

us; that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.

"Indeed it is proper that we be dedicated again, and that every aspect of American life be dedicated to the great task that lies before us; that labor and capital give and receive mutual respect for each other's rights, the welfare of the nation standing before either; that radio and the press, entering as they do into the very sanctuary of the American home, be a force for wholesome intelligent living rather than stoop to satisfy the morbidly curious; that the motion picture industry recognize its tremendous influence upon the youth of our country, and that it seek to elevate rather than to degrade; that all of us recognize that there is a greater God than the dollar; that it is more important to make people better than to make cars better; and that we must expect that America bless God, before we can expect that God bless America. These are our duties and our mandate from above.

"Yes, our departed comrades-in-arms, you who died that we might live, and that the world might have a new birth of freedom; yes, Tom and Jack and Larry and Pete and Frank and Henry and Joe, Fred and Bill and Clyde and Mike and Dick and Steve, and every last one of you who fought and bled and died: we do solemnly pledge by all that is sacred to your memory, 'that you shall not have died in vain.'"

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#### THEOLOGY AND THE APOSTOLATE

St. Gregory the Great sees in priests who are well versed in sacred theology a most efficacious means of carrying on the apostolate of the Church to those outside her ranks. This point cannot be emphasized too strongly, particularly in modern times when the ever-increasing number of educated persons creates new problems of intellectual approach for the priest who desires to manifest the treasures of divine revelation to non-Catholics.

—Fr. Edward L. Heston, C.S.C., in *The Priest of the Fathers* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1945), p. 112.

#### THE BISHOP AND THE DIOCESAN PRIESTHOOD

The status of a diocesan priest in the Catholic Church is that of a member of a sacerdotal brotherhood, gathered around and subject to the ruler and father of a local Church. As a corporate unit this brotherhood, the *presbyterium*, functions only to aid the visible head of the local Church in the performance of his divinely constituted duties. Normally, and according to the constitution of Christ's kingdom on earth, the visible head and father of the local Church is the diocesan bishop. Hence the function of the *presbyterium* as a fraternity and the function of the individual diocesan priest as a member of the *presbyterium* must be described in terms of the work which God has assigned to the diocesan bishop in the Catholic Church.

The work of a bishop who is a head of a diocese is, in the last analysis, the accomplishment of the purpose of the local Church itself. God has not charged him with a mere part, even with the principal part, of the task which the local Church is intended to perform. On the contrary God has made the bishop responsible for all of the functions which the individual local Church, the house or family of God over which the bishop rules as head and father, is meant to fulfil. As a result, the *presbyterium*, the brotherhood of diocesan priests over which the diocesan bishop presides, is a corporate reality brought into being to assist the bishop in his essential work of achieving the integral purpose for which God instituted the local Church as a unit of His kingdom on earth.

Now the local Church differs from every other religious family within God's city in this world in that its purpose is precisely that of the universal Church itself. The other individual religious brotherhoods in the Church have been brought into being at some point in the Church's history for the attainment and the conservation of some particular good which the Church desires for the attainment of its essential end. Thus the individual religious order or congregation exists to further some particular project or purpose of Christ's society. The local Church, the Catholic diocese, on the other hand, is itself the divinely instituted unit of the universal Christian society. It is the Catholic Church in the locality of the diocese. It exists to attain, not some

individual aspect or part of the Catholic Church's essential purpose, but that purpose as a whole, within and through the diocesan community. It is for this reason that the local Church is said to be the Church universal in miniature.

The difference between the immediate purpose of the diocese (and hence the immediate purpose of the bishop with his *presbyterium*) and the immediate purpose of the individual religious order or congregation is an extremely important factor in determining the distinction between the spirituality of the diocesan priesthood and the spiritualities of the various sacerdotal religious communities. Each one of the great religious orders and congregations can be said to have its own proper and characteristic spirituality. Thus the Benedictine spirituality is something distinct from that of the followers of St. Ignatius Loyola, or St. Francis, or St. Dominic, or St. Alphonsus Liguori. This is true, in the last analysis, because each one of these saintly Founders worked for the attainment of a distinct immediate purpose, for the accomplishment of one definite kind of benefit for the Church.

The good of the Church as a whole demanded, or at least made it expedient, that the individual ends of each one of the religious communities should be pursued. In each case, however, the corporate prosecution of such a particular good purpose within the Church necessitated the formation of a definite religious society distinct from the diocese and from the diocesan *presbyterium*. The diocese or the local Church as such has no right to limit its efforts or to concentrate them upon the achievement of any one particular objective within the ambit of the Church's purpose. By the very fact that it is what it is, it must labor for the attainment of the Church's objective as a whole. Because the local Church is the relatively autonomous and complete society of Christ's faithful in one city or district, because it is the company of Our Lord's disciples gathered around a spiritual father whose office is of the essence of the kingdom of Christ on earth, the work of the bishop and of his *presbyterium* must be directed immediately towards the full and complete purpose of the Church.

#### THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ instituted His visible Church and preserves it as an indefectible society for the glory

of God, for the perpetuation of His own redemptive work, and for the sanctification and salvation of men through the practice of the Christian religion. God is glorified when He is known clearly and rightly praised by His creatures. According to the actual decrees of divine providence, the only ultimate and completely perfective knowledge of God available to mankind is that of the beatific vision. Only if a man finally attains to that knowledge will he have reached the good to which God Himself has ordered the human family. Only in and through this beatific vision does man find his eternal and absolute happiness and thus ultimately glorify God.

It was to bring man to the perfection of the beatific vision that Our Lord performed His redemptive work. He suffered and died in order that men might gain victory over the forces tending to hold them apart from God and might possess God in the glory of the beatific vision forever. The life of sanctity in this world is that of habitual grace, the actual beginning of that supernatural life to which the beatific vision belongs. Thus the sanctification and salvation of men through the practice of the Christian religion is not to be considered as an end in any way distinct from God's glory or from the continuation of Our Lord's redemptive activity. It is the process in which and through which God is glorified and Christ's work is continued. It is the one essential purpose and function of the visible Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church has another purpose, secondary and subsidiary and, to a certain extent, incidental. Because it is the only authorized and infallible bearer of the divine message, it accomplishes the results which the message itself brings about. We know from the teaching of the Vatican Council's constitution *Dei Filius* that the divine public revelation entrusted to and preached by the Church is absolutely necessary for mankind because of the fact that God has raised man to a supernatural destiny, and also that it is truly, though not absolutely, requisite in order that "those truths about God which are not of themselves beyond the competence of human reason may, in the present condition of the human race, be known by all, readily, with firm certitude, and with no admixture of error."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Vatican Council, const. *Dei Filius*. Cf. Denzinger-Bannwart, *Enchiridion symbolorum*, n. 1786.

Because there is and there can be no such things as a realistic individual and social ethic apart from a correct natural knowledge about God, and because democratic nations can never hope to achieve even a decent government unless their electorates possess effective and true ethical standards, the divine message and the Church which teaches this message inerrantly are both necessary for the preservation of civilization and world order today. Since this natural and social good is produced by the Church by the will of its divine Founder, it may be and should be counted as a purpose of God's kingdom on earth. Nevertheless the Church is depicted in an entirely false light when this secondary purpose is presented as the only end or as the most important end of Christ's society.

Actually this secondary purpose of the Church is accomplished only in and through the essential labors of God's kingdom on earth, through the fulfilment of its efforts for the sanctification and salvation of man. The Church has no independent secondary message enshrining only the teachings of metaphysic and ethics. It teaches the one body of doctrine it is divinely commissioned to impart, the divinely revealed message which Jesus Christ Our Lord preached to the world from within His Church from the beginning. As a doctrinal unit the Christian revelation is intrinsically supernatural. Yet it embodies certain truths of the natural order, and these are the principles which an objectively true philosophy and a righteous governmental theory must recognize. These natural truths are necessary and, in order to have these natural truths readily, certainly, and accurately available to all men in the present condition of the human race, the intrinsically supernatural Christian revelation and the Church which alone is authorized to teach this revelation and divinely empowered to teach it infallibly are also requisite.

#### THE WORK OF THE BISHOP AND OF HIS DIOCESE

Since the primary and essential work and purpose of the Catholic Church is to bring about men's sanctification and salvation through the practice of the Christian religion, and since the local Church, as a social unit, is charged with the task of achieving that purpose by the employment of all the means that Christ places at the disposal of His kingdom on earth, there can be no section of the Church's salvific activity in any way foreign

to the diocesan bishop's responsibility and competence. Our Lord has commissioned His Church to attain its objective through the profession and the expression of a common faith, through the process of a common hope and prayer, and through the exercise of divine charity. To implement and to make possible this practice of the Christian religion, God gave to His Church the power to teach His message, the power to administer His sacraments, and the power to command Christ's disciples in the name of Christ. The residential bishop, as the head and father of the local Church, is charged by God with the duty of working for the fulfilment of every portion of the Christian life and is commissioned to exercise the triple power of sanctifying, teaching, and ruling the faithful.

No one phase or aspect of the Christian life, no one section of the work of the Church can be chosen by the diocesan bishop to the exclusion of any other. Because it has no other basic purpose than to assist the diocesan bishop in his paternal conduct of the local Church, the *presbyterium*, the brotherhood of the diocesan priests within a local Church, is also obliged to work in that same local Church, for every type of good which Christ expects from the Catholic Church as a whole. Thus we see that the universality of its mission is one of the principal factors that sets the *presbyterium* apart from any other sacerdotal brotherhood within the Church on earth.

The individual religious community is founded to procure the sanctification and the perfection of its own members through the performance of one individual type of activity or of one group of activities which lie within the competence and the field of responsibility of the Catholic Church. Thus one religious order may be founded and may endure chiefly for the sake of the Church's liturgical prayer. Another may exist in order to preach Christ's message accurately and effectively. Still others are directed to the accomplishment of definite spiritual and corporal works of mercy, or for the exercise of that perfection of prayer which we know as infused contemplation, or for the Catholic missions.

All of these ends, however, and all of the purposes for which both individual men and religious communities labor within the Church of God lie within the field of the diocesan bishop's competence and responsibility. His mission is as doctrinal as that of

any religious congregation which exists to preach and to teach God's word. With an obligation that is laid upon him by the divine constitution of the Church itself, he is bound to perform the works of mercy and to perform and oversee missionary activity. His *presbyterium* is, by its very nature, charged with responsibility over this same all-extensive field of Christian work.

It is quite manifest that individual members of the *presbyterium* are and must be placed by the bishop in charge of individual portions of the Church's work. The diocesan priest assigned as a hospital chaplain is obviously meant to do a sort of work different from that performed by fellow members of his *presbyterium* who are curates or teachers. Nevertheless, all of these men live as members of a sacerdotal brotherhood which, as a social unit, is devoted to the entirety of the Church's work. They are subject to an immediate superior who is placed over all the Christian activity of a local Church. Although the immediate function of the individual diocesan priest may be, and to a certain extent must be, specialized, the work of the diocesan bishop and of his *presbyterium* is not.

This salient and central characteristic of the diocesan priesthood should be stressed in the theological training of a man preparing himself to receive a call from a bishop to enter his *presbyterium*. Insistence on this point must be a basic element in the spirituality of the diocesan priesthood itself. It is perfectly true, of course, that the priestly sacrament of Holy Orders gives exactly the same sacramental character, and hence exactly the same supernatural competence, to every man who receives it validly. At the same time, however, it is one thing to exercise that priestly power as a member of a diocesan bishop's *presbyterium*, as a member of a sacerdotal fraternity charged with the entire spiritual welfare of a local Church, and it is quite another thing to exercise this same power as a member of a religious family charged, as a unit, with the responsibility of working for some individual good within the Church of Jesus Christ. The diocesan priest and the candidate for the diocesan priesthood need definite and specific instruction about the orientation of their own sacerdotal brotherhood just as truly as religious need to be taught about the immediate purposes of their own individual communities.

THE ADMONITION TO CANDIDATES FOR THE PRIESTHOOD  
IN THE PONTIFICALE ROMANUM

The essential purpose of the *presbyterium* as the instrument of the diocesan bishop who is its father and ruler is brought out with magnificent clarity in the admonition to the ordinandi placed on the lips of the ordaining bishop in the Roman Pontifical. "Sacerdotem etenim oportet offerre, benedicere, praesse, praedicare, et baptizare." Dom Pierre de Puniet tells us that this formula is found in tenth century *Ordines Romani* and that it refers historically to "priests in charge of parishes, whether urban or rural, such as were in existence everywhere at the time this formula was drawn up."<sup>2</sup> Dom de Puniet, however, makes another assertion which, seen in its proper light, manifests the relation of the *presbyterium* and of its individual members to their own bishop.

In earlier days, and especially at Rome, the statement [the formula about the duties and the prerogatives of the priest] would not have been made in this absolute and categorical form. At the beginning all the powers of the priesthood were subordinated to those of the episcopate, from which they were derived. In his cathedral church, surrounded by his *presbyterium*, or council of priests, the bishop not only presided but possessed and exercised in his own person all the powers of the priesthood. He was not only the head of the priestly college, but he also administered all the sacraments, even baptism. Even the preaching of the gospel was a privilege jealously reserved to himself by the bishop.<sup>3</sup>

It would be a grievous theological mistake to consider Dom de Puniet's description of the bishop in his cathedral as representing merely a form which has become historically outmoded. Actually the bishop, now as always during the Church's lifetime, really presides over his own diocese, and really possesses and exercises in his own person all the powers of the priesthood. The fact that the members of the *presbyterium* and all others who have received priestly orders are empowered to offer the sacrifice of the Mass in no wise detracts from the plenitude of the bishop's sacerdotal power. The bishop is now as always the chief priest of the diocese. When the local Church as a whole is gathered together for the eucharistic sacrifice, the bishop celebrates the Mass

<sup>2</sup> *The Roman Pontifical. A History and Commentary* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1932), pp. 222 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.

or appoints another to act in his place. The bishop presides over his people and over his *presbyterium*. When the members of that priestly company celebrate Mass in his diocese and for his flock, they act as his agents and representatives. They sacrifice with his authorization and in his Church.

The fact that, in the early years of the Church, the bishop ordinarily offered the holy sacrifice himself for his entire flock has led two most distinguished and learned contemporary Anglican writers into very serious error. Both Dr. Trevor Gervase Jalland<sup>4</sup> and Dom Gregory Dix<sup>5</sup> teach that originally the presbyter had no liturgical function at all and that only with the passage of time and with the growth of the individual local Church was he permitted to offer the eucharistic sacrifice. Thus, according to their theory, the priest's power to say Mass would be something granted by Church authority during patristic times. The bishop would have used his *presbyterium* as his instrument by giving its members powers which they did not possess by divine apostolic authority.

This theory misstates the relation of the *presbyterium* to the bishop and misrepresents the nature of the Christian priesthood. The truth of the matter is that several books of the New Testament show the various local Churches to have been provided each with its own *presbyterium* during the time of the great Apostle's ministry.<sup>6</sup> The men who formed these priestly brotherhoods are called sometimes *ἐπίσκοποι* and sometimes *πρεσβύτεροι*.<sup>7</sup> They had priestly, but not episcopal, powers.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *The Church and the Papacy* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1944), pp. 143, 182.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *The Shape of the Liturgy* (Westminster, England: Dacre Press, 1945), pp. 33 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Acts* 14:23 where the institution of presbyters in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia is recounted. *I Tim.* 5:17 and *Tit.* 1:5 mention the presbyteral office and give St. Paul's directions to his auxiliaries about the type of man who should be chosen for this position. *Acts* 20:17 speaks of the presbyters of Ephesus. Those of the mother Church of Jerusalem are mentioned in *Acts* 11:30; 15:2, 4, 5, 22, 23; 21:18.

<sup>7</sup> The fact that the same men were called *πρεσβύτεροι* and *ἐπίσκοποι* is brought out clearly in St. Luke's account of St. Paul's farewell to the *presbyterium* of Ephesus in *Acts* 20:17-36. In v. 17 St. Luke tells us that St. Paul summoned the *πρεσβύτερους* of the Church. In v. 28 St. Paul is represented as telling these men that God has made them *ἐπίσκοπους* to watch over His Church. See also *Tit.* 1:5-7; *I Tim.* 3:2; 5:17, *I Pet.* 5:1-2.

St. Paul himself kept episcopal control over these Churches during the time of their infancy. As occasion demanded, he sent the individual Churches certain of his disciples as delegates. These delegates, men like Timothy, Titus, Tychicus, and Artemas, possessed true episcopal power.<sup>8</sup> They were competent to ordain new members for the *presbyterium*. The members of the priestly brotherhoods within the local Churches did not have this power.

It would be stupid to suppose that the eucharistic sacrifice was offered in the local Churches only when St. Paul or one of his auxiliaries was present in the city. The presidency with which the *presbyterium* was charged was something to be exercised principally in the eucharistic gatherings themselves. Thus in the earliest days of the Catholic Church Mass was celebrated by men who did not have the episcopal character. The liturgical or eucharistic function of the *presbyterium* is in no sense a mere concession of ecclesiastical law. It is inherent in the very constitution of the Church.

Thus we see that the work, the essential function of the Church, for which the bishop uses the *presbyterium* as his instrument, is a task requiring the activity of a priestly brotherhood divinely commissioned to offer the sacrifice of the New Law. The fraternity over which the bishop presides and which he employs to aid him in the direction of his Church is one whose primary and essential function is the offering of the Mass. The Mass is pre-eminently the act of the Mystical Body. The Church of Christ is, in the last analysis, the group of the disciples whom God has called to honor Him and to carry on the redemptive work of His Son through this sacrifice.

In order to be of service to the bishop in his *presbyterium* the priest must also have the power "to bless, to preside, to preach, and to baptize." The power to bless involves a competence to take the lead in the Church's liturgical prayer and the capacity to administer Extreme Unction. The power to preside carries with it the right to exact obedience from the faithful. Preaching

<sup>8</sup> Both Timothy and Titus were charged with the task of ordaining presbyters and deacons and both were ordered to complete the organizations of the Churches to which they were accredited. Cf. *I Tim.* 3:1-13; 5:17-22; *Tit.* 1:5-9. Tychicus was sent to replace Timothy at Ephesus (*II Tim.* 4:12). Artemas took the place of Titus (*Tit.* 3:12).

is the explanation of the divine teaching confided to the Church of Christ. The power to baptize is that of acting as the ordinary minister of solemn Baptism, and it implies the basic competence to forgive sins in the sacrament of Penance.

All of these powers belong primarily to the bishop in his Church. The priest exercises them by the bishop's authorization. We can understand the nature and the purpose of the brotherhood of the diocesan priests in the local Church only when we realize that this company exists only for the sake of aiding its bishop in his administration and direction of his people through the exercise of all these functions.

The practical corollary to this theological truth about the position of the *presbyterium* with reference to the diocesan bishop is a matter of vital and central importance in the life of every individual secular priest and seminarian. Because, according to the divinely established constitution of the Catholic Church, the *presbyterium* does its sacerdotal and salvific work for Christ only in so far as it is intimately united in charity with the visible head of the local Christian community to aid him in the task God has given him, each diocesan brotherhood of secular priests and each individual member of such a brotherhood must realize that failure to cherish a spirit of loyal, whole-hearted, and charitable obedience and reverence for the bishop necessarily involves an absolute ruin of the spiritual life in the diocesan priesthood. In other words there can be no charity for God and loyalty to Christ in the soul of that secular priest who refuses to maintain and to foster in his own soul with all sincerity the reverence and obedience he promised the head and the father of his own *presbyterium* in the sacerdotal ordination by which he was admitted to this brotherhood. The glorious purpose of the Catholic Church, the end to which the labors of the bishop and his *presbyterium* are directly consecrated, demands of the individual diocesan priest the obedient and charitable expenditure of all his energy and of all his talents towards the most perfect accomplishment possible to him of the individual work to which the ruler of his own priestly company has assigned him. The sanctity of the diocesan priesthood requires this perfection of union with the bishop.

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## Answers to Questions

### PAULINE PRIVILEGE

*Question:* Since a convert may not exercise the Pauline Privilege if he has, after baptism, given the unconverted former spouse cause to depart, and since adultery committed after baptism is a just cause for such departure; how is the priest handling the case to find out whether the baptized party has committed adultery?

*Answer:* Gasparri (*De Matrimonio*, n. 1152) says that if the unconverted party gives negative answer to the first and second questions put to him according to Can. 1121, it is necessary to consider why he wants to depart. If he has a just cause for departure the convert has no right to enter a new marriage and if he should enter such a marriage it would be illicit and invalid. The just cause, he continues, is to be determined according to the rules of justice and right reason.

One of the just causes which he discusses is precisely adultery committed by the convert after baptism. He notes, however, that even such adultery would not deprive the convert of the right to contract a new marriage, using the Pauline Privilege, if the unconverted spouse has committed the same sin, or has condoned the adultery of the convert, or has been the cause thereof.

It would seem, then, that if the priest handling the Pauline Privilege case is worried about the possibility that the convert may have been guilty of adultery after baptism the ordinary way to find out would be to ask why the unconverted party refuses to cohabit with the convert. If it is because of the adultery of the convert the fact will appear from his answer. If it is for some other reason, then it will be clear that adultery is not the cause for departure which would deprive the convert of the right to use the Pauline Privilege.

It may also appear from the record that the unconverted party is himself guilty of adultery, e.g. by having attempted a marriage after civil divorce from the party now converted to the Church. The record may also show that the unconverted party does not blame the convert for an adultery actually committed, but has departed for some other reason, e.g. general incompatibility of temperaments, or because the one who departed simply got tired