian Charley writes (p. 23): "The minister, especially when he presides at the eucharist, is 'representative of the whole Church', whose priestly calling involves a self-offering to God as a living sacrifice (Rom 12.1). In so far as he helps the Church fulfil that priestly vocation, the term 'priest' may be justified for him."

⁶ p. 17: Clark edition—p. 6-13, "Discussion on the doctrine of the ministry". Charley edition—p. 10-15, "Appendix written at the request of the Commission"; written by Rev Colin Davey, it carries the authority only of the Anglican Co-Chairman (Bishop H. R. McAdoe of Ossory) and the writer.

⁷ Meeting of ARCIC at Gazzada, Milan, during Aug-Sep 1972; two documents issued from it, the other on Apostolicity.

There is a need, perhaps, to spell out, as Fr Jean Tillard, O.P., writes in para. 47 of his paper "The 'sacerdotal' quality of the Christian ministry"⁸ (p.26-7): "the priesthood in question is not of the same type as that of the *basileion hierateuma*, . . . neither can it be assimilated without qualification to the Levitical priesthood. . . We have rather to do with a priesthood *sui generis*, wholly relative to the unique priestly Act of Jesus." Fr Tillard distinguishes between two Old Testament veins which express what is latent in the term "priesthood": "the Levitical vein centred on the ritual, and the Exodus vein, centred on the holiness of existence of the consecrated People".⁹

It is to the latter type that the "common Christian priesthood belongs". It is to the former, Levitical, type that Christian ordained ministry has to a greater or lesser degree become assimilated, yet with such radical differences that there can be no simple identification or "assimilation without qualification".

Fr Tillard writes: "Our two Churches can therefore very well come together on the dimensions of ministry as attested by the revealed data, and not diverge except on a certain interpretation of the sacerdotal function rendered more explicit by Tradition."¹⁰

Our fundamental common ground is our understanding of Ministry in the New Testament, "a priesthood *sui generis*, wholly relative to the unique priestly Act of Jesus". There may be legitimate (to us but not to some critics?) divergences over the extent to which the "sacerdotal quality of the Christian Ministry" is stressed and developed, but these need not "constitute an obstacle to the unity we seek".

Acceptance of harmony between Bishop Clark and Dr Charley comes also from Rev George Tavard, A.A., Professor of Theology at the Methodist Theological School in Ohio (Delaware), who writes:

As a member of the international commission I have followed and taken part in the growth of this section. As a theologian looking at it as objectively as possible I have studied it since the release of our statement. As a lecturer I have had occasion to answer questions similar to the one you raise.

It is my judgment that the two commentaries by Bishop Clark and by Dr Charley are not contradictory and do not present opposite interpretations of the text. Admittedly, each commentator uses the language with which he is the more familiar and leans towards the traditional positions of his own Church or churchmanship. Yet this does not go so far as to creating two contradictory interpretations of the joint statement.

What n. 13 tries to do is to make clear the radical distinction between the high-priesthood of Christ (as in Hebrews), which is unique and has no equivalent or continuation, and the two Christian realities which

⁸ Published as Grove Booklets 13: "What Priesthood has the Ministry?". Fr J. M. R. Tillard, O.P., is Professor of Dogmatic Theology in the Dominican Faculty of Theology, Ottawa.

⁹ Para. 45, p. 26, translated slightly differently.

¹⁰ Para. 51, p. 28.

have been called priesthood: the "royal priesthood" of the People of God (as in 1 Peter) and the eucharistic priesthood (*sacerdotium*) of the priest-bishop in his function as president of the community at its eucharistic meal and memorial. Both of these are related to the priesthood of Christ: the former by offering God the fruits of it in the holy life of the People; the latter by making present in the community "the totality of God's reconciling action" through the eucharist. Neither is a priesthood in the proper sense, which belongs only to Christ. With the abolition of the levitical priesthood, the entire Christian People is priestly and no section of the community carries out what was the levitical function. The ministry, centred on the eucharist, may or may not be called priestly, depending on what we mean to emphasize. If we use the term, in order to show the relation between the sacrifice of Christ and its memorial, we will (as Bishop Clark does) insist that the difference with the "common priesthood" is one of essence and not only of degree (as was the levitical priesthood). If we prefer not to use the term (as Dr Charley prefers not to), we will emphasize the relationship of this eucharistic ministry to the Lord, who is the only priest in the proper sense of the term, by insisting that it is also a "gift of the Spirit" although it belongs to another realm. In this perspective it is quite proper to relate it to the gifts of the ascended Lord which, in Ephesians 4:11 ff, are given, not as "general gifts" but as gifts to individuals called for a special purpose for the edification of the whole Body in its growth toward the fulness of Christ.¹¹

It is my opinion that it is necessary, at this stage of the ecumenical rapprochement between the Catholic and the Anglican traditions, to express the same doctrine in categories that may appear to differ in the form of their expressions. This is the case in the two commentaries that you refer to. But we must also be able to read these different forms of expression and recognise in them the same content of faith. I believe this is the case here. I personally feel quite satisfied with the language adopted by Dr Charley.

It seems to me that the real weakness of the Canterbury Statement (speaking as a critical reader of the text) lies in the fact that n. 13, focused on the eucharistic role of the minister, is not very well harmonized with the rest of the document, where ministry is justified, not by its eucharistic function, but by the pedestrian need for "oversight". Thus the text juxtaposes two conceptions of the theological emergence of the Christian ministry. The eucharistic one derives from the eucharistic doctrine explained in the Windsor Statement. The "oversight" conception relates to a somewhat obsolete view of how leadership emerges in answer to the need of a community for a focus of unity.

¹¹ Ephesians 4:11-13: "And these were his gifts: some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip God's people for work in his service, to the building up of the body of Christ. So shall we all at last attain to the unity inherent in our faith and our knowledge of the Son of God—to mature manhood, measured by nothing less than the full stature of Christ."

Acceptance of harmony between Bishop Clark and Dr Charley comes also from a Roman Catholic theologian, Rev Barnabas Ahern, C.P., the Passionist Father who is Professor of Sacred Scripture at the Gregorian University, Rome, who writes:

The problem has puzzled me greatly. I agree that such a problem has existed historically and probably still exists in the minds of some Christians. But I cannot see how the "problem" can be deduced from either the consensus document on Ministry or the commentaries of Clark-Charley—if each statement in these three documents is interpreted, as it must be, *in the light of the context*. I shall explain:

1. The correct interpretation of the last two sentences of n. 13 in the Ministry document (which you have cited as giving "much cause for debate") must take into account the whole of n. 13 as well as n. 9. The material contained in these two paragraphs is a faithful rendering of the material contained in St Thomas' treatment of the Minister of the Eucharist in the *Summa Theol*, III, Q. 82. Following the lead of your own Abbot Vonier, O.S.B., present Catholic theology recognises as key-thoughts in St Thomas' treatment of the minister of the Eucharist

- a. The "power" given to the minister by ordination
- b. To act and to offer "*in persona Christi*"
- c. When he consecrates the Eucharist "*per modum sacramenti*"—"as Christ consecrated his body at the supper" (art 3).

In accord with Catholic faith, St Thomas Aquinas teaches clearly that the "Eucharist is not only a sacrament but also a sacrifice" (art 4). But he so insists on the "sacramental mode" in which Christ's sacrifice is offered that he does not hesitate to rule out the materialism which at times distorted some of our Roman Catholic theology in the last century. Passages like St Thomas' response to obj. 3 in art 4 of Q. 82 greatly helped Catholic theologians like Billot and Vonier to restore the authentic "sacramental" perspective to the minister's action in consecrating the Eucharist.

As far as I can see, the consensus-document on the Ministry merely repeats in n. 9 and n. 13 [quoted at the outset: Ed.] what is the clear teaching of St Thomas.

2. The correct interpretation of what Rev Julian W. Charley has written in his commentary on p. 23 of the Grove Booklet must be ascertained from what Dr Charley has written and not from any adventitious judgment on what his "Evangelical churchmanship" might lead one to think he means.

In interpreting Dr Charley's commentary I think it must always be borne in mind that, when he affixed his signature to the full contents of the documents on Eucharist and Ministry, he did so as a *conscientious* believer and theologian.

A man of his integrity will not deny or water down in a commentary what he is already publicly known to have accepted in a published document. Both justice and charity require us to accept this as a first principle in interpreting what he says in his commentary.

As for the actual words of the commentary, correct interpretation requires that cognizance must be taken of the full context of his statement:

- a. By his signature to the Ministry document Dr Charley has fully accepted the contents of para. 9 and para. 13 of the Ministry document—together with the relevant passages of the Eucharist document which he also signed and accepted.
- b. In his actual commentary, the statement which you cited from p. 23 must be read and interpreted in the light of all that he has written on pp. 22 and 23.

—On p. 22 he has presented a finely honed analysis of the OT Jewish priesthood, essentially transitory, and of the unique priesthood of Christ alone which is the subject-matter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. All modern Scripture scholarship would agree totally with Dr Charley that Hebrews says nothing explicitly about the priesthood of the Church's ministers. For the author of Hebrews the "priesthood" which Christ exercised through His death and resurrection is utterly unique.

—The statement must, therefore, be interpreted in the light of what precedes. When Dr Charley affirms that the ministry of ordained men "in the strictest sense is not a 'priesthood' at all" he is ruling out all univocation of this ministry with OT priesthood as also with the unique priesthood of Christ. He does not deny a relationship of ministry to the priesthood of Christ but he does rule out every form of univocation. This precision accords wholly with Catholic doctrine as taught by Trent and the *Mysterium Fidei* of Pope Paul VI.¹²

—When, after this exclusion, Dr Charley refers ministry to "Christ's gifts to the Church . . . portrayed in the Epistle to the Ephesians", he is simply saying what the document affirms and what he himself has reiterated, viz., the power to act "*in persona Christi*" and to offer Christ's unique sacrifice as "representative of the whole Church" is a power given by ordination to the minister for worship and sanctification—and, in no way to be *confounded* with the OT priestly service or with the "once for all" priestly act of Christ's death and resurrection.

- c. If I am not mistaken, this precision of language on Dr Charley's part accords well with the precision of language in the *Summa Theol*, III, Q. 82.

3. I, for one, therefore find no equivocation between Dr Charley's explanation of what you consider a moot phrase in the document and Bishop Clark's explanation.

You query whether, after the preparation of the Ministry document there still exists "a real difference between two traditions which has been disguised by the phrasing of the Statement, but revealed by the writings

¹² Encyclical letter *Mysterium Fidei* on the Holy Eucharist (1965), CTS Do 355.

of the commentators". As far as I can judge from "the writings of the commentators", it seems to me that both Bishop Clark and Dr Charley (when their words are read *in the full context* of what they have signed and written) affirm what is truly authentic in Roman Catholic theology. Of course, dear Father, you may quote what I have written. But I am most concerned that my words be presented within the context I have abundantly indicated (*viz*, exact exegesis of Hebrews, the true Catholic theology of Eucharist and Ministry as taught by St Thomas and the theologians of our own century who have followed him in his emphasis on the "sacramental mode"—*per modum sacramenti*—of both Eucharist and Ministry). If this context is not made clear, those who are still thinking in the materialistic thought-patterns of nineteenth century RC "theology" of the Eucharist will be more confused by what I have written than helped. *Deus illud avertat!*

One other signator replied, Rev Pierre Duprey, the Under Secretary of the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. He sent us a paper of his, "Reflexions on the Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion", published in French in *France Catholique*, 3rd May, 1974, and due to be published in *One in Christ*. It does not precisely answer our problem.

Has the problem been solved then without room for doubt? Are the Catholic bishop and the Evangelical theologian in full accord? In speaking of the title wording, do we mean "another kind of spiritual gift" or "another realm, *viz* that of the Gifts of the Spirit"? Is a sacrament such a Gift, or is it a sign of grace instituted by Christ? Is the title phrase a deliberate Agreed Statement ambiguity, designed to read as all things to all men? Has the phrase "royal priesthood"¹³ been treated to rigorous exegesis by the ARCIC, remembering that Holy Orders are permanent, whereas the priesthood of the baptised is "appropriated" and may perhaps be lost by grave sin or apostasy? It remains to the reader to decide.

¹³ 1 Pet 2.9 *a royal priesthood*, derived from Exod 19.6, "I will count you a kingdom (*basileion*) of priests, a consecrated nation"; and reflected in Rev 1.6—5.10, "He has made us a line of kings, priests to serve". The commentators, notably several orthodox Anglicans of the golden age, are in doubt as to how the verse should be punctuated and are quite divided as to what the Greek words mean here. *Basileion* may be both noun and adjective, and may refer to what precedes or to what follows: variously in OT and NT it can mean "royal", "sovereignty", "monarchy", "palace", "kingdom". Here it may mean "a priesthood in the service of a king", *i.e.* God (cf 2 Pet 2.5): LXX, transposing the ancient formula, puts the accent on *royal* priesthood rather than *priestly* kingdom, which reinforces this wording. Cf E. G. Selwyn, "The First Epistle of St Peter" (1945), p. 165; L. Cerfaux, "Regale Sacerdotium", *Rev Sc Phil Theol* xxviii.5, 1939, reprinted in *Receuil L. Cerfaux*, Gembloux 1954; W. L. Morgan, "A Kingdom of Priests" in J. L. McKenzie, "The Bible in Current Catholic Thought", New York, 1962.