CHAPTER TWO:
CLERICAL AND CONSECRATED LIFE AS FORMS OF EVANGELICAL LIFE

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All specific responsibilities of clerics and those who undertake some form of consecrated life recognized by the Church flow from their voluntary commitments to provide certain sorts of service to the Lord Jesus and to people he is trying to save. This chapter will clarify the nature of clerical and consecrated life by examining those commitments. Subsequent chapters will treat their specific responsibilities.

Jesus calls all his disciples to holiness. Those who respond strive to shape their entire lives by his teaching and example, thus undertaking what may be called an "evangelical life." Section **A** deals with holiness and that generic sort of holy life. Jesus practiced what he taught, and **B** concerns his unique evangelical life, many of whose features he commended to the Apostles and a few others who collaborated very closely in his own salvific service. In trying to embody those features in an evangelical life, many holy Christians have developed diverse forms of consecrated life, which I describe in **C.** Then, in **D,** I clarify what is common to the forms of consecrated life approved by the Church, what distinguishes all of them from other sorts of evangelical life, and what distinguishes them from one another. In **E,** I explain how deacons, presbyters, and bishops collaborate in Jesus' ongoing service and argue that it would be fitting for the Church to ordain only men who have the charisms for a consecrated life dedicated to ordained ministry.

A: The Call to Holiness and Evangelical Life

1) Because of God's traits, holiness connotes moral excellence.

The word *holiness* is likely to bring to mind moral excellence—for example, the heroism of St. Edmund Campion and St. Anne Line[1] or the obvious goodness of Pope John XXIII and Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Originally, however, the idea of holiness pertained not to morality but to religion, including religions whose objects of worship neither exemplify nor promote moral goodness. *Holy* signified the very reality of the divine—mysterious, frightening to many, but regarded as important by almost everyone. Sound religious thought recognizes that everything else depends on God for all it is and does, and especially that humankind depends on him for guidance and help in surviving, flourishing, and dealing with evil; in such thought, *holy* signifies God's transcendence (otherness, separateness, beyondness) and utter incomprehensibility.

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1. Anne Line was executed (27 Feb. 1601) in London for harboring a priest and canonized (25 Oct. 1970) by Paul VI with 39 other English martyrs. She and her husband, Roger, had been brought up as non-Catholics; while still teenagers, both sacrificed the favor and wealth of their families of origin by converting to Catholicism. They married young. In 1585, Roger, then only nineteen, was jailed; he got out, fled to Flanders, and died there in 1594. Anne took vows as a widow, risked her life caring for priests, and gladly paid with her life (see G. Fitz Herbert, "Line, Anne, Bl.," *NCE,* 8:771-72). John Finnis and Patrick Martin, "Another Turn for the Turtle," *Times Literary Supplement,* 5220 (18 Apr. 2003): 12-14, show how William Shakespeare beautifully but cryptically memorialized the couple with his poem, "The Phoenix and the Turtle," first published (1601) in *Love's Martyr,* a volume of verse organized by Robert Chester to which various poets contributed original works.

The Old Testament frequently mentions holiness: “There is none holy like the Lord, there is none besides thee; there is no rock like our God” (1 Sam 2.2); “Let them praise thy great and terrible name! Holy is he!” (Ps 99.3); “To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One” (Is 40.25). Especially in Isaiah, God often is called simply “the Holy One of Israel.”

Only occasionally does the New Testament use *holy* in that sense. The first petition of the Lord’s Prayer (see Mt 6.9, Lk 11.2), that the Father’s name be hallowed, calls for recognition of his divinity (see *CCC* 2807-15). And, though Jesus usually addresses his Father familiarly, when praying at the Last Supper for his disciples’ unity, he says “Holy Father” (Jn 17.11).

The core meaning of holiness appears most clearly in liturgy. Isaiah’s vision of the worship of God, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts” (Is 6.3), is echoed in John’s vision of the heavenly court:

> And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all round and within, and day and night they never cease to sing,
> “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,
> who was and is and is to come!” (Rev 4.8)

In every Mass we join in the heavenly worshipers’ acclamations by responding “Holy, holy, holy!” to the Preface.[2]

Beginning from the sense of *holy* signifying the very reality of the divine, people of every religion use the word to refer to other things considered insofar as they are related to the divinity the people worship. If the object of worship is frightful, such acquired holiness may be more a curse than a blessing. Even if it is benign, reverence for it leads people to reserve for religious uses things that acquire holiness.

Sacred things in this way are segregated from other things, which thereby become profane, that is, *not*-sacred. The taking or making over of something not-sacred for religious purposes requires drawing it out of the sphere of the profane and consecrating it, that is, setting it apart from the profane for its special relationship to God. At the same time, when people deal with the profane, as they must, they become as it were contaminated by it (“unclean”); then they must be ritually purified before engaging again in worship.

The Old Testament attributes holiness acquired by being related to the divine to the mighty deeds and the words by which the Lord reveals himself, and to the places where he dwells or becomes present; to the covenant and all its provisions; to the patriarchs, prophets, and priests; to everything required for worship and the times and places set aside for it; and, not least, to the whole community insofar as it is God’s chosen people.

This attribution of holiness to the people of God continues in the New Testament. The Church and her members are God’s incipient kingdom and adopted family. In virtue of the Holy Spirit’s pervasive activity in and through the Church, everything specifically

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2. *Holy* also is used with its core meaning when the *Gloria* is sung or recited and the reason for our worship is explicitly stated: “For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.”

required for Christian worship is holy, and every aspect of the Church's institutional structure and activity shares in her sacredness. Popes are called "His Holiness" regardless of their personal moral character; clerics and those consecrated for the things of the Lord also are holy in this sense, as are things that have no moral character at all, such as holy days, holy water, and holy pictures.

How, then, does holiness come to connote moral excellence? In his relationship with Israel, God, the Holy One, manifested eminent goodness: fidelity and loving kindness, righteousness and compassion (see Ex 34.6-7). "The Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is he" (Dt 32.4). He directed Moses to teach the Israelites to imitate that aspect of his holiness by introducing a restatement of moral law with a specific commandment calling Israel to holiness: "Say to all the congregation of the people of Israel, You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lv 19.2).[3] Thus, Israel's law was holy, not only because the Holy One gave it to his chosen people (thereby separating them from other peoples who were not holy by being his), but because its moral requirements guided people toward fitness for covenantal friendship with their holy God by teaching them to imitate his own goodness.

> And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I command you this day for your good? Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it; yet the Lord set his heart in love upon your fathers and chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as at this day. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn. For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of Lords, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner therefore; for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.
> (Dt 10.12-19)

Because Yahweh is not only mighty and terrible but loving and faithful, the people he has chosen must walk in his ways, love him, and keep all his commandments—which he gives them *for their own good.*[4] Insofar as they sin, God's people will not be holy but impure and unworthy of him. That is why Isaiah, observing the worship of the thrice-holy Lord and becoming acutely aware of his and Israel's unworthiness to participate in it—"I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (Is 6.5)—is cleansed by a seraph with a burning coal, a cleansing not of mere ritual impurity but of sin: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven" (Is 6.7). In this way he is prepared for prophetic service.

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3. See Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, Anchor Bible, 3A (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 1602-8.

4. Commenting on the command to love God with all one's heart, soul, and might (Dt 6.5), Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, Anchor Bible, 5 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 351-52, explains that it is modeled on the provisions of covenants by which vassals promised an overlord exclusive devotion and service (all one's heart), even to the point of death (all one's soul), and employing all one's strength and resources (all one's might).

The New Testament presupposes the Old Testament's teaching that holiness belongs primarily to God, who communicates it to human beings. The new covenant's communication of holiness, however, is far more profound, for the divine Word becomes the man "called holy, the Son of God" (Lk 1.35), and consecrates himself so that he can sanctify his disciples in truth (see Jn 17.17, 19). By perfect obedience to the Father, Jesus frees humankind from sin, radically transforming those who believe in him (see **1-D-2,** above) so that he can present them "holy and blameless and irreproachable" (Col 1.22) to the Father. Christians are baptized with the Holy Spirit (see Lk 3.16), who dwells in the entire Church (see 1 Cor 3.16), and so dwells in them, making them holy.

Intimate fellowship with God requires moral excellence of Christians (see, e.g., Rom 6.15-23, 8.1-17, 12.1-2; Gal 5.13-6.10). The development of this line of thought can be seen in statements of Peter that refer to holiness. When Jesus manifests divine power by bringing about a miraculous catch of fish, Peter exclaims: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Lk 5.8). After Jesus feeds the five thousand (see Jn 6.4-14), Peter explicitly recognizes him as "the Holy One of God" (Jn 6.69), and after Jesus rises from the dead Peter bears witness to him and challenges the people of Israel: "You denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead" (Acts 3.14-15). Finally, the First Letter of Peter recalls the Old Testament's teaching and calls all Christians to holiness:

> As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." And if you invoke as Father him who judges each one impartially according to his deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile. . . .
>
> Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brethren, love one another earnestly from the heart. (1 Pt 1.14-17, 22)

John develops the same line of thought without using the concept of holiness. Jesus' intimate communion with the Father and their mutual indwelling (see Jn 10.38, 14.10-11) are extended to embrace those who believe in Jesus (see Jn 14.20, 17.21-23). He manifests his love for the Father and abides in his Father's love for him by doing what his Father commands (see Jn 14.31, 15.10). "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments" (1 Jn 5.3). Loving Jesus, abiding in his love, and remaining in communion with the Father thus require those who believe in Jesus to keep his commandments (see Jn 14.15, 21, 23; 15.10, 14; cf. 1 Jn 2.3-6)—which are not only his but the Father's (see Jn 14.24). First among them is that Jesus' disciples love one another as he has loved them (see Jn 15.12, 17; cf. 1 Jn 2.7-11, 3.9-24, 4.7-21).

2) All the baptized are called and empowered to pursue perfect holiness.

In Vatican II's document on the Church, the fifth chapter, "The universal vocation to holiness in the Church," begins by affirming and explaining the Church's unfailing holiness, which is a gift of the uniquely holy God. Jesus, the Son of God, "loved the Church as his spouse, giving himself up for her so as to sanctify her (see Eph 5.25-26), and for God's glory joined her to himself as his body and filled her with the gift of the

Holy Spirit" (LG 39). The Council immediately draws the conclusion that every member of the Church, including every cleric, is called to holiness. It supports that inference by quoting Paul, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thes 4.3), and citing his teaching that God chose the Church's members in Christ so that they "should be holy and blameless before him" (Eph 1.4). Although Christians cannot by themselves respond to that call to holiness, the Council teaches that the Holy Spirit constantly brings about fruits of grace that in diverse ways manifest the Church's holiness among all those whose plan of life tends toward perfect charity.[5] The Council also notes that the Church's holiness "appears in a certain special way in the practice of the counsels, which have customarily been called 'evangelical'" (LG 39).

The Council emphatically teaches that Jesus, the divine teacher and paradigm of all perfection, preached "holiness of life to each and every one of his disciples of every condition: 'You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect' (Mt 5.48)."[6] But is that really possible? The Council points out that Jesus empowered his disciples to love all-inclusively: he sent them the Holy Spirit to inspire them to love God perfectly and to love one another as Jesus loved them (see LG 40). Due to God's graces rather than to anything Christians themselves do, they have been called to follow Jesus, justified in him, given in baptism a new birth as sons and daughters in the Son, and thus really made holy: "Hence they must by God's grace cling to and complete the holiness they have received" (LG 40). The Council concludes that all the Christian faithful, regardless of their place in the Church, are obviously called "to the fullness of Christian life and the perfection of charity." To attain such holiness they must use the strength Jesus gives them so that, "following in his footsteps and becoming conformed to his image, they may wholeheartedly devote themselves to the glory of God and the service of neighbor, doing the Father's will in all things" (LG 40).

Holiness is not realized in a compartmentalized set of religious activities. Doing the Father's will in *all* things is the key, as the Council proceeds to explain:

> In the various kinds and duties of life, one holiness is cultivated by all who are moved by the Spirit of God. Obeying the Father's voice and adoring God the Father in spirit and truth [by offering their lives with Jesus in the Eucharist[7]], they follow the poor, humble, cross-bearing Christ so that they may deserve to share in his glory. But according to each one's particular gifts and responsibilities, he or she must advance unhesitatingly along the way of living faith, which arouses hope and works through love. (LG 41)

The Council explains how different sorts of Church members—bishops and other clerics, married couples and other lay people, and those overwhelmed by various afflictions—can

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5. See LG 39. As will be shown, not only those in a canonical state of perfection and clerics but all who seek to do God's will in everything and who accept everything that befalls them from his hand have a plan of life that tends toward perfect charity.

6. LG 40. As the context of Mt 5.48 (see 5.43-47) makes clear, *perfect* in that saying means all-inclusive in love of neighbor.

7. Eucharistic Prayer I: "Bless and approve our offering; make it acceptable to you, an offering in spirit and in truth."

live holy lives by exercising the theological virtues in using their gifts to do God's will as they fulfill the responsibilities and meet the challenges of their daily lives. The Council sums up:

> All Christ's faithful, therefore, will grow in holiness day by day in and through all the conditions, duties, or circumstances of their life if they accept all these with faith from the heavenly Father's hand and cooperate with the divine will, manifesting to everyone by their temporal service itself the charity with which God loved the world. (LG 41)

If all the afflictions God permits were accepted with faith and all his gifts were used as he wills in loving service, one would cooperate fully with the divine will and day by day steadily grow in holiness.

The Council completes its chapter on the universal vocation to holiness by focusing on charity. By the gift of the Holy Spirit, God, who is love, pours his love into the hearts of all who believe and are baptized, and those who abide in that love abide in God, who also abides in them (see Rom 5.5, 1 Jn 4.16). "So, the first and most necessary gift is charity, by which we love God above everything else and our neighbor on account of him" (LG 42). The growth of charity requires constant cooperation with God's grace: repenting promptly any sin one commits (see LG 40), willingly listening to God's word and doing his will, and participating devoutly in the liturgy, especially the Eucharist (see LG 42). At the same time, charity itself directs and enlivens all the means of sanctification: speaking and listening to God in loving prayer, exercising all the virtues in doing his will, denying oneself in serving others (see LG 42).

The greatest witness of love and most perfect imitation of Jesus' love are to lay down one's life for him and for others; just after that the Council places the self-giving of those who observe the counsels "which the Lord in the gospel commends to his disciples" (LG 42). But all Christians, even though they are given neither the opportunity for martyrdom nor the charisms for observing the counsels, are called and required to take up their crosses, follow Jesus, and confess him before others, despite having to suffer for it (see LG 42). Likewise, all the Lord Jesus' faithful are called and bound to pursue holiness and the perfection of their own state. All therefore must shape their interests in worldly realities in such a way as to avoid attachments that would deprive them of the freedom to love perfectly (see LG 42; cf. 1 Cor 7.29-31).

Vatican II's teaching in this chapter on the universal call to holiness in the Church (LG 39-42) fits perfectly with its teaching that each of the faithful ought to devote his or her whole life to the Church's apostolate (see **1-D-4,** above). As I explained in **1-E-2,** an integrally apostolic life fulfills one's responsibility to provide priestly, prophetic, and kingly service, and its every component will have all three of those meanings. An apostolic life will conquer sin in oneself and offer others a compelling witness to faith, which will serve them well by contributing to their salvation. Consistently offering such witness also will engage one's whole mind, heart, soul, and strength in the service of love, and so will foster growth toward perfection in the charity in which one will firmly abide.

3) Pursuing holiness organizes one's entire life as an answer to the Father's calling.

Commenting on Vatican II's teaching on the perfection of charity, John Paul II links holiness to each individual's vocation: "As the Council itself explained, this ideal of perfection must not be misunderstood as if it involved some kind of extraordinary existence, possible only for a few 'uncommon heroes' of holiness. The ways of holiness are many, according to the vocation of each individual."[8] But all these ways involve accepting with faith from the Father's hand all the conditions and duties of life, doing the Father's will in all things, and using all his gifts in loving service. Doing those things consistently will organize one's entire life as a response to the Father's calling—as the carrying out of one's unique, personal vocation.

But the lives of many Catholics are not organized in that way.

Baptized infants have been made holy, as children of God in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. Given good example and catechized well, little children will wonder at God's goodness, love Jesus, praise him and the Father, and thank them for all their gifts. When making their First Communion, they will delight in their oneness with Jesus, and their holiness will increase.

Children begin making choices, however, before they can grasp the ideas of accepting everything with faith from the Father's hand, doing his will in all things, and using all his gifts in service. Good children obey the norms they are taught and their parents' and teachers' commands, yet, left to themselves, they spontaneously do as they please. Thus, they tend to develop a variety of interests unrelated to one another and to their faith and its practice, and they do not easily grasp most of what they hear read in church during the Liturgy of the Word. As a consequence, their initially innocent interests develop without reference to the kingdom of God, usually generating attachments to earthly realities that impede growth in charity toward perfection and are likely eventually to lead to temptations.[9]

What happens as they grow up?

Some are so poor that they lack many of the necessities of life. Seeing no prospect of bettering their condition, they have no motive to look ahead and are unlikely to consider their lives as a whole. Instead, they will try to survive from one day to the next, while seizing every chance of escape and gratification.

Others are economically better off. In most cases their parents and teachers encourage them to look ahead, consider their possibilities, get clear about what they want out of life, and develop personal agendas. When carrying out requirements of an agenda

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8. *Novo millenio ineunte*, 31, *AAS* 93 (2001) 288, *OR*, 10 Jan. 2001, VI-VII. Pope John Paul makes the same link in *Pastores gregis*, 54, *AAS* 96 (2004) 894, *OR*, 22 Oct. 2003, XV: "It is essential to promote a vocational culture in the broadest sense: young people, in other words, need to be helped to discover that life itself is a vocation. The Bishop would do well, then, to appeal to families, parish communities and educational institutes to assist boys and girls in discovering God's plan in their lives and in embracing the call to holiness which God from the beginning addresses to each person. [A footnote refers to the Synod's *Propositio* 52.]"

9. For this reason, timely catechesis regarding personal vocation is an urgent need of every Catholic child.

that promises gratification only in the distant future becomes burdensome, young people may take a break in transient escapes—for example, college students who work hard most weekdays but get drunk and "party" every weekend. When their undertakings are unsuccessful or the results are disappointing, a project or relationship (even a marriage) may be abandoned as "broken down" or "dead" to clear the way for a fresh attempt.

Both poor young people and those who are better off may continue, more or less, to practice their faith and to try to avoid mortal sins, at least those they feel are *really bad.* The more kindhearted may include promoting social justice in their agendas and enjoy spending some time in service projects. But even those who think they might have a "vocation" to the priesthood or religious life are likely to think of that as a possible agenda item and evaluate it as they would any other: "How much of what I want out of life can I expect to get by being ordained for this diocese . . . professed in that institute? How much else of what I want will I still be able to pursue? How much of what I would like will I need to forgo?" That is entirely different from the way the Bible indicates one should think about vocation.

Abraham learned of his vocation when God appeared to him and said: "'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.' Then Abram fell on his face" (Gn 17.1-3). Moses was curious about a burning bush and, despite his seemingly reasonable objections, was drafted to lead the Israelites out of Egypt (see Ex 3.1-4.17). The young Samuel did not realize that the Lord was calling him, but the call was repeated until he replied: "Speak, for thy servant hears" (1 Sm 3.10). Against Samuel's judgment, God chose the youthful David for anointing as Saul's successor; David's immediate response is not recorded (see 1 Sm 16.1-13). Isaiah did volunteer for his prophetic service (see Is 6.8), but he seems to have realized that he had been formed for it from the womb (see Is 49.1-6). Jeremiah also was formed and consecrated for his role, but found himself drafted for it despite his misgivings (see Jer 1.4-10); only after he committed himself was he informed that his prophetic office required, among other things, that he remain celibate (see Jer 16.1-4).

John the Baptist is destined before his conception for his important but subordinate role, which he humbly accepts and heroically fulfills (see Mt 14.1-12; Mk 6.14-19; Lk 1.5-25, 3.1-20, 9.7-9; Jn 1.15, 19-36; 3.25-30). Angels tell Mary and Joseph they are to serve as Jesus' parents, and they submit to the Lord's plan for them (see Mt 1.18-25, Lk 1.26-38). Jesus calls those who will be the Twelve to drop what they are doing, leave everything behind, and follow him (see Mt 4.18-22, 9.9-13; Mk 1.16-20, 2.14; Lk 5.1-11, 27). Only John's Gospel suggests that their curiosity plays a role in their calling (see Jn 1.35-51), but it also makes it clear that their vocation was not their choice: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit" (Jn 15.16). The youthful Paul was sure he was doing God's work by persecuting Jesus' followers until Jesus blinded him into seeing his error and becoming Jesus' chosen instrument for opening the Gentiles' eyes (see Acts 9.15, 26.9-18). Only in retrospect did Paul realize he had been consecrated for his role before he was born and prepared for it until God saw fit to reveal it to him (see Gal 1.13-17).

In all these cases, God's or Jesus' agenda is the source of people's vocations. The Lord has his plan, and he assigns those he chooses a unique part in carrying it out. He has prepared them and expects them to accept their part and cooperate. In many cases, he enables them to do what at first they think impossible. Cooperating, they have no opportunity to pursue an agenda of their own, for God takes charge of their entire lives. Spiritually changing and maturing as his plan for them unfolds, their lives take on meaning they could never have foreseen. In doing great things, they become great people.

Jesus calls people to follow him and collaborate in his mission. But with revelation's completion in him, the manner in which vocation is communicated had to change. Before then, God's will, revealed to all in the law, sufficiently guided most people, while those prepared and called for some special role in God's redemptive work received their vocations as a fresh divine revelation, as a new truth of faith. But the New Testament includes teachings, unprecedented in the Old Testament, about personal vocation for Jesus' disciples.

Jesus lays the foundation. Drawing on previous revelation, he commissions his disciples to be the salt of the earth and light of the world (see Mt 5.13-16). He teaches them to trust God for necessities, and to focus on seeking his kingdom and righteousness (see Mt 6.24-34). He warns them against believing in him while neglecting to do the Father's will (see Mt 7.19-21). By the simile of the vine and the branches, he teaches them that every disciple must abide in him and bear fruit, lest he or she be cut off and discarded (see Jn 15.1-11). Jesus teaches that all disciples must offer their unique, personal witness and must be ready to sacrifice life itself in doing so:

> And he said to all, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels." (Lk 9.23-26; cf. Mt 17.24-27, Mk 8.34-48)

When a rich man asks what he must do to have eternal life, Jesus makes it clear that keeping the commandments, while necessary, is not sufficient; one also must follow him and must give up everything that would prevent doing so.[10] With the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus teaches his disciples that the commandment to love one's neighbor as oneself requires more than fulfilling specific duties to particular people; everyone in need is to be treated as a neighbor and thus made into a neighbor (see Lk 10.25-37). With the description of the last judgment he teaches them that he himself is served by loving

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10. See Mt 19.16-22, Mk 10.17-22, Lk 18.18-23. The rich man does not rightly reject Jesus' guidance. For him as for everyone, having eternal life requires following Jesus; but for him though not for everyone (e.g., the propertyless), to follow Jesus requires getting rid of his wealth. Had Jesus considered the rich man's negative reaction acceptable, he would not at once have pointed out that it will be hard for the rich to enter the kingdom (see Mt 19.23-24, Mk 10.23-25, Lk 18.24-25). Thus, Jesus' "If you would be perfect" (Mt 19.21; but not in Mk or Lk), should not be read as offering the rich man a better option for discipleship, but as articulating the requirement of charity—"Love one another as I have loved you"—that transcends other commandments. See Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8-20: A Commentary*, trans. James E. Crouch (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), 509-16.

service which meets others' genuine needs, while failure to serve those in need is neglect of him (see Mt 25.31-46).[11] By the parable of the talents he teaches that different servants of God receive different resources for promoting his kingdom and that, *even if otherwise blameless,* those who fail to do what they can with what they are given will lose their opportunity to share in the kingdom (see Mt 25.14-30, Lk 19.11-27).[12]

The implication of these teachings is that disciples must do the Father's will, as Jesus himself did, by obeying not only the commandments that specify obligations everyone must fulfill but the commandment to love, which requires that they bear witness by their entire lives to the truth of God's revelation and use their particular God-given abilities and resources to meet others' genuine needs. Only such a life serves Jesus himself, effectively promotes God's kingdom, and will lead to sharing in it.

Paul instructs Christians to offer their bodies—their very selves, their lives—as a living sacrifice (see Rom 12.1). Regarding the surrounding non-Christian world as the decadent residue of the age that is passing away, he encourages forward-looking thinking: "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove [Gk. *dokimazein* = discern] what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom 12.2). All Christians are to recognize and humbly accept their limited roles, and each is to use his or her particular gifts in building up the one body of the Lord Jesus.[13]

That catechesis, so beautifully developed by Paul, is not peculiar to him; the same insight is briefly expressed elsewhere, using the analogy of servants in a household rather than that of members of a body: "As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace" (1 Pt 4.10). But only Paul makes it clear that each Christian receives a charism or set of charisms to live his or her entire life in response to God's call, according to the exhortation: "Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Col 3.17).

How such a life, completely eucharistic and completely holy, responds to God's calling of each person is most clearly articulated in the letter to the Ephesians. It begins by summarizing the calling of Christians to holiness, their predestination to adoption, their redemption by Jesus' blood from sin, their insight into God's plan to gather up all creation in Christ, and their assignment to live for the praise of God's glory (see 1.3-14). Even though dead in their sins, Christians were nevertheless loved by God, who, being rich in mercy, raised them to life with the Lord Jesus, so as to manifest his infinite

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11. See John P. Meier, *Matthew* (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1980), 301-306.

12. See ibid., 297-300.

13. See Rom 12.3-8. Brendan Byrne, S.J., *Romans,* Sacra Pagina, 6 (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1996), 368, comments: "The sober self-assessment of believers rests upon the way in which they perceive themselves to have been gifted by God at the moment of coming to faith . . .. Presupposed is Paul's distinctive view that each person, on coming to Christian faith, is addressed by God in a way that constitutes their 'calling' (*klesis*) and bestows upon them the distinctive 'gift' (*charis*) which they then contribute to Christian community life." Also see 1 Cor 12.4-31; cf. **1-D-5,** above.

goodness (see 2.1-7). Salvation, then, is entirely the fruit of God's grace, not of human works:

> For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (2.8-10)[14]

Christians have been recreated in Jesus precisely for the sake of their good works, which God prepared for them and gives them to live out. Paul goes on to summarize his own vocation, the life of good works the Lord gave to him (see 3.1-12), and then, after praying for those to whom he is writing (3.14-19), he begs them "to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called" (4.1). Because "grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift" (4.7), this is a personal calling to each of them to live his or her unique life of good works.[15] Diverse individuals have received diverse graces to make their particular contributions to the building up of Christ's body (4.7-13) until all attain to holiness—to "mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (4.13).

Paul's teaching makes it clear that, while each vocation is individual in the sense that it calls someone to walk in the unique life of good deeds that God prepared for him or her, all vocations also are social in the sense that they are callings to act for the common good of the kingdom of God. Embracing the whole of creation, providence orders everything to the kingdom; thus, the providential plan for each person is a vocation to do his or her share for the kingdom's coming and thereby reach fulfillment in it. The Church as a whole carries out the apostolate that fulfills her mission only insofar as each of her members cooperates by responding to his or her personal vocation and faithfully fulfilling the responsibilities it entails.[16] All Christians are called to use the charisms the Spirit gives them to build up the Church. These various charisms not only are complementary but are often shared by many, in such a way that those sharing them are called to work together—their vocation is con-vocation. Using gifts to serve others unselfishly not only fulfills the individual (see GS 24) or community working together but builds up the Church, and that benefits all her members and potential members—every human being alive or yet to be born.

The theology of personal vocation that I have been drawing from Scripture in this section has been briefly formulated by John Paul II in a splendid passage:

> As a kingly people, the Church sees herself rooted in and enlivened by "the law of the Spirit of life" (Rom 8.2), which is essentially the royal law of charity (see Jas 2.8) or

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14. This passage implies that Christians' holy lives are entirely the fruit of grace, and that God creates free choices; see **1-A-3** to **1-A-8,** above, for a defense of the coherence of those propositions.

15. See Markus Barth, *Ephesians, 4-6,* Anchor Bible, 34A (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974), 453-57.

16. Thus, John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, 21, *AAS* 71 (1979) 318, *PE,* 278.87, teaches that an initiative can serve genuine renewal in the Church only insofar as it "is based on adequate awareness of the individual Christian's vocation and of responsibility for this singular, unique and unrepeatable grace by which each Christian in the community of the People of God builds up the Body of Christ."

> the perfect law of freedom (see Jas 1.25). Therefore, the Church fulfills her mission when *she guides every member of the faithful to discover and live his or her own vocation in freedom and to bring it to fulfillment in charity.*
>
> In carrying out her educational role, the Church aims with special concern at developing in children, adolescents and young adults a desire and a will to follow Jesus Christ in a total and attractive way. This educational work, while addressed to the Christian community as such, must also be aimed at the individual person. Indeed, God with his call reaches the heart of each individual, and the Spirit, who abides deep within each disciple (see 1 Jn 3.24), gives himself to each Christian with different charisms and special signs. Each one, therefore, must be helped to embrace the gift entrusted to him or her as a completely unique person, and to hear the words which the Spirit of God personally addresses to him or her.
>
> . . .
>
> The aim of education for a Christian is to attain the "stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4.13) under the influence of the Spirit. This happens when, imitating and sharing Christ's charity, one turns one's entire life into an act of loving service (see Jn 13.14-15), offering to God a spiritual worship acceptable to him (see Rom 12.1) and giving oneself to one's brothers and sisters. *The service of love is the fundamental meaning of every vocation . . ..*[17]

Attaining to the "stature of the fullness of Christ" is attaining holiness; turning one's entire life into an act of loving service is living one's whole life in response to the Father's calling. Thus, one attains holiness by living one's whole life in response to one's personal vocation.

In sum, every Christian is called to be a saint—not some generic sort of saint but a particular saint. Mary was called to be the saint she became by living her unique life, Peter to be the saint he became by living his unique life, and so on. One becomes holy as one responds to one's unique vocation. God calls and sets apart every single Christian for a unique relationship with himself and a unique role in his plan. He takes the initiative; vocation is first and always his idea and his gift, a gift that includes all one's abilities and resources, one's awareness of God's call, and one's ability to respond to it. Someone can refuse the gift or accept it. If one accepts, the life of good deeds that will carry out one's vocation becomes the object of a profound and free self-commitment. For those who cooperate with God, the whole, living relationship is a great blessing, a covenant of faithful love, of fellowship and cooperation for the heavenly kingdom—which will include God's glory, the world's salvation, and their own complete fulfillment.

4) One's whole life can respond to God's calling and can lead to holiness.

The point of this section is not to prove the truth expressed by its title—a truth already implicit in the preceding one—but to clarify it by focusing more closely on its various aspects.

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17. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 40, *AAS* 84 (1992) 724-25, *OR*, 8 Apr. 1992, X-XI. The passage is concerned with the responsibility of the Church's pastors to promote vocations to the priesthood, but the Pope rightly sees that responsibility to be part of the wider responsibility to help every Christian find his or her personal vocation.

Since being not at one with God in any respect would leave that part of oneself unsanctified, the Christian who strives to become a saint will strive to be at one with God in respect to everything whatsoever. God's providential plan embraces absolutely everything. No possible good can come about unless God creates it, and no possible evil can occur unless he permits it. Therefore, someone who means to do the Father's will in all things always listens for God's call before deciding what to do and never makes any choice, no matter how seemingly trivial, unless confident that carrying it out will be doing the Father's will. And someone who means to accept everything in faith from the Father's hand refrains from reacting to bad things—those others do and those that simply happen—without first recalling that God has permitted them and asking what response he wants.

One obviously must avoid mortal sin. But venial sins also are very serious evils: "Venial sin weakens charity; it manifests a disordered affection for created goods; it impedes the soul's progress in the exercise of the virtues and the practice of the moral good; it merits temporal punishment. Deliberate and unrepented venial sin disposes us little by little to commit mortal sin" (*CCC* 1863). But striving to avoid sin, important as it is, does not provide much in the way of loving service. One must act for the sake of the kingdom; one must do the truth in love. Religious responsibilities are fundamental of course: listening to God's word, participating in the liturgy, praying, and so on. But religious acts should not be compartmentalized; they should enliven and transform the whole of one's life.[18]

Most adults make major commitments: to be a husband or wife, to be a cleric, to be a religious, and so on. Commitments like these cannot be made by oneself. For example, one cannot commit oneself to be a husband or a wife without getting married to a particular person, who makes a corresponding commitment. Those who make such commitments with well-grounded confidence that to do so responds to God's call—to be, for example, a deacon for this diocese or a permanent member of this institute—have heard and accepted in principle at least very central elements of their vocations.

I say "in principle" because major commitments need to be reaffirmed day by day as their particular responsibilities emerge or take shape. I say that these people have accepted "at least very central elements" of their vocations because God's plan might call them to make other commitments, perhaps even major ones—for example, to undertake

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18. John Paul II, *Christifidelis laici*, 59, *AAS* 81 (1989) 509, *OR*, 6 Feb. 1989, 19, makes the point that the vocations of the lay faithful are all-inclusive: "There cannot be two parallel lives in their existence: on the one hand, the so-called 'spiritual' life, with its values and demands; and on the other, the so-called 'secular' life, that is, life in a family, at work, in social relationships, in the responsibilities of public life, and in culture. The branch, engrafted into the vine which is Christ, bears its fruit in every sphere of existence and activity. In fact, every area of the lay faithful's lives, as different as they are, enters into the plan of God, who desires that these very areas be the 'places in time' where the love of Christ is revealed and realized for both the glory of the Father and service to others. Every activity, every situation, every precise responsibility—as, for example, skill and solidarity in work, love and dedication in the family and the education of children, service to society and public life, and the promotion of truth in the area of culture—are the occasions ordained by Providence for a 'continuous exercise of faith, hope, and charity' (AA 4)."

this or that job. Moreover, seldom if ever is it the case that a person's set of commitments settles everything. Almost everyone is free to make some additional choices about leisure activities, friendships, and so on. And that "free" area is not outside God's plan, for the life of good deeds he has prepared is a tightly integrated whole, and such elements of one's vocation not only are important in themselves but are likely to have a significant impact on other, more central elements.

Furthermore, the ongoing activities that make up a great part of their lives must quite often simply be accepted rather than chosen by Christians. Most children have little choice about whether to go to school; many people have no real options about what nation to live in; and some have no choice about what kind of work to do. But even so, one can meekly accept such things as elements of one's vocation and fulfill unchosen responsibilities with the intention of pleasing God. Thus Paul taught: "Slaves, be obedient to those who are your earthly masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as to Christ; not in the way of eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to men" (Eph 6.5-7).[19]

Other conditions beyond one's control can pertain to a vocation. After speaking of the more obvious elements, such as work and state of life, John Paul II adds: "And I am thinking also of other situations: for example, of the husband who is left a widower, of the spouse who is abandoned, of the orphan. I am thinking of the condition of the sick; the old, infirm and lonely; and of the poor."[20] Accepting everything in faith from the Father's hand means acknowledging that God has permitted such things and then dealing with them properly—as opportunities to cooperate with him in bringing the good he intends out of the evil suffered.

Though the life God prepares for one is a perfectly coherent whole, the calling to live it is not communicated all at once, but piecemeal over one's lifespan. When devout children or young people first begin to understand their vocations, they often are surprised at how God's providence has already formed them and brought them to that moment. Moreover, nobody immediately receives a complete itinerary and lifetime schedule of events, and the kindly light that leads often illuminates no more of the path ahead than is necessary to follow it. Only the blessed can, retrospectively, understand their vocations as a whole.

Often one's vocational path does not lead where one expects. God sometimes calls couples to become engaged but not married, calls men to be seminarians but not

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19. That teaching implies neither that slavery was just nor that those who recognized its injustice were wrong in working to abolish it. It implies instead that those who suffer injustice can and should cooperate with God and thus escape from evil rather than being enslaved by it as are those who answer evil with evil. See 1 Pt 2.18-25 and the rich commentary by John H. Elliott, *1 Peter,* Anchor Bible, 37B (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 511-50. Elliott rightly points out (542): "What is said of and to slaves here at the outset of the domestic exhortation pertains ultimately to all within the household of God. The condition and experience, the attitude and the steadfastness, the vocation and the reward of the household slaves are all typical of and paradigmatic for the household of God as a whole."

20. John Paul II, Homily at Mass at St. Joseph Cafasso Parish, 4, *Inseg.* 4.1 (1981) 215-16, *OR,* 16 Feb. 1981, 6.

ordained, calls men and women to be novices but not professed. Knowing that, Christians who are becoming saints make the most of their engagement or their formation as seminarians or novices, without setting their hearts on the wedding, ordination, or profession—that is, without ever pursuing their own agenda. They say, "If the Lord wills," and then listen patiently for his definitive call.[21] Those who are becoming saints never stop listening and are always prepared for shocking turns along the path ahead.

They also are prepared for bruising falls, which include their sins. God, of course, does not call anyone to sin, but he permits even those who are becoming saints to do so. Then it is part of one's vocation to acknowledge that this evil, too, has been permitted by God, and to deal with it as he wills—with honesty, genuine contrition, appropriate restitution to those one has injured, gratitude for the Lord's mercy, and suitable penance.

Many Christians, perhaps partly due to poor catechesis, construct agendas that organize large parts of their lives without taking their faith and hope into account. Such planning, directed to getting what one wants without regard to God's call, is at least venially sinful. But what becomes of such people's vocations? Or of the vocations of those who through sin make binding commitments they should not make or in ways that cannot be remedied fail to make commitments that they were called to make? Suppose a young woman, careless about God's plan for her life, ignores her vocation to the religious life, marries, has children, and only then becomes devout: Has she missed her vocation, once for all?

No, she has not. God remains forever faithful; his gifts and calling are irrevocable (see Rom 11.29). But what God calls one to do varies according to the particular circumstances of one's life. Having become a wife and mother, this woman has assumed responsibilities that she is morally obliged to fulfill. Her marriage and parenthood are central parts of her vocation, and she ought to seek holiness by fulfilling those roles in an exemplary way. As God calls those who have defrauded others to restitution, so he calls sinners who missed what would have been their vocation had they not sinned to that life of holiness available to them now, even at the eleventh hour (see Mt 20.1-16). Hence, although sinners miss or even reject their vocations, a repentant sinner once more has a complete personal vocation.

Not all those who disregard God's call in planning their lives make commitments other than those they would have made had they done their best to discern their vocations. Young people, not previously devout, who experience a conversion sometimes can see in retrospect that the Lord has used their own self-seeking to prevent them from making irreversible commitments and/or to develop their gifts in ways that enable them now to undertake the lives of selfless service to which they see themselves called. Of course, to do so they will need to reconsider the reversible commitments they have made and the projects they have undertaken, and bring everything in their lives into conformity with God's plan.

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21. Jas 4.14-15: "You do not know about tomorrow. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and we shall do this or that.'"

The understanding that each Christian is called to a life of good deeds that God has prepared in advance may lead someone to suppose that such a vocation is like a role in a drama, a scripted part that need only be acted out. If that were so, however, no one could be called at the eleventh hour. Is a vocation then more like the directions provided by a guidance system that continuously takes into account one's present position and, regardless of wrong turns or deliberate deviations, always tells one how to get home? That analogy captures some features of vocation missed by the role-in-a-drama analogy, but it obscures the fact that the Father not only calls all of his children to dwell with him but calls each one to mature into that unique member of his family that he or she will be forever.[22]

Once misleading analogies are set aside, one can see that, although God's action is primary in vocation, it does not render Christians passive, and so prevent them from shaping their own vocations. As will be explained (in **5,** below), in discerning one's vocation one does construct a tentative plan of life. Then too, while God sometimes moves Christians who have been living sinful lives to repentance by calling them to some challenging service that appeals to them, many Christians merit at least some of the more central elements of their vocations by their docility in accepting other elements and diligence in fulfilling them. That is suggested by the parable of the talents (see Mt 25.14-30, Lk 19.11-27), in which the faithful servants are entrusted with greater responsibilities. (Such merit, of course, also is a gift of grace.) Moreover, Christians who find appealing something they know they should not adopt as part of an agenda can rightly ask God to call them to that same thing, as some have prayed for the opportunity to lay down their lives as martyrs.

Constantly listening for God's calling, regularly accepting it, and faithfully carrying it out leads to holiness.

Someone conformed to the world would never hear God calling. One must be transformed by a renewal of mind, so that one's thinking is attuned to God's word. Moreover, one will listen for God's call only if one is interested in what he is interested in: the completion of his creative-redemptive-sanctifying work. Such listening therefore presupposes that one is seeking the kingdom and hoping for its coming. When hope dominates one's attitude toward life, one is ready to expend oneself completely here and now without becoming attached to anything precisely as it here and now is: "Those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it" (1 Cor 7.29-31). Such people stop worrying about success, care only about being faithful, and wait without anxiety for the Lord's coming.

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22. In fact, no analogy does justice to vocation in general and in itself. For then we begin thinking about God's action and wondering how what he is doing is related to our own actions. Such thinking is similar to the theological reflection that led to the conflicting theories about grace and free choice mentioned in **1-A-4,** above, and like that reflection, is bound to be not only futile but misleading (see **1-A-5** through **1-A-8**).

Sinful options regularly come to the attention of those who aim no higher than to avoid sin while carrying out their own agendas. But such options are precluded for the person who always has this or that to do because it is what God wants, or has this or that to deal with because God has permitted it, and one must deal with it as God wants. Preoccupied with the good, one is not so easily distracted by what is bad. People who use all their time and resources to do the Father's business have no unused capacity to put to bad uses.

Living a life meaningful through and through, one is grateful for God's gift of it and wishes to give oneself back to him. Of course, people cannot package themselves up and ship themselves to heaven, nor can they surrender themselves in such a way that they no longer are responsible for themselves. A person becomes Jesus' mother and brother and sister by hearing his or her Father's word and keeping it, by listening to God's calling and responding to it (see Mt 12.49-50, Mk 3.31-35, Lk 8.21). So, one takes up the cup of salvation and calls on the Lord's name: one offers oneself with Jesus in the Eucharist (see **1-E-2,** above). What is offered is gathered into the Lord Jesus and laid up as material for the kingdom (see **1-E-3,** above). And such material is sanctified when one participates in the Eucharist. My whole self would be sanctified if my entire life were fit to be offered with Jesus' sacrifice. If only . . .

5) One must discern which option God wishes one to take.

It is obvious to faithful Christians that some possible choices would be sinful, whether for everyone (e.g., choosing to lie under oath) or for them (e.g., for those committed to celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake: choosing to engage in a romantic relationship). Conscientious people refuse to entertain obviously sinful possibilities. As for those about whose moral acceptability they are unsure, they either obtain the guidance of a trustworthy moral adviser or engage in moral inquiry to determine such possibilities are right or wrong. In that case, they apply relevant moral standards to three things: what they would choose to do, why they would choose to do it, and the likely side effects of carrying out the choice. When trustworthy advice or inquiry makes it clear that only one of the possibilities is morally acceptable in all three respects, conscientious people realize that this is the uniquely acceptable option God means for them to take.

Sometimes, though, without needing to engage in inquiry or after doing that, conscientious people find themselves confronted with two (or more) options—including the option of rejecting the other possibility (or possibilities)—that they are confident are morally acceptable. So far as they can see, either (or any one) of the options might be part of the life of good deeds God has prepared. Then discernment is required. It is thus necessary when, but only when, one must take one of two (or more) options, both (or all) of which are known to be morally acceptable.[23] To discern

23. Conversely, it is wrong to attempt to discern before excluding morally *unacceptable* options. For example, Bishop Diablo attempts to discern whether to give the police evidence that a brilliant young priest, Fr. Nocte, has been engaging regularly in oral sex with a boy, Ismael, aged fourteen. The Bishop carefully notes his "desolation" when he imagines Fr. Nocte in prison and "consolation" when he imagines his protégé in Rome studying canon law, and concludes that God clearly wants him to withhold the evidence and send Fr. Nocte off to Rome. Unfortunately, Bishop Diablo failed to consider the possibility

is to consider both (or all) of the morally acceptable possibilities in order to identify the one that God prefers be taken.[24]

Although identifying the option God wishes one to take does not preclude free choice, the very undertaking to discern does implement one's commitment of faith and other choices in virtue of which one was prepared to do what God prefers. Still, having identified the option God prefers, one can be tempted not to take it. The temptation need not be dramatic; it can be nothing more than hesitation, due to habitual caution, to let go of other possibilities and assume incalculable future responsibilities.

Obviously, people who are not disposed to do what God prefers will not be interested in discerning what that is. Moreover, someone might object that trying to identify the option God wishes one to take is a hopeless waste of time, since once one is confident that all the options under consideration are morally acceptable, further reflection cannot exclude any of them as really inappropriate. That is true if *really inappropriate* means inherently unreasonable. But choices among inherently reasonable options are possible, we can reasonably prefer some options to others, and so can God. Thoughtful people who want to give someone they love a gift often draw up a list of reasonable options, discern which gift would most please the recipient, and give that; thoughtful Christians who love God and wish to give themselves to him will identify the option most pleasing to him from among those that are morally acceptable, and will shape their lives accordingly.

But the critic of discernment might argue that since God is incomprehensible, his preferences, unlike those of human loved ones, are inscrutable. That would be true if God did not communicate his preferences. But the Father has revealed himself in Jesus, who is really human. Christian life is cooperation with Jesus, and Christians who wish to give themselves to God can trust Jesus' preferences. His preferences with respect to any set of reasonable options one confronts can be identified in the same way one identifies other friends' preferences. While that will involve gathering and considering available information, in the end it will depend on an insight shaped by one's entire human relationship with Jesus.

But, someone might object, isn't that insight completely subjective? No more so than identifying other friends' preferences—and, in fact, less so. Other friends, being more or less ambivalent and unclear about what they prefer, inevitably send more or less mixed signals. But not Jesus. Moreover, other friends understand us more or less imperfectly

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that he had a moral obligation to do his best to protect other boys from being seduced as Ismael was and to bring Fr. Nocte to justice. His "discernment" actually was a process of self-deception in which he misinterpreted the significance of his feelings about the alternatives, feelings appropriate in themselves but entirely irrelevant to the moral judgment that the Bishop ought to have made.

24. This definition is for the purposes of this book; *discernment* also can refer to identifying not only God's preferences but any divine communication. Thomas Dubay, S.M., *Authenticity: A Biblical Theology of Discernment*, updated ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1997), deals with discernment in that wider sense. While there are a few things in that book with which I cannot agree, it seems to me sound on the whole, and in my judgment it deserves careful reading by anyone who undertakes to teach others about discernment or to help others in discerning.

and so communicate with us more or less ineptly, but God understands us perfectly and cannot fail to communicate whatever he wishes.

Of course, one must be prepared to hear. One learns to do that by listening attentively to God's word and doing one's best to grasp the message it conveys to oneself. One becomes attuned to Jesus' preferences by carrying on a close friendship with him. Noticing some difference between what the world is saying and God's word, between popular attitudes and Jesus' attitudes, one tries to take God's view and share Jesus' attitudes. Insofar as one's mind is no longer conformed to the dying world but to the coming kingdom, one then is in a position not only to judge what is good and acceptable but to discern what is perfect (see Rom 12.2). Having set aside any former agenda, one does not look for divine endorsement of a preexisting inclination. Regularly asking the Holy Spirit to enlighten and guide one's reflection, one confidently expects him to do so.

Especially when considering the more central commitments that will shape his or her life, a person must make a serious effort to identify acceptable options, not assume that only the possibilities that happen to come to mind are worth considering. God gives each of us abilities and resources (along with handicaps and inadequacies), and puts us in historical and social situations offering certain opportunities and manifesting many different, pressing human needs. As someone thinks about how to use his or her abilities and resources so as to take advantage of available opportunities for meeting others' pressing needs, various possibilities will emerge. Of course, in thinking about any option, one also must take one's own limitations and needs into account.

People sometimes mistakenly rule out a possibility that deserves consideration—for example, a possibility that would leave many of one's talents undeveloped. That consideration certainly is relevant, but it cannot be absolutized. Any choice means forgoing other possibilities, and any major commitment by a gifted person is likely to leave some talents undeveloped. Gifts not used in one way often will be called into use in other, unexpected ways. Moreover, it can be reasonable to forgo developing some talents in undertaking a service that will meet many people's important and urgent needs. Jesus might have become the world's greatest storyteller or political leader, but in doing the Father's will, he set aside those uses of his gifts.

Another ground for excluding a possibility is that it would involve one in a morally difficult situation. Sometimes, the problem is only others' moral shortcomings, and the reluctance to get involved is little more than a self-centered concern to avoid challenges and hardships—more generous readiness to serve would make the messy possibility an appealing option. In other cases, involvement surely would be morally challenging for oneself. That consideration is relevant but not always decisive: if the occasions of sin presented by the situation could be modified so as to be unlikely to lead one to sin, one might well be called to involve oneself in a morally difficult situation in order to work to change it for the better.

It is necessary to gather information about the various options under consideration. What exactly would one be undertaking in each case? What considerations support and oppose each option? How relevant is each to making good use of one's abilities and

resources in serving others? In considering options and answering these questions, people sketch out possible plans for their lives. They should consider how likely it is that this or that need of others will go unmet unless they try to meet it.

One also needs to check out one's feelings. How well do they harmonize with the reasons for and against the various options? It is important to become aware of and neutralize excitement, uneasiness, and other feelings about possibilities that are aroused by superficial factors or by attachment to anything one should be prepared to give up.[25]

People must discern for themselves; nobody can tell which of two or more morally acceptable choices God prefers someone else to make. In this respect, discernment is unlike moral judgment, for a competent moral adviser often can discriminate between morally acceptable and unacceptable options facing others. Moreover, parents and others in authority rightly judge what is in the best interests of those for whom they are responsible. But when an issue calls for discernment in the sense under consideration here, anyone who tries to discern on another's behalf is overreaching. Moreover, lacking access to the other person's intimate relationship with Jesus, which should shape the intuition required for sound discernment, the intuition of someone attempting to discern on another's behalf will be shaped by something else, and all too often by his or her own agenda, mistaken for God's will.

Even so, those trying to discern, especially in respect to central commitments, should seek others' help in gathering information and can scarcely afford to ignore proffered advice. All available sources of information ought to be used and checked against one another. And even unsought advice should be evaluated carefully.

A sound, wise, and attentive spiritual guide also can be a great help. Soundness includes moral uprightness, fidelity to the Church's teaching and practice, and dedication to the guide's own vocation. Wisdom includes appropriate theological training, openness to legitimate diversity in personal lifestyle and devotion, and a realistic awareness of the limits of one's insight into other people's personalities and problems. Caring includes friendliness, reasonable availability when needed, patience in listening, sympathetic understanding, and unflagging respect for others' right and responsibility to discern God's will for themselves and to follow it. A spiritual guide of this sort will provide moral advice regarding presupposed issues of right and wrong, clarify the process of authentic discernment, supply enlightening examples, challenge the residue of worldly views probably still present even in a generally renewed mind, help the other party examine his or her reasons and feelings with respect to various options, help bring to light blind spots arising from subconscious motivations, and provide encouragement and the spiritual support of prayer.

Unfortunately, devout people often cannot find a truly qualified spiritual guide who is able and willing to help them. Then conversation with a holy, thoughtful person who lacks theological training is more likely to be helpful than consulting a trained director who purveys dissenting opinions, lacks prudence, or treats serious issues and concerns casually and offhandedly.

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25. For some examples showing how emotional motives can be fruitfully examined, see *LCL*, 276-79.

Someone preparing to discern must keep an open mind. Additional information sometimes shows that what seemed to be an option is morally unacceptable or something that simply cannot be done or undertaken. Sometimes, too, what one had not thought of or deemed impossible emerges as an option.

Those who find some demanding and noble vocation attractive should not be too quick to suppose they lack the gifts and/or other resources for it. People, especially young people, often lack insight into their own gifts and resources or badly underestimate themselves. It is clear from Scripture and the lives of saints that God often calls people to do things for which they consider themselves inadequately equipped—and then enables them to do what seemed impossible. Charisms also can remedy deficiencies, and although we cannot confer charisms on ourselves, we can pray for them. Then too, we often have the option of promising God that we will undertake something if he provides the necessary gifts and resources, and those who do that often find that he accepts the offer. And when human laws or practices block what otherwise would be a vocational option, or some person or group can rightly make the impossible possible, we should not assume that people will not do what they can, but should earnestly ask them to do it.

How much time and effort should a person put into finding options, gathering information about them, and listening to others' advice? That depends on the importance of what is to be discerned. Both the state of life to which one will commit oneself and the place where one will vacation next summer could be objects of discernment, but discerning the former obviously deserves more careful preparation than discerning the latter. St. Francis de Sales offers sensible advice:

> Choice of vocation [i.e., state of life], plans for some affair of great importance, a work requiring a long time or some very great expenditure of money, change of residence, choice of associates, and such similar things require that we think seriously as to what best accords with God's will. But in little daily actions, in which even a mistake is neither of consequence nor beyond repair, what need is there for us to make a great to-do, give them much attention, and stop to make importunate consultations with others? To what purpose will I make trouble for myself to learn whether God prefers me to say the rosary or the office of our Lady? There can be no such great differences between the one and the other that a long inquest should be held. So also as to such things as the following: Should I go to the hospital to visit the sick rather than to vespers? Should I go to hear a sermon rather than visit an indulgenced church? Ordinarily there is nothing of such obvious importance in one rather than the other that there is need to go into long deliberation over it. We must proceed in good faith and without making subtle distinctions in such affairs and, as St. Basil says, do freely what seems good to us, so as not to weary our minds, waste our time, and put ourselves in danger of disquiet, scruples, and superstition. I always mean when there is no great disproportion between one work and another and where we meet no important circumstances on one side rather than the other.[26]

Where less important matters are concerned, the general undertaking to discern God's preferences and the ongoing effort to prepare oneself to do so will tend to limit appealing

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26. St. Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God* (lib. 8, c. 14), trans. John K. Ryan (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1963), 2:94-95.

options to ones that have few significant differences. Moreover, Christians whose more central, life-shaping commitments have been made after careful discernment usually can be confident that they are handling less important matters as God prefers by doing whatever seems harmonious with their existing responsibilities.

In preparing to discern, one must be clear about the options. One cannot choose to do something known to be wrong; one cannot now treat as an option a commitment to undertake something that cannot now be undertaken. Obvious as these things seem, people sometimes are confused about them.

Some commitments presuppose long periods of study and/or other sorts of formation—for example, years in a novitiate and/or seminary program. People with a sound understanding of vocation who are trying to discern God's will obviously will not undertake such formation without believing they might well be called to make the commitment in question. But clearheaded persons considering undertaking formation will not make the mistake of trying to discern then what can only be discerned later—if they complete the formation and are invited to make the commitment.

Thus, a man who is thinking about applying for admission to a seminary should not try to discern whether God is calling him to be a priest. (Much less will he simply determine to get ordained if he can!) Rather, he will discern whether God is calling him to prepare as a seminarian to be a priest, in case that turns out to be part of God's plan for him. Then, if he discerns that God does want him to try to prepare to be a priest in this or that diocese or institute, he already will be carrying out his vocation, not just satisfying requirements to get ordained, by fulfilling his responsibilities as a seminarian. And if it turns out that God has something else in mind, he will be ready for the next part of the life of good deeds that God has readied for him, whatever that may be.

Having identified options between or among which discernment is appropriate, gathered information about them, considered reasons for and against each, checked out their feelings with respect to the options, and judged that the time for discerning has come, people need some time free of distraction and conducive to recollection, prayer, and calm reflection—a retreat or something like it. For instance, a busy person might participate in a Saturday evening Mass, talk things over with his or her spiritual director or friend, and then spend the night alone in discerning: first recalling that the discernment will affect himself or herself and others forever, then seeking the Holy Spirit's help, and finally prayerfully reflecting on the options.

The question is: Which does Jesus prefer me to take? The question in not what Jesus would do, but how he would rather have me help him, what contribution to the Church's apostolate he would prefer me to try to make. My relationship with him and the feelings pertaining to it are the touchstone for concretely considering each option and my feelings about it.

Someone who has prepared properly is earnestly doing his or her very best to discern God's will. Since only God can make it known, the person cannot discern unless he does. But it would be pointless for him to want someone to do something, without making what he wants clear. Immediately after the passage quoted above, Francis de Sales goes on:

> Even in important matters we must be very humble and not think of finding God's will by force of scrutiny and subtle discussion. After we have implored the light of the Holy Spirit, *applied our thought to search for his good pleasure,* taken counsel with our director and perhaps with two or three other spiritual persons, we must come to a resolution and decision in the name of God. After that we must not call our choice in doubt, but devoutly, peacefully, and firmly keep and sustain it.[27]

The italicized phrase encapsulates the whole process of preparing for discernment. St. Francis seems to have believed that whatever choice one makes after having prepared properly will certainly correspond to God's will.

St. Ignatius's treatment of Christian decision making suggests that it is not so simple. His view deserves respect, for the Church often has commended his *Spiritual Exercises,* and that entire work centers on finding and embracing the will of God. Just as there are bodily exercises, Ignatius says, "so is the name of spiritual exercises given to any means of preparing and disposing our soul to rid itself of all its disordered affections and then, after their removal, of seeking and finding God's will in the ordering of our life for the salvation of our soul."[28] Ignatius plainly grasped the importance of vocation and the need for discernment, and the *Exercises* provide a thoroughgoing way of preparing for it, carrying it out, and acting on its outcome.

When Ignatius focuses on the moment of discernment, he assumes that all appropriate preparations have been made. The treatment therefore is fairly brief. He distinguishes three sorts of cases.

In the first, what God wants is perfectly obvious. You are being called and are aware of it and absolutely clear about what he wants. Ignatius uses the calling of Paul and of some of the Twelve to exemplify this sort of case.[29] But people who earnestly seek God's will sometimes are given the sort of intuition and certainty Ignatius has in mind without experiencing anything like a revelation. As they consider their options, one suddenly shines like the face of a loved one among a crowd of strangers, while the others fade and lose their appeal. They instantly *know* what God wants and gladly embrace it.

In the second sort of case, Ignatius says, "sufficient clarity and knowledge are received from the experience of consolations and desolations, and from experience in the discernment of various spirits."[30] Here Ignatius has in mind the situation in which a person, having prepared to discern, prayerfully reflects on the options, gives play to feelings, and takes note of how they differ as each option is considered. Doing that often makes clear what God prefers, just as an analogous process often enables one to identify the gift a friend would prefer.

It is essential to bear in mind, however, that Ignatius's teaching about such discernment applies to Christians who are appropriately disposed and prepared to discern, and whose feelings are centered on their relationship with God. When he speaks of

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27. Ibid., 95 (italics added).

28. *Ignatius of Loyola: The Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works,* ed. George E. Ganss, S.J. (New York: Paulist, 1991), *SE,* 1; p. 121.

29. Ibid., *SE,* 175, p. 162.

30. Ibid., *SE,* 176, p. 163.

consolations and desolations, for instance, Ignatius does not mean what a worldly person means in saying: "I would be comfortable with that" or "I can't see myself putting up with that." He defines *consolation* in terms of intense, positive experiences in the relationship with God, such as feeling love for him that subordinates and relativizes one's interest in created things, being moved to tears by one's sins or Jesus' sufferings, joyfully anticipating heaven, relaxing peacefully as one sets aside the day's cares and entrusts oneself to the Father's loving providence. *Desolation* is defined in terms of religious experiences of just the opposite kind.[31]

In the third sort of case, Ignatius supposes that someone appropriately disposed and prepared to discern is not given a sudden intuition or an insight through religious experiences. Then, like Francis de Sales, Ignatius advises calming down, considering the options' relation to one's interest in promoting the kingdom and one's own share in it, and making a choice. He carefully specifies that the deliberation must be carried out prayerfully and by a renewed mind that excludes worldly considerations. He also suggests thought-experiments that sometimes generate insight. Imagine that the decision is not your own to make but a matter on which your advice is being sought by a friend you want to see grow in holiness. What decision would you advise that friend to make? Suppose you died suddenly right after making the decision. What would you wish to have decided? Imagine standing before the Lord Jesus and giving an account of all the decisions you have made. Which decision would you rather have made? Ignatius also teaches that, after making the decision, a person ought to offer it in prayer to God, and ask him to accept and confirm it, if it really is pleasing to him. To do that also is implicitly to detach oneself from the decision and submit to God's will in carrying it out.[32]

It might be supposed that in asking God to confirm the decision a person also is implicitly asking him to make it clear that he or she has gone wrong if in fact that is the case. That makes sense just to the extent people should be skeptical about their own holiness and sincerity. For it sometimes happens that a person after conversion who was not appropriately disposed and prepared to discern does come to see that worldly considerations, irrelevant feelings, or even mistaken moral judgments shaped a decision that seemed at the time to reflect God's preference. Insofar as people are properly disposed and well prepared to discern, however, nothing that happens afterward can count against their conviction at the moment of decision that they are doing God's will. God wants us to know what he wants, and those who really want to do his will and do their best to discover what that is cannot go wrong.

Of course, devout and conscientious people can do their best to solve some moral issue yet mistakenly judge something to be sinful that is morally acceptable or something to be right that is gravely wrong. But moral judgments depend on accurate understanding

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31. For consolation, see ibid., *SE,* 316, p. 202; for desolation, *SE,* 317, pp. 202.

32. Ibid., *SE,* 177-88, pp. 163-65. A brief but useful introduction to Ignatius' teaching on discernment: Philip L. Boroughs, S.J., "Using Ignatian Discernment," *Review for Religious,* 51:3 (May-June 1992): 373-87.

of actions and reasoning from principles and norms, and both are susceptible to mistakes, whereas discernment by people properly disposed and well prepared concerns options clearly understood and morally acceptable. There is only one matter of fact to settle: Does God prefer that I take this option or that one? After discerning, someone may find it impossible to do what he or she has concluded God prefers. But that does not mean God did not want one to take the option, attempt to carry it out, and find that to be impossible. One may do what one is convinced God wants and experience unexpected and disastrous consequences. But even if one cannot imagine why God is permitting the evil that the well-intentioned action is bringing about, the disastrous outcome does not show that God did not want one to take the option and carry it out. Thus, immediately after the passage last quoted from his book, Francis de Sales adds:

> Although the difficulties, temptations, and different events that occur in the course of carrying out our plan may cause us some uncertainty as to whether we have chosen well, still we must remain firm and not consider all such things. Rather, we must reflect that if we had made some other choice we might be a hundred times worse off, and furthermore that we do not know if God wills us to be trained in consolation or in desolation, in peace or in war. Once our resolution has been holily made, we must never doubt the holiness of its execution. If we do not fail, it cannot fail. To act otherwise is a mark of great self-love, or of childishness, weakness, and folly of mind.[33]

Once a properly disposed and well prepared person discerns an option to be what God prefers, nothing whatever can show that God did not want that person to take that option.

When two or more people can act only by consensus and have more than one morally acceptable option—for example, a couple considering marriage, whose options are to marry each other and not to marry each other—it still is true that each must discern for himself or herself. Still, they should cooperate in discerning by helping each other discern soundly. That will mean sharing all relevant information with candor, and doing their best to help each other become properly disposed and well prepared to discern God's will. Since he must either prefer that they act or not act, their cooperative effort should bring them to the same conclusion. Otherwise, they perhaps failed to cooperate as fully as they should have, or else one or both of them was not fully ready to discern. If, however, they truly do their best to discern yet fail to reach consensus, they must recognize that God's plan for them does not include the cooperation they were considering. So, for instance, if a diocesan seminarian, after his ordination has been approved and scheduled, becomes convinced that God is not calling him to be ordained, the bishop who thought God was calling him to ordain the man should recognize that he was mistaken.

6) Various elements of one's vocation are obligatory in diverse modes.

There are at least five reasons why one ought to find, accept, and carry out one's personal vocation.

First, we are not our own. We are created and have been redeemed, "bought with a price" (1 Cor 6.20) by the Father, who gave his only Son for us. So, we owe him service.

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33. De Sales, loc. cit.

He has entrusted us with all our abilities and resources. If we fail to use them productively, we will deserve to be cast out, and we will be, as the parable of the talents makes clear (see Mt 25.14-30).[34] It might seem that the unproductive servant is treated too severely: frightened by the master's reputation, he is indeed overcautious; but he does not steal or lose the sum entrusted to him. Yet he is condemned as wicked, slothful, worthless, and is cast out (see Mt 25.26, 30). The point, however, is that he did not do what his master told him to do: he was disobedient. His defense, even if truthful, makes it clear that he knew he was disobeying and did so deliberately.[35]

Second, by the act of faith, we agree to receive Jesus' service, to benefit from his laying down his life. Having benefited from his self-sacrifice, we owe him a debt of gratitude. He wants his disciples' cooperation: If you wish to be my disciple, take up your own cross and follow me (see Mt 10.38, 16.24-27; Mk 8.34-88, Lk 9.23-26). One cannot rightly refuse. Moreover, Jesus' response to the rich man (see Mt 19.16-22, Mk 10.17-22, Lk 18.18-23) shows that to accept his invitation to discipleship and deny oneself everything at odds with it is advice one cannot safely reject.

Third, fairness requires that we treat others as we wish to be treated. But in accepting Jesus' service, we wish to be saved by his self-sacrifice. And since the kingdom is constituted by mercy, fairness requires its members to treat others with mercy, as Jesus makes clear with the parable of the merciless official (see Mt 18.23-35). We ought therefore to sacrifice ourselves in meeting others' needs, chief among them the need to repent, believe, and abide in love. Those who fail to use their gifts to promote others' salvation deserve to be treated as the merciless official was.

Fourth, Jesus commissions his Church to carry on his mission, and the Spirit sees to it that each of the baptized receives the gifts needed to do his or her full share in that apostolate. People do that only by using those gifts in service, and not to use them fully is a defect in gratitude to the Spirit.[36]

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34. Jesus makes the point repeatedly and in different ways. Branches that bear no fruit will be taken away: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit" (Jn 15.1-2). Fruitless trees will be eliminated; saving faith is alive and active: "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will know them by their fruits. 'Not every one who says to me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven'" (Mt 7.19-21). Indeed, since the productive use of God's gifts also is his gift, even if one perfectly fulfilled one's personal vocation, honesty would require one to say: I am an unprofitable servant, for I have done only what I ought to have done: see Lk 17.10; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Gospel according to Luke: X-XXIV*, Anchor Bible, 28A (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985), 1144-46.

35. In the Lucan version, the master says: "I will condemn you out of your own mouth, you wicked servant!" (Lk 19.22). At the same time, Christians who know what God wants and do their best to do it cannot fail to please him: fidelity suffices, success is unnecessary (see **1-E-5,** above). The servant, by contrast, had he been obedient and done his best, might well have lost his master's deposit and been blamed for that.

36. Thus, canon law directs the faithful to fulfill their personal vocations: *CIC,* c. 204, §1: "The Christian faithful are those who, inasmuch as they have been incorporated in Christ through baptism, have been constituted as the people of God. For this reason, made sharers in their own way in Christ's priestly, prophetic, and royal function, they are called to exercise the mission which God has entrusted to the Church to fulfill in the world, in accord with the condition proper to each." One cannot trace this canon

Fifth, even though the divine persons stand to gain nothing by all they have done, are doing, and will do for us, "in everything God works for good with those who love him" (Rom 8.28). In creating, redeeming, and sanctifying us, God desires our cooperation because without it we cannot come to be the unique members of his family he wishes us to be forever (see **1-E-2,** above). Children blessed with wise and unselfish parents ought to obey them in everything, and are foolish and self-defeating when they do not. Similarly, God's children ought to be eager to know what the Father wants, ready to cooperate in everything, and steadfast in doing so.

The first three of these arguments make it clear that some elements of a personal vocation are obligatory in the sense that refusing or failing to respond to the call is grave matter. Those who abide in love and live in the Lord Jesus bear *some* fruit even if they never think about vocation; so, those who bear no fruit at all evidently do not abide in love and live in the Lord—they are living in mortal sin.

Sometimes Christians must either bear witness to their faith or sin gravely, whether by directly denying that faith or by committing some other mortal sin. It is gravely wrong not to rise to such a challenge even though one's life is at stake; and when the stakes are not that high, giving in is still more gravely wrong. Also, sometimes Christians who fail to help neighbors in need or to forgive those who have wronged them sin gravely against charity (see Mt 6.14-15, 18.23-35, 25.41-46; *LCL,* 306-20, 788-821).

Furthermore, even if people are thinking of their own agendas rather than their vocations in undertaking a major commitment—like marriage, accepting ordination, making vows in a religious institute—the grave responsibilities that flow from the commitment then pertain to their personal vocation. John Paul II has this in mind when he says:

> This principle [each Christian receives a gift and ought to use it to build up the one body], the key rule for the whole of Christian practice—apostolic and pastoral practice, practice of interior and of social life—must with due proportion be applied to the whole of humanity and to each human being. . . . It is precisely the principle of the "kingly service" that imposes on each one of us, in imitation of Christ's example, the duty to demand of himself exactly what we have been called to, what we have personally obliged ourselves to by God's grace, in order to respond to our vocation. This fidelity to the vocation received from God through Christ involves the joint responsibility for the Church for which the Second Vatican Council wishes to educate all Christians.[37]

Whether Christians think about their vocations or not, the vocations include all their grave obligations—those all Christians share and those that arise from their peculiar circumstances or previous choices. And even their obligations that are not grave—for all the obligations of Christians pertain to their personal vocations.

Among the obligations that are not grave are those bearing upon the vocation itself: to strive to identify all of its elements and to accept them precisely as elements of one's vocation. Part of identifying the elements of one's vocation, as has been

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back to any single passage in Vatican II's documents. But the Council's teachings in LG 9-17, 31, 34-36; AA 2, 6, 7, 9, 10, imply what the canon encapsulates.

37. John Paul II,, *Redemptor hominis,* 21c, *AAS* 71 (1979) 318, *PE,* 278.87.

explained, is discerning among otherwise morally acceptable options the one God prefers that one choose.

Two objections are likely here. On the one hand, given the grave moral dangers to people who construct personal agendas without considering what God is calling them to do, the obligation to think in terms of personal vocation would appear to be grave. On the other hand, since discernment deals only with options that one is certain are morally acceptable, it seems one is morally free to choose whichever one likes and has no obligation at all to discern which one God prefers.

The answer to the first objection is that one does have a grave obligation to take God's will into account in making every choice, not least a central commitment. And faithful Christians who construct their own agendas without thinking about vocation do take God's will into account, at least to the extent of not including anything they know would involve a mortal sin or probably lead to committing one. For instance, without thinking of marriage as a vocation, faithful Catholics who fall in love and want to marry see a priest, do what is necessary for the marriage to be valid in the eyes of the Church, and commit to such a marriage; once married, they do God's will with respect to their marital and parental responsibilities, at least insofar as they realize that not doing his will is mortally sinful.

True, if Catholic young people thought in terms of personal vocation, they would be more likely to consider celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake as a possible alternative to marriage. And if they thought they were called to marriage, thinking in terms of vocation—before falling in love, while courting, in deciding to marry, when planning the wedding, and in carrying out their commitments—would make them less likely to marry imprudently, better prepared to resist temptations, and more likely to be sanctified by married life and parenthood. But neither Scripture nor the Church's teaching makes it clear that a Christian sins gravely by marrying without considering what God is calling him or her to do, and they surely would have done so if the matter were in fact grave. Therefore, unreasonable as it is to make central commitments without considering what God is calling one to do, the matter is not grave. In my judgment, even deliberate refusal to think about one's life in terms of personal vocation would be, *in itself,* a venial sin.

The answer to the second objection is that Christians who are sure that all the options before them are morally acceptable in themselves are morally free to choose whichever one they like, *unless* they are considering those good options as means to some ulterior good end. If the options are being considered as means, one should consider which of them would be more conducive to the end and choose it—unless one has a good reason, not just an emotional motive, to choose otherwise. Since Christians ought to think in terms of vocation, they ought to consider any set of morally good options as possible ways of giving God a gift, and the option most conducive to that end is the one he prefers. Giving that preferred gift certainly also will be better for oneself and others than giving any other. So, there can be no good reason not to give it. Therefore, if one could discern which one of an otherwise morally acceptable set of options God prefers but does not do that, or discerning fails to choose accordingly, one chooses unreasonably. But any

unreasonable choice is morally wrong. Hence, we do have an obligation to discern God's preference whenever we can and to choose accordingly.

That obligation is of a special sort, however. Only the fourth and fifth of the arguments above bear upon it. It is not like the obligation to avoid mortal sin or even like the obligation to avoid what is in itself a venial sin—for example, a harmless lie to avoid embarrassment. It is analogous to the obligation people have to welcome and make good use of a present they receive from a spouse or friend, even if they would have preferred something else. Unlike objects of strict duties, that complete gratitude and subordination of preference are not owed. Their whole value lies in manifesting and eliciting love, thus deepening and strengthening the marriage or friendship. Yet because mutual gratitude and subordination of preferences strengthen interpersonal communion, loving spouses and friends practice them. To do so is an obligation to the communion itself, considered as the concrete, personal and interpersonal reality of we-two-together, where *yours* and *mine* are no longer meaningful expressions.

The obligation to use God's gifts fully by discerning among morally acceptable options and choosing the one God prefers is something like that. God does not demand it, but it is an obligation to the kingdom—to the coming, everlasting communion of God and created persons, considered as the concrete personal and interpersonal reality of the whole divine family: we Uncreated Persons and created persons together.

If we have an obligation to think in terms of vocation and to identify all of its elements and accept them, why has the Church not said more about personal vocation?

In fact, the Church has taught about it to some extent, but almost always without using the expression *personal vocation.* The Church always presented the New Testament, proposed Jesus, Mary, and other saints as models, and taught people to pray: "thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." She encouraged her children not only to avoid sin but to be grateful to God, love him, and strive to please him. She taught them to remember that life is short and to detach themselves from earthly things, hope for heaven, fear hell, and live their lives accordingly.

Today the Church is teaching explicitly about personal vocation. Besides the implications for personal vocation of Vatican II's teaching about holiness (already treated in **2,** above), the Council, in explaining the responsibilities of presbyters as spiritual fathers of the faithful who have been entrusted to their care, said:

> Wherefore it belongs to priests, as educators in the faith, to see to it, either personally or through others, that each of the faithful is led in the Holy Spirit to cultivate his or her own vocation in accord with the gospel, to practice real charity, and to live in the freedom with which Christ has set us free (see Gal 4.3; 5.1, 13). Little will result from ceremonies, even if beautiful, or associations, even if flourishing, unless they are suited to educate people in pursuing Christian maturity. (PO 6)[38]

38. John Paul II, General Audience, 4, *Inseg.,* ???, *OR,* 26 May 1993, 11, having quoted this passage, comments on it: "The Council stresses the need to help each member of the faithful to discover his specific vocation, as a proper, characteristic task of the pastor who wants to respect and promote each one's personality. One could say that by his own example Jesus himself, the Good Shepherd who 'calls his own sheep by name' (see Jn 10.3-4), has set the standard of individual pastoral care: knowledge and a

This is echoed by John Paul II in *Pastores dabo vobis:* "The Church *fulfills her mission* when she guides every member of the faithful to discover and live his or her own vocation in freedom and to bring it to fulfillment in charity."[39]

Some good pastors through the ages have done this. St. Ignatius, St. Francis de Sales, other saints, and their followers understood personal vocation without calling it that, and taught many people to think in those terms. Moreover, until modern times, most Christians were brought up in Christian cultures without the secularization now afflicting affluent nations; and most people had far fewer choices to make than we do, far less wealth, and a shorter life span. With both the Church and their own experience constantly teaching them about divine providence, they were predisposed to find God's plan in conditions that were for them a given. Good pastors often provided such people with direction along the lines expressed by De Caussade, a eighteenth-century spiritual writer:

> Would to God kings and their ministers, princes of the Church and of the world, priests, soldiers, peasants, laborers, in a word, all men, knew how easily they can attain eminent sanctity! They have but to fulfill the simple duties of religion and their state in life, and bear with submission the crosses these duties bring, and accept with faith and love the work and suffering which unsought and unceasingly come to them through the order of Providence. This is the spirituality which sanctified the patriarchs and prophets before there were so many methods and so many masters of the spiritual life.
>
> This is the spirituality of all ages and of all states, which cannot be more surely sanctified, or in a manner more noble, more extraordinary, more easy than by the simple use of that which God, the Sovereign Director of souls, gives them each moment to do or suffer.[40]

Unfortunately, despite what Vatican II and John Paul II say regarding personal vocation, few Catholics today receive such clear and helpful teaching.[41]

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relationship of friendship with individual persons. It is the presbyter's task to help each one to utilize well his own gift, and rightly to exercise the freedom that comes from Christ's salvation, as St. Paul urges (see Gal 4.3; 5.1, 13; cf. also Jn 8.36)."

39. Italics changed; this statement is part of a longer passage quoted in **3,** above. By this remarkable statement, John Paul II surely does not mean to deny the centrality to the Church's mission of the Eucharist, about which he teaches richly in *Ecclesia de eucharistica,* where he also both follows and develops the teaching of Vatican II. The point, however, is that the Eucharist will be fruitless if the faithful do not learn to use their gifts to live lives that they can bring to the holy sacrifice to be offered to the Father and returned to them fully incorporated into the body of Christ—materials ready to be transformed into the everlasting kingdom (see **1-E-3,** above).

40. J. P. de Caussade, S.J., *Abandonment or, Absolute Surrender to Divine Providence,* ed. H. Ramière, S.J., trans. Ella McMahon, from 8th French ed. (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1887), 40-41.

41. Besides Vatican II's explicit teaching about personal vocation, certain parts of the Council's documents contain teachings especially relevant to personal vocation in general and/or the personal vocations of lay people: LG 9-17, 30-38, 41; SC 1-20; GS 33-39, 47-52, 63-71; AA 1-8, 28-32; AG 11-12; GE 1-8; DH 11, 14. John Paul II's relevant teachings are too numerous to list here; for some of the most directly relevant, see the references in the sections on apostolate and personal vocation in the second volume of the present work: *LCL,* 104-129. Other relevant teachings of John Paul are referred to throughout that volume, for it is designed to help Catholics, especially lay Catholics, understand all their moral responsibilities in terms of their unique personal vocations, rather than legalistically, and so to live Christian life as apostolate and way toward holiness, rather than as one part of life among

7) Several factors explain the scarcity of teaching on personal vocation.

Considering the importance of personal vocation, why has the Church not taught explicitly about it until recently and why is the present teaching not being received by pastors and passed on to the faithful? Several factors help one understand the situation.

Perhaps the most important factor has been, and still is, a profound and widespread misunderstanding of the superiority of clerical and consecrated life and service. John Paul II points out that

> . . . in the period before the Second Vatican Council the concept of "vocation" was applied *first of all* to the priesthood and religious life, as if Christ had addressed to the young person his evangelical "Follow me" only for these cases. *The Council has broadened* this way of looking at things. Priestly and religious vocations have kept their particular character and their sacramental and charismatic importance in the life of the People of God. But at the same time the *awareness renewed* by the Second Vatican Council of the universal sharing of all the baptized in Christ's three-fold prophetic, priestly and kingly mission (*tria munera*), as also the awareness of the universal vocation to holiness (see LG 39-42), have led to a realization of the fact that every human life vocation, as a Christian vocation, corresponds to the evangelical call. *Christ's "Follow me" makes itself heard on the different paths* taken by the disciples and confessors of the divine Redeemer.[42]

Jesus' "Follow me" (Mt 19.21, Mk 10.21, Lk 18.22) had been narrowed to signify consecrated life and the priesthood. The misunderstanding that led to that narrowing and the authentic superiority of clerical and consecrated life will be dealt with directly and at length below (in **D-2, D-3, D-6,** and **E-8).** Here I shall deal with three factors that contributed to and sustained the misunderstanding: legalism (see **1-E-1,** above) that distorted the moral and spiritual formation of all Christians, Neoplatonism that distorted the formation of clerics and religious, and the mistaken theological view that Christians living in grace cannot help but direct all their actions toward God as ultimate end.

Imbued with legalism, many theologians and pastors focused on the minimum requirement of avoiding mortal sin; for them, the pursuit of holiness has been and remains an optional extra, and so they have paid little attention to recent teaching regarding personal vocation and the universal call to holiness. Dissenting theologians and pastors have spent most of their time and effort trying to lighten the burden of unpopular Catholic moral teachings regarding marriage, sex, and other matters. Since Vatican II, moreover, even those theologians and pastors who have given some thought to what the faithful ought to be doing often have overlooked or ignored the Council's teaching about lay apostolate and focused on promoting either ecclesial ministries or activism shaped by contemporary secularism's social, economic, and political ideology and agenda. Ministries sometimes are part, but usually no more than a small part, of a Christian's personal vocation. As for action for social justice and peace, only if it is planned and

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others, each of whose minimal demands have to be met. With respect to the vocations of lay people, also see **1-D-5,** above.

42. John Paul II, *Apostolic Letter on the Occasion of the International Youth Year,* 9, *AAS* 77 (1985) 602, *OR,* 1 Apr. 1985, 5.

carried out in complete accord with the Church's moral teaching, including her social teaching, can it be a valuable apostolate and an important part of one's personal vocation; but relevant Church teachings too often are regarded legalistically as nonbinding on consciences commendably aroused by injustice and human suffering.

The prevalence of legalism is partly due to the impoverishment of moral theology and its isolation from so-called spiritual theology. The manuals of moral theology generally used in modern times focused almost exclusively on identifying mortal sins and providing norms for administering the sacraments. Spiritual theology mainly offered guidance and inspiration for clerics, religious, novices, and seminarians; spiritual writers addressing the laity generally assumed that their readers would already have made their central commitments and simply adapted to them the kind of advice designed for clerics and religious. Neither the moral theologians nor the spiritual theologians saw any need to help every Christian find his or her unique vocation.

Two things contributed to the impoverishment of moral theology and its isolation from spiritual theology. First, the main focus of theology after Trent was on the training of seminarians. Almost all those who wrote theological texts and taught theology worked either alone or only with others in their specialty; and most took a rather narrow view of what seminarians needed to know. Second, the situation reflected the fact that the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* is divided into four parts—dogma, liturgy, moral, and prayer—with the material in each part treated in such a way that the living deposit of faith is dissected into hundreds of bits and pieces. True, these are admirably arrayed for easy perusal, but they also are lifeless and isolated from one another.[43]

Another important factor that contributed to the narrowing of the concept of vocation was the influence of Neoplatonism.

Many Christian teachers in the early centuries had studied the thought of pagan philosophers and rightly tried to put their ideas to work in the service of the faith. By 200 AD and for the next several centuries, Neoplatonism seemed to many Christians the most useful pagan philosophy.

The Neoplatonists strove to develop a single, all-inclusive worldview and way of life. They held that reality has four levels: the highest level is the source of everything, the *One* (identified with the *Good*), which is undifferentiated perfection beyond understanding; next is pure *Mind,* which contemplates in a single vision the One, itself, and the ideas of all possible things; then pure *Soul,* which, working from the ideas Mind contemplates, generates a system of existing things, in the process giving rise to individual souls; and the lowest, the multitude of sensible things, *the material world.* At the bottom of the material world is pure matter, which, lacking all perfection, is evil. While all four levels of reality are eternal, the three lower ones proceed from the One by timeless emanation (*Good* by its very nature is diffusive of itself), somewhat as light,

43. In this respect, unfortunately, the more theologically ambitious *Catechism of the Catholic Church* imitates its venerable predecessor. The Church universal still needs a more organic, exemplary catechism. *CCC* 2012-16, concerns Christian holiness, but only 2013 deals with the universal call to holiness. Personal vocation is not treated in *CCC,* and GS 38 and 39 are not mentioned in *CCC,* part 3: "Life in Christ."

heat, and life proceed from the sun—although, unlike the sun, the One does not do anything or give up anything in emanating.

According to Neoplatonism, human souls share in mind and are capable of understanding and action, but humans as embodied are real in the lowest way. Tending to forget their origin, they become dispersed outside themselves and enmeshed in the sensible world. But because the lower levels proceed from the One, they also "convert"—that is, turn back to the One. To begin their return, humans must first draw back from the exterior world of sense and exercise moral self-discipline so as to focus on the higher level of rational reflection. Then they must go beyond that level's multiplicity to the unity of intuition. Finally, they will lose themselves in the undifferentiated perfection of the One.[44]

It may seem from this brief summary that the Neoplatonist worldview and way of life offers little for Christian use. But Neoplatonism was developed by learned and able philosophers, who gathered up many insights from Plato, Aristotle, and others. They worked out a coherent and inspiring system, developing insights, arguments, and a vocabulary far more serviceable than those of other contemporary pagan thinkers, whose views were more like those of many post-Christian thinkers of our own time. Consequently, though Christian thinkers rejected everything in Neoplatonism that they saw to be incompatible with faith, they also found in it much that seemed helpful. Among those who made considerable use of Neoplatonism were Origen, Basil of Caesarea, and Gregory of Nyssa in the East; and, in the West, Boethius, Ambrose, and Augustine. Moreover, some Greek treatises, probably written around 500 AD, by a Christian writer claimed authorship by the Dionysius who was a disciple of St. Paul (see Acts 17.34). Translated into Latin, those treatises, which were imbued with Neoplatonism, were used by medieval and early modern Catholic theologians as highly authoritative sources.[45]

Neoplatonism obviously differs in important ways from Christian faith.[46] What is especially relevant here is that returning to the One does not require grace, repentance, faith, baptism, the Eucharist, and a life of witness and service; it requires detachment from exterior things and bodily functions, moral discipline, intellectual work, and

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44. For a more adequate but brief and understandable sketch of Neoplatonism together with a bibliography, see Joseph Owens, C.Ss.R., *A History of Ancient Western Philosophy* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1959), 395-416; an even briefer sketch, which makes clearer some very influential elements of Neoplatonism: Pierre Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?* trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 2002), 157-71.

45. On Pseudo-Dionysius and his Christian transformation of Neoplatonism, see Louis Bouyer, Cong. Orat., *History of Christian Spirituality,* vol. 1, *The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers* (New York: Seabury, 1963), 395-421.

46. The One, which is beyond personhood, does not create, does not exercise providential care, does not reveal, and cannot offer human beings a share in its nature and life with a view to interpersonal communion. The Neoplatonist cosmos never will be transformed into a new heavens and a new earth, but will continue forever essentially as it is. Originating from the One by an unbroken process, bodily human persons are alienated from the One not by sin but by that process of emanation itself and by involvement in the sensible world. Moreover, human souls do not differ infinitely from the One as creatures from their creator, but are a lower mode of the reality whose supreme mode is the One, so that the soul is naturally akin to the divine.

contemplation that ends in ecstatic union with the One. Human individuals certainly cannot and will not be fulfilled by rising from the dead and living with the One; a man or a woman can become his or her truer self only by ceasing to live as a mere bodily individual and attaining to the higher levels. That does not come about by entering into a covenantal communion that will last forever but by transcending human society and sensible things to return to unity in Soul, then passing beyond Soul's action and Mind's contemplation to the One. Thus, human beings do not have different personal vocations; the truly good life is exactly the same for everyone, though most people will remain more or less enmeshed in the sensible world and never will rise above some degree of moral discipline.

Neoplatonism may have been influenced by Christian teaching, and the triad of the One, Mind, and Soul is reminiscent of the Holy Trinity. Among Christians, Neoplatonism contributed to heretical thinking about the Trinity and the Incarnation, but it also provided some of the ideas and language needed to develop the dogmas of orthodox faith on those central mysteries. Later Catholic theologians, including St. Thomas, continued drawing selectively from Neoplatonism, rejecting its obvious errors but using what seemed compatible with faith. Even so,

> from the patristic era onward, Neoplatonism has had an influence on Christian teachings concerning the spiritual life that is highly disputable. The ancient tradition went from the humanity of Christ to the knowledge of the Father; it took ecclesiastical experience, i.e., the effect of the Holy Spirit in the Church, as its point of departure to attain God. Neoplatonism, on the contrary, pretended that an immediate and experimental knowledge of the transcendent God is possible. While making the necessary corrections in this matter, St. Augustine and St. Gregory of Nyssa were led to a like doctrine. From this there would result, in teachings on mysticism, a disequilibrium between the doctrine on union with God and the doctrine on the mediation of the Incarnate Christ.[47]

That disequilibrium caused many Christians more or less completely to overlook that Jesus transforms by the sacraments everyone who properly receives them—he makes them saints and perfects them in holiness.[48] They lost sight of the fact that God offers holiness to every human being and calls all Christians to perfect their holiness by accepting and fulfilling their personal vocations and participating in the Eucharist. They failed to realize that in the Eucharist, "unlike any other sacrament, the mystery [of communion] is so perfect that it brings us to the heights of every good thing: here is the

47. P. Hadot, "Neoplatonism," *NCE,* 10:336.

48. By baptism, Jesus frees people from sin, unites them with himself in the fellowship of the new covenant, empowers them to participate in the Eucharist, and gives them the Holy Spirit, who pours divine love into their hearts and makes them children of God, truly sharing in their Father's nature. By baptism and confirmation, Jesus not only makes Christians members of his Church but gives them the Spirit to enable them to bear personal witness, by confessing him with their lips and living the lives of good deeds that God has prepared for each of them. By the Eucharist, Jesus not only enables his disciples to sanctify their lives of good deeds by uniting them with his own self-offering to the Father but incorporates them and their lives into himself, thus sanctifying them and preparing them for everlasting life in the kingdom.

ultimate goal of every human desire, because here we attain God and God joins himself to us in the most perfect union."[49]

Thus many Christians supposed that only a few had vocations; the rest were not called to holiness, but could only struggle against temptations to commit mortal sins and obtain forgiveness when they "fell into" them. Seeing the present life as little more than a test to be passed, many hoped, not that the kingdom described in the New Testament would come, but only that their own souls and those of their loved ones would avoid hell, be cleansed in purgatory, and be admitted to the beatific vision. They neither denied nor thought much about other elements of the New Testament's teaching about the kingdom: the resurrection of the body, the transformation of the whole cosmos into a new earth and new heavens, the Lord Jesus' handing over the kingdom to the Father, and God's being all in all. The few who were conscious of having vocations thought the way to perfect holiness was not only Jesus, his sacraments, and doing the Father's will in everything but also the way marked out by Neoplatonism and taught by Pseudo-Dionysius: first, the moral discipline of purgative asceticism; then, the ascent of the soul by illumination received especially through personal prayer and contemplation; finally, God joining himself to the soul in the most perfect union, *not in the Eucharist but in a strictly private experience.*[50]

Still, faithful Catholics whose quest for holiness was guided in part by Neoplatonism nevertheless knew that they had been created in God's image and likeness and never supposed that they and the world had resulted from emanation. It was not ambition for spiritual self-perfection and the hope of losing themselves in the One that motivated them but the love of God poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Spirit and the hope of reaching a dwelling place in the Father's house. Great Christian thinkers whose thought incorporated many Neoplatonic ideas always transformed them. For instance, Augustine's account of the beginning of Christian conversion can be summarized:

> Immersed in the world by its senses, the soul must begin by withdrawing itself from the world, by re-entering into itself, and thus rediscovering itself. Thus it will rediscover the image of God to which it was made. But God is not His image; He is the model of it. And so, having re-entered into itself, the soul must still go beyond itself in order to find Him. Yet it cannot accomplish this return except by hearing the Word of God which made all things and which, by the Incarnation, now resounds in this world where the soul has forgotten Him in forgetting itself. Thereby the soul is recalled from lust ('the love of self carried to contempt of God') to charity ('the love of God carried to contempt of self').[51]

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49. John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistica*, 34, *AAS* 95 (2003) 456, *OR*, 23 Apr. 2003, VI, quoting with approval from *Life in Christ* by Nicolaus Cabasilas: "With discerning faith a distinguished writer of the Byzantine tradition voiced this truth."

50. For a much fuller comparison between the ancient and now-reaffirmed mysticism that culminates in the Eucharist and the mysticism that culminates in a private experience, see Martin Henry, "How Christian Is Christian Mysticism?" *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 64 (1999): 29-54.

51. Louis Bouyer, Cong. Orat., *Introduction to Spirituality*, trans. Mary Perkins Ryan (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1961), 150-51.

Similarly, the pagan mysticism of Neoplatonism was transformed by orthodox Christian mystics. This was done in a thorough and perfect way by two Carmelites generally regarded as the greatest Catholic mystics, John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila, both canonized saints and Doctors of the Church.[52] They rightly subordinate personal devotion in general to the Church's liturgy, and mystical union with God to the mediation of the Word Incarnate. St. Teresa's work also makes it clear that the gifts of prayer characteristic of her own personal vocation should not be expected by Christians with quite different gifts.

St. Thomas Aquinas holds that perfect holiness is in loving God without any restriction and loving one's neighbor as oneself, and explicitly teaches that there is more than one way toward that end. For those with appropriate gifts, he holds, totally abandoning the goods of this world by living according to the counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience is an especially expeditious way. But Christians who do not receive those gifts are called to holiness by another way: rightly using the things of the world.[53]

Still, Greek philosophical thought, including Neoplatonism, available to Thomas either in translated texts or by way of earlier Christian thinkers, did lead him to maintain a position that prevented him and his many followers from recognizing the need, pointed out by Vatican II, for pastors to see to it that each of the faithful is helped *individually* to work out his or her personal vocation (see PO 6), and thus to order his or her entire life toward God.

Thomas argued that nobody can make any free choice without intending some ultimate end, held that people expect complete fulfillment from whatever they take as an ultimate end, and concluded that at any given time a person's will cannot be directed to more than one ultimate end.[54] In his view, every child, in his or her very first free choice, either takes God as the ultimate end or commits a mortal sin.[55] Children cannot act for anything but God as an ultimate end except by committing a mortal sin.[56] It follows that remaining in the state of grace is of itself sufficient to integrate all one's actions toward God.

The logic is sound: if it is true that at a given time one must have the same ultimate end in everything one does, and if one takes God as that end, then remaining in the state of grace organizes one's whole life around God. But then, Christians who are in grace would shape their lives by faith and hope toward the kingdom simply by avoiding mortal sin. They would never construct agendas for the rest of their lives while isolating their faith in a compartment, and there would be no need for them to order their entire lives toward the kingdom by finding and following their personal vocations—in which case

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52. For a very helpful historical treatment of the entire process, see Louis Bouyer, *The Christian Mystery: From Pagan Myth to Christian Mysticism,* trans. Illtyd Trethowan (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989); on John of the Cross and Teresa, 250-57.

53. See *S.t.,* 1-2, q. 108, a. 4; 2-2, q. 184, aa. 3-4.

54. See *S.t.,* 1-2, q. 1, a. 5 (read in the context of the question as a whole).

55. See *S.t.,* 1-2, q. 89, a. 6.

56. See *S.t.,* 1-2, q. 72, a. 5; q. 88, a. 1, ad 3; 2-2, q. 24, a. 10, ad 2.

there would be no need to teach them to do that. It would be enough to teach what no good pastor fails to teach: Avoid mortal sin.

It is true that every choice must be made for the sake of some ultimate end. But Thomas's assumption that people expect complete fulfillment from whatever they take as an ultimate end is mistaken.

No matter what people take as their ultimate end, it cannot fulfill them completely. Children soon learn that. Seven-year-old Susie's best friend, Angela, and her family will be moving far away tomorrow morning, and the two are invited to spend today together at Angela's grandmother's house. But Susie's family is preparing to go on a long-planned, all-day boatride and picnic provided by her dad's employer. Her parents say: "It's up to you. Spend the day with Angela, if you like, or say goodbye and come with us." Susie wishes she could do both things but she must choose, not between means to an end, but between two things she sees as good in themselves (and rightly, whether or not she also sees that the choice of either can and ought to be ordered to the kingdom of God as ultimate end). Neither today nor ever will Susie obtain fulfillment in the unchosen possibility. Today's possibilities are gone when today is done, and *today* never again-will be, not even in the kingdom.[57] Experience teaches the same lesson to all of us.[58]

St. Thomas certainly knew that empirical truth, too, and he usually paid more attention to common human experience than philosophers and theologians generally do. But in this case, the experience falsifies an assumption that Thomas thought Aristotle and Augustine shared, and that assumption was essential to a theory that must have seemed almost self-evident to him.

However, both the assumption and the conclusion drawn from it are false: people can and often do act for two or more ultimate ends at the same time.[59] Though people wish they could have everything they want, and though all Christians could seek God's kingdom as their single ultimate end, many, realizing that nothing can fulfill them completely, clarify their desires, set their priorities, and pursue two or more ultimate ends simultaneously. For instance, a Mafia Don might act for three ultimate ends: having and enjoying the things money can buy, having a few women who pretend convincingly to love him and who sexually please him alone, and being powerful so that everybody else respects him and either stays out of his way or does what he wants.

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57. Of course, if Susie abides in God's love, she should hope for far more perfect fulfillments of both her friendship with Angela and her fellowship with her family than those possible today. But goods are particulars and the goods between which Susie must choose are not fungible. Hoped-for fulfillment in heaven is not one of the alternatives available for Susie to choose, as it can and should be for someone tempted to commit a mortal sin.

58. This argument cannot be rebutted by saying: "Thomas is doing metaphysics here, not psychology." He is doing metaphysics but also is drawing a conclusion about a matter of fact that pertains to psychology. Against truths of faith—e.g., the substantial presence of Jesus in the Eucharist—experience cannot count. But when someone argues from a metaphysical assumption to a thesis about what people must do, and one finds one need not do it, or about what one cannot do, and one finds one can do it, experience falsifies both that thesis and the metaphysical assumption from which it follows.

59. This point has been established more cogently than I shall try to do here: Peter F. Ryan, S.J., "Must the Acting Person Have a Single Ultimate End?" *Gregorianum,* 82 (2001): 325-56.

Again, little Johnnie's very first free choices might be to swipe his sister's candy bar, though he realizes he should not, and then, deny doing it, though he knows lying is bad. His end in swiping the bar is to eat it, and in lying to avoid punishment. He regards both ends as good, not for the sake of anything else, but simply in themselves. So, both are ultimate ends for him. But in making those choices, the end for whose sake he briefly considers not swiping the candy bar and not lying is his cherished relationship with his loving parents, who are trying to teach him to be a good little boy. Johnnie does not see any connection between that end and God, though his parents also have catechized him, and he hopes eventually to be with Jesus and see God. In the circumstances, even if what Johnnie chooses were grave matter, he lacks sufficient reflection, and so does not commit a mortal sin. Still, he deliberately does what he knows is wrong. So, *pace* St. Thomas, Johnnie's first choices, though sinful, are not mortal but only venial sins.

Not only Johnnie's venial sins but those of everyone living in grace also falsify the thesis that people can have only one ultimate end at any given time. According to Thomas, one can remain in grace while committing deliberate venial sins (see *S.t.,* 1-2, q. 74, a. 9), and venial sinners continue to have God as their only ultimate end: "When one sins venially, one involves oneself with a temporal good not by enjoying it, since one does not make it one's end, but only by using it while referring it to God, not actually but habitually" (ibid., q. 88, a. 1, ad 3).

But that will not do. Those who take God as their ultimate end can refer to him habitually what they have previously referred to him actually, whether concretely or in general. For instance, a mother changing her baby's diaper need actually be thinking only about the well being of her baby, but if she has undertaken motherhood as part of her personal vocation, she refers habitually to God whatever she does in fulfilling her responsibilities as a mother. However, an ultimate end causes only by providing a reason for choosing to act for a proximate end, and nothing about God can provide any reason for choosing to act sinfully—even venially sinfully—for any end. So, in sinning venially, one cannot refer to God habitually the good in which one actually involves oneself. Either one has some ultimate end other than God or no ultimate end at all. But, as Thomas soundly argues, nobody can will anything except on account of some ultimate end (see ibid., q. 1, a. 4). Thus, deliberate venial sinners have some ultimate end other than God, and those in grace who commit deliberate venial sins simultaneously have at least two ultimate ends.

In sum, it is not true that at a given time a person's will must have a single ultimate end in willing whatever it wills. Yet that follows from Aquinas's premise that only what one regards as absolutely fulfilling can be taken as one's ultimate end. So, that premise also is false.

Since people can act simultaneously for two or more ultimate ends, Christians living in grace can act for ultimate ends other than God not only when they commit venial sins but when they make good choices, including some of the central commitments that shape their lives. And not only can they do that, they will—unless they make the connection between God and his kingdom, on the one hand, and, on the other, the goods that specify those commitments, such as the good of serving others in a certain way by one's work.

The connection is that in response to God's call one can involve oneself with such goods as part of following Jesus and preparing material for the kingdom.

Of course, as was explained (in **6,** above), countless devout Christians alert to providence and ready to accept everything from God's hand have lived out all or much of their personal vocations without individual pastoral help. Even when the world Thomas knew passed away—due to increasing mobility, commerce, and urbanization, as well as modern ideas and practices—so that many Christians had to make more life-shaping commitments, the devout among them exercised their greater freedom with an intense desire to please God. That is why helpful works like the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius and the *Introduction to a Devout Life* of Francis de Sales gained and have retained a prominent place in Catholic spirituality.

During early modern times, Catholic theologians and pastors might well have developed fully the notion of personal vocation—as Vatican II and John Paul II now have done—had Martin Luther not developed it first.[60]

Recent Catholic teaching on personal vocation coincides with Luther's teaching in many important ways. Every Christian has a unique personal vocation, which presupposes faith. In doing what they are called to do, they cooperate with God and implement love of neighbor. A personal vocation always is consonant with all relevant moral norms and just laws, but always, too, it calls for more than they require. Everybody who desires to do God's will can find his or her vocation, and doing so involves paying attention to one's own gifts and the opportunities to use them in meeting others' needs. People must continue to recognize God's plan and accept their vocations throughout their lives.

But there also are differences. Luther thinks the truth that salvation is by grace through faith rules out the notion that fulfilling one's vocation is one's way to holiness. Catholics believe that salvation by grace through faith includes the gift of good works, beginning with one's very choice to believe; for that reason, they believe that fulfilling one's vocation contributes to one's holiness. Luther thinks salvation and faith pertain to one realm, while vocation and the struggle against sin pertain to another, thus he speaks of "two kingdoms." Catholics believe there is only one kingdom, incipient and hidden in the present age, that God will transform into the glorious fulfillment of the age to come. Luther recognizes that Christians exercise some freedom in carrying out their vocations, but believes that their exercise of freedom has no fruit beyond this world. Catholics believe that one constantly exercises freedom in carrying out one's vocation, and that doing so faithfully to the end is cooperating with God in becoming the unique saint he is calling one to be forever.

Unfortunately, too, Luther dealt with vocation in the context of his polemic against Catholic teaching and practice regarding the monastic life and ordained priesthood, not least with respect to celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake. Moreover, in holding that

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60. The statements about Martin Luther's views in the following two paragraphs are not based directly on his works, with which I am unfamiliar, but on a detailed and well-written book by a scholar who appears to be both friendly toward Luther and very able: Gustaf Wingren, *Luther on Vocation*, trans. Carl C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1957).

every Christian has a vocation, a role to play in the earthly kingdom, Luther was denying that any sort of vocation is superior in God's eyes. Indeed, his thought on vocation was linked to his thought on priesthood, according to which the priesthood of all believers precluded any special priesthood of the ordained.[61] Hence, up to Vatican II the climate of opinion stemming from the Counter Reformation helped prevent any development of doctrine on personal vocation in the Catholic Church.

8) Not all are called to the path marked out by the great mystics.

Despite the teaching of Vatican II and John Paul II, some, rather than helping the faithful find and accept their personal vocations, still claim that every Christian is called to follow the same path to holiness—the contemplative and mystical life exemplified by St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila—and that most Christians fail to follow it only because they are inadequately detached. Thus they remain stuck at the first stage of the route blazed by Neoplatonism.[62]

There is of course a true sense in which every Christian, in being called to holiness, is called not only to detachment from everything contrary to God's will but to become a mystic.

> Spiritual progress tends toward ever more intimate union with Christ. This union is called "mystical" because it participates in the mystery of Christ through the sacraments—"the holy mysteries"—and, in him, in the mystery of the Holy Trinity. God calls us all to this intimate union with him, even if the special graces or extraordinary signs of this mystical life are granted only to some for the sake of manifesting the gratuitous gift given to all. (*CCC* 2014)

Moreover, inasmuch as Christian life consists in receiving, accepting, cherishing, enjoying, and cooperating with gifts God offers in and through the Lord Jesus, it requires contemplation.[63] One must try persistently not only to hear God's word in Scripture (see **1-B-8,** above) but also to be receptive to his entire self-gift in words and deeds, including those of the liturgy, the signs of the times, and the indications of one's personal vocation.

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61. For the preceding statements in this paragraph, see Karlfried Froehlich, "Luther on Vocation," *Lutheran Quarterly*, 13 (1999): 195-207.

62. See, for example, Thomas Dubay, S.M., *Fire Within: St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, and the Gospel—on Prayer* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1989), 199-216. Much of what Dubay has written in this and his other works is sound and inspiring. Sometimes, though, he pays attention only to parts of recent teaching, taken out of context and read so that they support his view—a view that does not include personal vocation. He formulates (199) the issue about the way to sanctity with a dichotomy grounded in Neoplatonism: "Are there two ways to sanctity, an active, ascetic way and a passive, mystical way? Or is there only one way meant for all, active and ascetic in the beginning, but becoming passive and mystical in full development?" That excludes from consideration the way to sanctity of personal vocation that was actually taught by Vatican II (see **2,** above). Of course, nobody follows that way without the detachment and personal prayer required to find and accept his or her personal vocation, whose fulfillment in every case also includes appropriate personal prayer and self-denial. This view will be treated more fully in section **9,** below.

63. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*, 4:22, makes this point: the Holy Spirit makes Christians contemplate God by making them love him, because love leads to conversation, and one cannot converse with God except by contemplating him. That contemplation, Thomas adds, leads to awareness of God's will and willing cooperation with him.

That receptiveness and that pondering in one's heart of all the gifts God gives—pondering with wonder, gratitude, and joy—are contemplation. And that contemplation is concerned with mysteries, realities hidden or veiled: God himself, his plan, the kingdom to come, divine-human fellowship in the sacraments, and so on. In sum, every devout Christian, whatever his or her personal vocation, contemplates mysteries and lives them, and so is a mystic.

But not every Christian is called to what St. Teresa calls "prayer of recollection" and other types of mystical prayer, including what she calls "spiritual marriage."[64] She generally refers to those sorts of prayer as "favors,"[65] and holds that, through no fault of their own, some do not obtain such favors.[66]

Teresa describes favors as charismatic gifts, given more for others' benefit than the recipients': God "doesn't grant them because the sanctity of the recipients is greater than that of those who don't receive them but so that His glory may be known, as we see in St. Paul and the Magdalene, and that we might praise Him for His work in creatures."[67] She makes it clear that even spiritual marriage is for the sake of loving service: "For if [a soul] is with Him very much, as is right, it should think little about itself. All its concern is taken up with how to please Him more and how or where it will show Him the love it bears Him. This is the reason for prayer, my daughters, the purpose of this spiritual marriage: the birth always of good works, good works."[68]

While saying that favors are quite helpful to those given them, she also says: "Without these favors we can be saved, and [God] knows better than we ourselves what is fitting for us and who of us truly loves Him."[69] Indeed, a person not only can be saved without favors but can be holy without them: "There are many holy persons who have never received one of these favors; and others who receive them but are not holy."[70]

Teresa also makes it clear that not everyone is called to be a contemplative of the sort she herself is. Considering the life of Carmelite nuns, she says:

> It is important to understand that God doesn't lead all by one path, and perhaps the one who thinks she is walking along a very lowly path is in fact higher in the eyes of the Lord.
>
> So, not because all in this house practice prayer must all be contemplatives; that's impossible. And it would be very distressing for the one who isn't a contemplative if she didn't understand the truth that to be a contemplative is a gift from God; and since

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64. St. Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle,* IV, 3, 1-3, in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila,* trans. Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D., and Otilio Rodriguez, O.C.D. (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1980), 2:327-29.

65. Ibid., III, 2, 9-11 (313-14).

66. Ibid., 11 (314); the section ends: "His Majesty will give you through other paths what He keeps from you on this one because of what he knows, for His secrets are very hidden; at least what He does will without any doubt be what is most suitable for us."

67. Ibid., I, 1, 3 (285).

68. Ibid., VII, 4, 6 (446).

69. Ibid., IV, 2, 9 (326).

70. Ibid., VI, 9, 16 (417).

> being one isn't necessary for salvation, nor does God demand this, she shouldn't think anyone will demand it of her.[71]

Like Vatican II, Teresa teaches that what is essential to Christian perfection is conformity of one's will to God's will: "The highest perfection obviously does not consist in interior delights or in great raptures or in visions or in the spirit of prophecy but in having our will so much in conformity with God's will that there is nothing we know He wills that we do not want with all our desire, and in accepting the bitter as happily as we do the delightful when we know that His Majesty desires it."[72] Anyone who seeks that perfection obviously must try to identify and respond to each and every element of his or her unique personal vocation.

The heart of the teaching of St. John of the Cross, like St. Teresa's, also is what Vatican II teaches: holiness grows by doing the Father's will in all things and accepting everything from his hand with faith. John holds that the union with God that constitutes perfect holiness "exists when God's will and the soul's are in conformity, so that nothing in the one is repugnant to the other. When the soul completely rids itself of what is repugnant and unconformed to the divine will, it rests transformed in God through love."[73] For those who wish to grow toward perfect holiness: "First, have a habitual desire to imitate Christ in all your deeds by bringing your life into conformity with His. . . . In His life He had no other gratification, nor desired any other, than the fulfillment of His Father's will, which He called His meat and food."[74]

Considering a remarkable statement attributed to the saint to be authentic, the translators of John's collected works included it there:

> Once being asked how one becomes enraptured, the Venerable Father Fray John of the Cross, replied: by denying one's own will and doing the will of God; for ecstasy is nothing else than going out of self and being caught up in God; and this is what he who obeys does; he leaves himself and his desire, and thus unburdened plunges himself in God.[75]

While John's language—"going out of self and being caught up in God" and "plunges himself in God"—suggests experiences well beyond those of most devout people, he is asserting that "this is what he who obeys does." John thus implies that the true summit of contemplation and mystical rapture is nothing but the experience of submitting

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71. St. Teresa of Avila, *The Way of Perfection,* XVII, 2 (in the cited edition, 2:99). Later, she seems to contradict this statement by suggesting that all Carmelite nuns should strive for the greatest possible intimate experience of God and that no one who does so will go unrewarded. But *how* each one's striving will be rewarded is another matter: "You must always proceed with this determination to die rather than fail to reach the end of the journey. If even though you so proceed, the Lord should lead you in such a way that you are left with some thirst in this life, in the life that lasts forever He will give you to drink in great plenty and you will have no fear of being without water"—ibid., XX, 2 (114); cf. *The Interior Castle,* V, 3, 7 (350-51).

72. *The Foundations,* 5, 10 (in the cited edition, 3:120); cf. *The Interior Castle,*, V, 3, 3 (349).

73. *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross,* trans. Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D. and Otilio Rodriguez, O.C.D. (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1979), 116 (*The Ascent of Mount Carmel,* II, 5, 3).

74. Ibid., 102 (I, 13, 3 and 4).

75. Ibid., 654 (considered trustworthy); 680 (the maxim).

completely to God's will. Everyone is called to do that, and no one can reach it without discerning, accepting, and fulfilling his or her personal vocation—without identifying and walking in the life of good deeds that God prepared in advance for him or her.

John also makes it clear that the majority of devout people who pursue holiness never reach "contemplation." Near the beginning of *The Dark Night*, after describing how the "spiritual person" makes progress but sometimes advances only gradually, John adds:

> Those who do not walk the road of contemplation act very differently. This night of the aridity of the senses is not so continuous in them, for sometimes they experience the aridities and at other times not, and sometimes they can meditate and at other times they cannot. God places them in this night solely to exercise and humble them, and reform their appetite lest in their spiritual life they foster a harmful attraction toward sweetness. But He does not do so in order to lead them to the life of the spirit, which is contemplation. For God does not bring to contemplation all those who purposely exercise themselves in the way of the spirit, nor even half. Why? He best knows. As a result He never completely weans their senses from the breasts of considerations and discursive mediations, except for some short periods and at certain seasons, as we said.[76]

Thus, God nurtures the spiritual lives of the majority of those who "exercise themselves in the way of the spirit in ways other than those he employs with persons who "walk the road of contemplation." This is not due to any sort of failure on the part of the majority; it is simply that God "best knows."[77] Since God never asks the impossible, he never calls people to anything without enabling them to do it. Therefore, he plainly does not call most people to "contemplation" in Teresa's and John's sense, for he does not "wean" the majority from the more common forms of prayer appropriate to their various vocations—which do not include "contemplation."

Unlike St. Teresa of Availa, however, St. John of the Cross does not make explicit that not all Christians (not even all Carmelites) are called to contemplation, and his writings as a whole seem to imply that God calls all to holiness by a single way—the way by which he called John himself.[78] Hans Urs von Balthasar, in a study of John's works, endorses that interpretation.[79] Yet at the end of the study Balthasar signals his own disagreement: "Nowhere is one so aware of the dubiousness of norms which reduce all to the same level as in the thought of this man, who is nonetheless a Doctor

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76. Ibid., 316 (*The Dark Night*, I, 9, 9).

77. Dubay, op. cit., 208, refers to this passage and makes four points in trying to explain what it says. The first is that the passage is not relevant to the universal call to contemplation, but that begs the question. The second point is that John explains elsewhere what he here says God knows, but that simply assumes the explanations provided elsewhere refer to the many whom God chooses not to bring to contemplation rather than to some of those he chooses to bring to it but who do not cooperate with that grace. The third and fourth points depend on statements John makes shortly *before* the quoted passage, but both points mistakenly apply what John says about those called to contemplation to those considered in the quoted passage—who are not called to it.

78. See Dubay, op. cit., 208-12.

79. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 3, *Studies in Theological Styles: Lay Styles*, trans. Andrew Louth et. al., ed. John Riches (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1986), 105-71.

of the Church."[80] Balthasar suggests that John's views are in some respects too close to Neoplatonism, and asks whether "the way of the exclusive, contemplative vocation" is only "one particular way alongside other Christian ways" or is "absolutely *the* way, which contains the experience of God that is normative for all."[81] His answer is that, though John meant it to be *the* way for all, charity can become perfect in other ways. He concludes:

> If this is so, then the contemplative way of those few who are chosen for it enters the realm of the charismatic. Although such unique experience points the way to the Church, it is now seen as one charism in the economy of grace in the mystical Body, as little Thérèse, above all, perceives. This charism, like others, even more than others, has representative and thus normative value for the whole Body. To this extent, then, John's doctrine becomes normative for the whole Church, but analogically, not as literally as he himself wanted this norm to be understood.[82]

And Balthasar goes on to explain how John's unique experience and teaching are normative in certain respects for every religious and in others for every Christian. Strictly speaking, though, his way is only for those called to it: "This doctrine in a stricter sense can be a guiding star for the contemplative ways in the Church, provided always God is given the freedom to lead other souls on other paths and according to different rhythms."[83] That conclusion is in harmony with recent Church teaching about personal vocation and seems to me sound.[84]

9) Consistently responding to one's personal vocation is living an evangelical life.

Because professing the counsels traditionally called "evangelical" and living accordingly constitutes consecrated life (see LG 39, PC 1), the various forms of consecrated life often are called *evangelical life.* This is especially true of those that, by their community life and practice of poverty, try to imitate the Christian community described in Acts 2.42-47 and 4.32-37. But anyone who lives in accord with the gospel and thereby bears witness to it can reasonably be said to live an evangelical life, and anyone who walks in the life of good deeds that God prepared in advance for him or her will live in accord with the gospel and thereby bear witness to it. Therefore, anyone who strives to find and faithfully fulfill his or her entire personal vocation can reasonably be said to be living an evangelical life.

Moreover, recent Church teaching sometimes uses *evangelical life* to refer to more than consecrated life. Vatican II teaches that the lay apostolate of evangelization and

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80. Ibid., 159.

81. Ibid., 167-68; the quoted phrases, 168.

82. Ibid., 170.

83. Ibid.

84. One thing falsifies the view that the way marked out by St. John of the Cross is *the* way for all. Nobody has greater love than those who lay down their lives for the Lord Jesus and his brothers and sisters (see LG 42), and some martyrs canonized as saints have not followed John's way or, at least, not gone far along it. For example, St. Maria Goretti's love was perfect simply because she, like other martyrs, totally gave herself to God by her final choices to do his will: she accepted death rather than fornicate and she forgave her assailant.

sanctification demands special formation: “Since in our times materialism of various kinds is everywhere pervasive, even amongst Catholics, lay people not only should learn Catholic doctrine very diligently, especially those parts of it that are called into question, but also make manifest the witness of an evangelical life against every form of materialism” (AA 31). In the context, *evangelical life* might well mean no more than a life concerned with the authentic goods of persons rather than one preoccupied with having and enjoying material goods. But the context does not preclude a richer meaning, and the Council uses the same expression in telling missionaries to dare to speak boldly in proclaiming the gospel and to bear witness “by a really evangelical life . . . to their Lord, if need be, even to the shedding of their blood” (AG 24). Here the context makes it clear that *a truly evangelical life* refers to following the Lord Jesus and acting with virtues similar to his, including genuine charity, poverty, obedience, humility, meekness, patience, longsuffering, and pleasantness. This passage is addressed not only to “priests, brothers [and], sisters” but to “lay people” (AG 26) who undertake “evangelization and the planting of the Church among those peoples and groups where she has not yet taken root” (AG 6). But since the laity at large will contribute effectively to the apostolates proper to them only by providing the same witness of life required of not only clerical and religious but lay missionaries, the reasonable presumption is that the Council uses *evangelical life* in the same, rich sense in both passages.

Then too, if an evangelical life is defined by the exercise of Christlike virtues, the definition also will be satisfied by entirely fulfilling any personal vocation. Christlike virtues cannot be acquired by imagining Jesus’ external behavior and mannerisms and trying to mimic his imagined way of speaking, gestures, facial expressions, and so on. Rather, Christlike virtues develop from becoming one in mind and heart with Jesus—from undertaking, as he did, to do his Father’s will in everything and to accept everything from his hand. A selfish eight-year-old boy, told to share a candy bar with his younger sister, does not do his parents’ will by resentfully shoving half of it into her mouth, and one does not do the Father’s will by outwardly performing what he asks in a way that would not please him. To do the Father’s will, therefore, one must not only choose as he wants one to choose but unselfishly make these choices *for his reasons,* insofar as he has made those reasons known, while doing one’s best to bring one’s feelings into harmony with those reasons. If one does that, Christlike virtues will develop so that one’s emotional motives in carrying out one’s choices will shape one’s speech, gestures, facial expressions, and so forth in ways likely to make one’s actions bear the fruit God desires. Thus, as for the missionaries addressed by Vatican II, so for all Christians, accepting their vocations and really responding to God’s will as Jesus did is the way to acquire Christlike virtues.

Many Catholics who undertake to live the evangelical life in response to their personal vocations ought to join institutes or associations of the faithful recognized by the Church. But not all. Some are not called to do so, because membership would bring responsibilities at odds with elements of their personal vocations. If their pastors do not supply the spiritual direction and support such people need, they can obtain it from members of various institutes and associations. And they can carry out the elements of

their vocations requiring collaboration beyond their families and parishes by cooperating with recognized institutes and associations without joining them, and/or participating in or developing appropriate associations that do not require ecclesial recognition.

What I have been explaining about evangelical life raises questions to be addressed in the remainder of this chapter. First, what is special about vocations that include either consecrated service and life, clerical service and life, or both? Second, what special reasons are there for those who undertake these ways of life to live an evangelical life—to surrender entirely any agenda of their own and persistently seek, accept, and faithfully fulfill their entire personal vocation? Third, how are these specific vocations superior to other, more common forms of evangelical life?

B: Jesus' Lifestyle, His Commendation of It, and Its Superiority

1) Jesus has a personal vocation, which he fulfills perfectly.

In dealing with Jesus' lifestyle, I shall treat any statement the evangelists seem to attribute to him as an accurate report of what he said, and ignore historical questions raised by Scripture scholars. Some of those questions presuppose the view, which I consider contrary to Catholic faith, that the authors of the Gospels assert some false propositions (see **1-A-9,** above). Even if one assumes the inerrancy of Scripture, however, there still are legitimate historical questions that I cannot treat. But that need not undermine the theological views for which I argue. As John Paul II says: "The Gospels do not claim to be a complete biography of Jesus in accordance with the canons of modern historical science. From them, nevertheless, *the face of the Nazarene emerges with a solid historical foundation.*"[85] It therefore seems to me that, even if Jesus did not utter all the words the evangelists seem to attribute to him, anyone who accepts the inerrancy of Scripture ought to suppose that the Gospels do provide an adequate basis for what follows.

The Father certainly prepared in advance a life of good deeds for Jesus, and Jesus always did his Father's will. But none of the evangelists uses the word *vocation* or *calling* in referring to the Father's directing of Jesus' life. Instead, they speak of *sending,* for example: "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work."[86] Similarly, in all the Gospels, Jesus speaks, not of what he was *called* to do, but of what he has *come* to do, for example: "I have come as light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. If any one hears my sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world."[87] The language of sending and coming connotes the oneness of the Father and the Son in redeeming humankind, and sometimes is used in making Jesus' divine

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85. John Paul II, *Novo millennio ineunte,* 18, *AAS* 93 (2001) 277, *OR,* 10 Jan. 2001, IV.

86. Jn 4.34; also see Mt 10.40, 15.24, 23.37; Mk 9.37; Lk 4.18, 43; 9.48; 10.16; Jn 3.17, 34; 5.23-24, 30, 36, 38; 6.29, 38-39, 44, 57; 7.16, 18, 28-29, 33; 8.16, 18, 26, 29, 42; 9.4; 10.36; 12.44-45, 49; 13.20; 14.24; 15.21; 16.5; 17.3, 18, 21, 23, 25; 20.21.

87. Jn 12.46-47; also see Mt 5.17, 9.13, 10.34-35, 20.28; Mk 2.17, 10.45; Lk 5.32, 12.49, 19.10; Jn 5.43, 6.38, 6.51, 7.28-29, 9.39, 10.10, 18.37.

sonship explicit: "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I proceeded and came forth from God; I came not of my own accord, but he sent me" (Jn 8.42).

Being truly human, Jesus "willed humanly in obedience to his Father all that he had decided divinely with the Father and the Holy Spirit for our salvation" (*CCC* 475; cf. DS 556-59). Jesus' human willing presupposed his human understanding of the Father's plan—the human experience of being called and sent. Thus, John Paul II, in a letter to priests, teaches that Jesus "too was *called to the priesthood.* It is the Father who 'calls' his own Son . . .. The Son's vocation to the priesthood expresses the depth of *the Trinitarian mystery.*"[88] Again, in treating "The Church and the Gift of Vocation," the Pope says that "she guards within herself the mystery of the Son, who is called by the Father and sent to proclaim the kingdom of God to all."[89] And under the heading, "The Vocational Dialogue: Divine Initiative and Human Response," John Paul teaches that Jesus' self-oblation to the Father is both the exemplar and the principle of Christians' response to their vocations:

> The free oblation, which constitutes the intimate and most precious core of a person's response to God who calls, finds its incomparable model, indeed its living root, in the most free oblation which Jesus Christ, the first of those called, made to the Father's will: "Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me . . .. Then I said, Lo, I have come to do your will, O God'" (Heb 10.5, 7).[90]

Thus, the Lord Jesus is preeminent, among other things (see Col 1.15-18), in responding to his human vocation. The Letter to the Hebrews uses Psalm 40.6-8 to express Jesus' basic commitment in undertaking that entire vocation. He implemented that commitment by further choices throughout his life, all of them informed by his fundamental, overarching commitment to do the Father's will in all things.

What was the Father's plan for Jesus' life? What was his vocation? That question can be answered in different ways: to announce the reign of God in this world, to initiate that reign, to provide the way for fallen human beings to enter it and enjoy all its benefits. Or, again: to save fallen human beings from the power of Satan, and from sin and death both by establishing a new, permanent, divine-human, covenantal fellowship and by providing people with adequate incentives to repent, believe, and faithfully participate in that fellowship (see **1-C-5,** above).

At the beginning of his public life, Jesus insists on being baptized by John, because "it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Mt 3.15). He began carrying out his vocation of salvific service to fallen humankind by placing himself in solidarity with penitent sinners: "The baptism of Jesus is on his part the acceptance and inauguration of his mission as God's suffering Servant. He allows himself to be numbered among sinners; he is already 'the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world' (Jn 1.29;

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88. John Paul II, Letter to Priests for Holy Thursday 1996, 1, *AAS* 88 (1996) 539-40, *OR,* 27 March 1996, 3.

89. *Pastores dabo vobis,* 35, *AAS* 84 (1992) 714-15, *OR,* 8 Apr. 1992, IX.

90. Ibid., 36, *AAS* 718, *OR,* X.

cf. Is 53.12)" (*CCC* 536). The heavens open, the Spirit anoints Jesus for his unique, prophetic-priestly-messianic mission, and the Father's voice confirms him in it (see Mt 3.16-17, Mk 1.10-11, Lk 3.22).

The Spirit at once leads Jesus into the desert to fast and pray, and at the end of that time Satan tempts him. "Jesus' temptation reveals the way in which the Son of God is Messiah, contrary to the way Satan proposes to him" (*CCC* 540).

> The struggle is precisely about the nature of Jesus' vocation and ministry. The pull of hunger, the lure of cheap and quick 'success', the desire to change the vocation to be the light of the world into the vocation to bring all nations under his powerful rule by other means—all of these would easily combine into the temptation to doubt the nature of the vocation of which he had been sure at the time of John's baptism. *If* you are the Son of God . . . There are many different styles of career, ministry, and agenda that Jesus might have adopted.[91]

But Jesus, citing Scripture, unhesitatingly rejects the threefold temptation (see Mt 4.1-11, Lk 4.1-12), for he intends to carry out the Father's plan, however it unfolds.[92]

Early in his ministry, Jesus preaches in the synagogue at Nazareth on the sabbath. He reads a passage from Isaiah (61.1-2) and declares that it has been fulfilled by his very reading of it (see Lk 4.21):

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.
> He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
> and recovering of sight to the blind,
> to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
> to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. (Lk 4.18-19)

This passage articulates the prophetic element of Jesus' mission: preaching and proclaiming the arrival of God's reign by indicating its benefits for various disadvantaged groups. Significantly, Jesus does not read the remainder of Isaiah 61.2: "and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn."

Over and over, Jesus speaks of the prophetic element of his mission. When the people in one town want him to stay, he declares: "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose" (Lk 4.43). And when, near the end, Pilate asks him if he is a king, he does not deny it, but reaffirms his prophetic mission: "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth" (Jn 18.37). While making it clear in preaching the good news that he does not judge and condemn anyone, Jesus also warns that those who do not receive what is being offered condemn themselves: "He who

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91. N. T. Wright, *Christian Origins and the Question of God*, vol. 2, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 458.

92. Luke adds: "And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time" (Lk 4.13). Luke may have in mind some or all of three later incentives to deviate from God's plan that Jesus resisted: people wanted him to become their kind of Messiah; he experienced agony in the garden; and he was challenged to prove his claims by coming down from the cross (Mt 27.39-44, Mk 15.29-32, Lk 23.35-37).

rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day." (Jn 12.48). Since the gospel requires a decision by those who hear it, he even says: "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Mt 10.34).

But he is more than a prophet, and he also speaks about the priestly element of his mission: "Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mt 9.13; cf. Mk 2.17, Lk 5.31-32); "The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (Lk 19.10); and "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt 20.28; cf. Mk 10.45, 1 Tm 2.5-6, 1 Pt 1.18-19).

Being the Messiah, Jesus also speaks about his kingship: "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Mt 5.17). Jesus is God's good shepherd; displacing those who "steal and kill and destroy," he "came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn 10.10; cf. Ez 34.1-16). His kingdom, however, is not of this world (see Jn 18.36); he will raise God's people up in the kingdom on the last day:

> All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me; and this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. (Jn 6.37-40)

Jesus also suggests that he has been called to exercise kingship in the new people of God by relating to them as bridegroom to bride: "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?"[93] At Cana, when Mary says, "They have no wine" (Jn 2.3), Jesus' cryptic reply, "What to me and to you, woman? My hour is not yet come" (Jn 2.4, Gk), can be understood: *This is not yet my wedding feast; I do not have the bridegroom's duties.* Yet he performs a miracle that sets him on course to his own "hour"—his passion, death, resurrection, and ascension (see Jn 12.23, 27; 13.1; 17.1)—by which, as Paul teaches, Jesus prepares the Church to be his bride: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the Church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish" (Eph 5.25-27).

Jesus' entire life simultaneously fulfills his prophetic, priestly, and messianic vocation (see **1-E-2,** above). It was a vocation that also included frustration. Although his primary mission was to gather "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt 15.24), but he encountered a great deal of resistance from his nation's leaders (see **1-C-3,** above). "He came to his own home, and his own people received him not" (Jn 1.11). Near the end, he

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93. Mt 9.15; cf. Mk 2.19, Lk 5.34-35; also see Jn 3.29, where the same suggestion is conveyed in a different way: speaking of his relationship to Jesus, John the Baptist identifies himself as "the friend of the bridegroom."

grieved: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!” (Mt 23.37, Lk 13.34). Like us in everything but sin (see 2 Cor 5.21), Jesus “in every respect” was “tempted as we are” (Heb 4.15), and this even included experiencing failure.

2) Jesus’ commitment to his mission accounts for his lifestyle.

Consecrated by the Father when he was sent into the world, Jesus consecrated himself so that his followers might also be consecrated (see Jn 10.36, 17.19). Being sinless, he perfectly fulfilled his human vocation, and so integrated every aspect of his humanity with his divine holiness. As man, Jesus loved the Father with his whole mind, heart, soul, and strength, and his human brothers and sisters as himself. Obeying the Father, he gave himself completely in service to others and thereby became, as man, all he was called to be. In teaching what he did and living as he did, Jesus as man cooperated with the Holy Spirit in creating a new kind of human life—evangelical life—as well as creating his own, unique evangelical life.

Jesus’ vocation included more than the prophetic-priestly-messianic service he was sent to provide and undertook at the beginning of his public life. Insofar as he had any choice about what he did to increase in wisdom and in favor with God and his fellow human beings during his hidden life in Nazareth (see Lk 2.51-52), that long formation for service was part of his vocation. If the New Testament told us how he lived in those years, we would see what how each element of his formation view contributed to his subsequent service. For example, if we were told that, during his twenties, Jesus chose to spend some time each year living and working with a different set of his parents’ relatives—one year during the grape harvest with a poor family that tended a vineyard, another year with a prosperous merchant-family during their busy season, and so on—we would readily understand that he was deliberately gathering diverse experiences so as better to understand diverse people and learn how to communicate effectively with them.

Similarly, insofar as elements of Jesus’ lifestyle were either chosen by him or incidental to other choices he made, that lifestyle was included in his vocation. Salvific service was central to it, and his lifestyle was either part of or subordinate to his salvific service. Moreover, in making his human choices, Jesus must have had human reasons, and he always chose reasonably. So, his aim of serving others gave him good and understandable reasons for choosing or accepting every aspect of his lifestyle. Therefore, we should expect to understand Jesus’ lifestyle by considering what each of its elements contributed to his salvific service.

As Paul VI points out, Jesus was totally focused on the kingdom: “Christ, as the herald of the gospel, announces first of all the kingdom, that is the kingdom of God, and to this he attributes such essential importance that all else becomes ‘those other things which shall be yours without the asking’ (see Mt 6.33). The kingdom of God is to be considered, therefore, as the absolute good so that everything else is subordinate to it.”[94] When Jesus visits friends, their learning about the kingdom is the one thing necessary,

94. Paul VI, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 8, *AAS* 68 (1976) 10, Flannery, 2:714.

and preparing dinner is very secondary.[95] So is the politics of the present age, as John Paul II explains:

> Jesus never wanted to be involved in a political movement and fled from every attempt to draw him into earthly questions and affairs (see Jn 6.15). The kingdom he came to establish does not belong to this world (see Jn 18.36). For this reason he said to those who wanted him to take a stand regarding the civil power: "Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God" (Mt 22.21).[96]

The kingdom that matters is the reign of God that will be realized fully only in the age to come.

Jesus seems to have taken little or no time off from his work. All the evangelists describe him using meals and every other encounter with anyone to carry on his mission. Jesus' focus was so complete and his pace so frantic that people close to him worried about his sanity (see Mk 3.21). When crowds hounded him and the apostles so that they lacked time even to eat, he did try to take the apostles, just returned from their successful mission, away for a rest (see Mk 6.30-32). But "when the crowds learned it, they followed him; and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God, and cured those who had need of healing" (Lk 9.11; cf. Mk 6.34). As usual, Jesus was available to the people. He had come to serve rather than be served; being always ready to serve others, he strove to meet their genuine, urgent, and important needs (see Mt 9.35-36, 14.13-21).

Having no agenda of his own and always doing the Father's will (see **B-1,** above), Jesus as man perfectly obeyed God. His obedience included fulfilling what God's word had predicted about him[97] and reasonable conformity to the precepts of the Mosaic law.[98] Being fully committed to real goods rather than enmeshed in legalistic minimalism and self-centered concerns about appearances, he was meek and humble (see Mt 11.29) rather than rebellious and arrogant. He respected and obeyed legitimate human authorities. After unintentionally distressing his parents when he was twelve, something children that age often do, Jesus went home "and was obedient to them" (Lk 2.51)—that is, continuously obedient[99]—as adolescents and emotionally immature adults seldom are. Though insisting on God's overriding claim on human beings, Jesus acknowledged the obligation to pay the Roman tribute.[100] Similarly, while asserting the dependence of

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95. See Lk 10.38-42; Fitzmyer, op. cit., 28A:892-94.

96. John Paul II, General Audience (28 July 1993), 2, *Inseg.*, ???, *OR*, 4/11 August 1993, 7.

97. See Mt 4.14; 5.17; 8.17; 12.17; 13.35; 26.54, 56; Mk 14.49; Lk 4.21; 22.16, 37; 24.44; Jn 19.28.

98. See Mt 5.17; divine law itself never was at stake in Jesus' controversies with the scribes and Pharisees over sabbath observance and other matters; the issues concerned human traditions and legalistic applications of precepts: see Mt 12.1-13, 15.1-11; Mk 2.23-3.5, 7.1-15; Lk 6.1-10, 13.10-17, 14.1-6; Jn 5.5-17, 7.21-24, 9.1-34.

99. See Fitzmyer, op. cit., 28:445.

100. See Mt 22.15-22, Mk 12.13-17, Lk 20.21-26. Fitzmyer, op. cit., 28A:1289-98, summarizes various interpretations of the Lucan version but briefly offers his own interpretation (1293): "The kingdom which Jesus preaches does not call in question Caesar's rightful kingship; but that is not the all-important aspect of human life. A human being belongs to God, whose image he/she bears; God has not only a right of possession over human beings, but also a claim to a basic recognition of his lordship." That seems to me

Pilate's authority on God and implying that the governor was sinfully mistreating him, Jesus did not reject that authority (see Jn 19.8-11).

Besides submitting to legitimate authority, Jesus exercised authority reasonably.

He never tried to carry out his saving work alone, but from the start enlisted others' collaboration. In leading and forming the Twelve, he was decisive and firm without being domineering. He asked nothing of them that he was not ready to do himself, and he showed them how to do what he would later direct them to do. He answered their questions and explained points they did not understand. Like a good father forming his sons, he pointed out the apostles' shortcomings and corrected their mistakes, while assuring them of his love. Near the end, Jesus explained the relationship he had been developing with the Twelve. Though they rightly regarded him as their teacher and Lord (see Jn 13.13), he wanted them to be his close collaborators, who would not need to follow orders without knowing why: "No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you" (Jn 15.15). To the Twelve, Jesus communicated everything his Father had confided to him, so that they would fully understand their mission, commit themselves to it, and so share responsibility for it.[101]

Jesus did not treat those outside his circle condescendingly or as subordinates. He did not try to coerce them but sought to elicit their trust, faith, and love by understandably and cogently presenting his message, and by his works providing evidence of his good will and the truth of his message (see DH 11). He showed great understanding and gentleness to the humble and sincere—for example, the woman with a flow of blood (see Mk 5.25-34), the men who brought the paralytic (see Mt 9.2-8, Mk 2.3-12, Lk 5.18-26), the centurion with the sick slave (see Mt 8.5-13, Lk 7.1-10), the Samaritan woman at the well (see Jn 4.5-29). He straightforwardly challenged those who were unreasonably resistant—for example, his hometown people (Mt 13.53-58, Mk 6.1-6, Lk 4.16-30) and Nicodemus, the half-believing pharisee (see Jn 3.1-11). He severely reproved those who exhibited insincerity and created obstacles for others' faith by proposing sophistic arguments or trying to entrap him—for example, the Pharisees and Scribes who insisted on human traditions but provided dodges to evade divine commandments (see Mt 15.1-12, Mk 7.1-13) and the hypocrites who objected to his curing of a crippled woman in a synagogue on the sabbath (see Lk 13.10-17).

It appears that Jesus neither owned anything nor had a regular income during his public life. When a scribe enthusiastically offered to follow him anywhere, he warned that even the animals were better off: "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head" (Mt 8.20; cf. Lk 9.58). Jesus and the Twelve apparently depended on voluntary donations; they received financial support

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sound except that God's rights with respect to human beings as creatures and as his children in Christ are of a unique sort, in neither case a right of possession.

101. See St. Thomas Aquinas, *Lectura super evangelium S. Ioannis*, xv, lect. iii.

from a group of women who were grateful to him for freeing them of evil spirits or curing their infirmities.[102]

Jesus had no children, but against his disciples' effort to exclude children from his ministry, he welcomed them, blessed them, and taught that they were especially suited for membership in the kingdom (see Mt 19.13-15, Mk 10.13-16, Lk 18.15-17).

Jesus did not marry, but he obviously was at ease with women and enjoyed close friendships with some, such as Mary and Martha (see Jn 11.5). He is as interested in gathering women as men into the kingdom, and he always treats women with understanding and respect. At least some of the women who had accompanied Jesus and the Twelve, and perhaps other female disciples, were present at his crucifixion (see Mt 27.55-56, Mk 15.40-41, Lk 23.49). Mary Magdalene, who accompanied Jesus and the Twelve and stood close to the cross with his mother and her sister (see Jn 19.25), was the first to see the risen Lord (see Mk 16.9, Jn 20.11-18); later he appeared again to her and another woman (see Mt 28.1-8, Lk 24.1-11).

Unlike many unmarried men, Jesus did not remain tethered to his family of origin. When told, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, asking for you" (Mk 3.32), he made it clear that his primary allegiance was to those who were entering into the new community he was gathering: "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Mk 3.34-35; cf. Mt 12.46-50, Lk 8.19-21, Jn 7.5). Thus, he subordinated even the most central, natural, human relationships to the relationship formed by revelation and faith, a point he again made clear when a woman said to him: "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!" and he answered: "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" (Lk 11.27-28).

Although Jesus' lifestyle was unusual, it is easily explained by his commitment to his unique mission.

It has parallels. Confronted with a great emergency in which many people's lives are at stake, for instance, dedicated and capable rescue workers and health care personnel put everything else aside and work long stretches without rest to save as many as possible. Again, convinced that their nation's vital interests are gravely threatened, patriotic citizens leave everything behind and courageously risk their lives to defend their homeland.

Jesus is confronted with a world where people's souls, immeasurably more important than their mortal lives, are at stake; he knows, too, that no one else can preserve Israel's identity as God's people. He is totally selfless and very able, and nothing is or could be

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102. These women also accompanied Jesus and the Twelve as they spread the good news and ministered to them (see Lk 8.1-3; cf. Mt 27.55-56, Mk 15.41). Fitzmyer, op. cit., 28:696, comments that "the episode of [Lk] 8:1-3 does indicate . . . a recollection about Jesus which differed radically from the usual understanding of women's role in contemporary Judaism. His cure of women, his association with them, his tolerating them among his followers (as here) clearly dissociates him from such ideas as that reflected in John 4:27 or early rabbinical writings [reference omitted]. The women are depicted by Luke as ministering to Jesus and the Twelve in roles surprising for their day: providing for them, and from their own means; at least one of them was a married woman (Joanna); how many among the 'many others' were so too?"

so important and urgent for him as carrying out the Father's plan. So, he is totally focused on the kingdom. Shunning involvement in earthly questions and affairs, which would not further the cause to which he has committed himself and would waste his time and energy, he spends all his time and puts all his strength into announcing and promoting the kingdom as effectively as he can. Taking vacations, owning property, earning a decent living, marrying and having children—in Jesus' life there simply is no time and no room for those normal human concerns.

John the Baptist's understanding of his own mission gave him a similar sense of urgency but shaped a lifestyle in some ways even more austere than Jesus' (see Mt 3.4, 9.14, 11.7-19; Mk 1.6, 2.18; Lk 3.2-20, 5.33, 7.24-35; Jn 3.23-30). Their lifestyles differed because their missions did. Neither is called to carry out a merely human response to the crisis that they both recognized or to lead the people in carrying out such a response. But Jesus, unlike John, is sent not only to announce but to mediate God's response to the crisis and to enable people to accept and cooperate with the divine plan.

Thus, Jesus speaks for God: "I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak" (Jn 12.49). He announces the arrival of God's reign. But for him merely talking about the kingdom would not provide an adequate incentive for reasonable people to believe; by deeds, therefore, he verifies what he proclaims. By casting out demons, he shows that Satan's reign is ending and God's reign arriving (see Mt 12.22-29, Lk 11.14-22). By healing infirmities, raising the dead, and miraculously feeding thousands, he shows that he is speaking for God: "The testimony which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear me witness that the Father has sent me" (Jn 5.36).

Exorcisms and miraculous works, however, are not the only deeds by which Jesus clarifies and confirms his words. His parables of the kingdom give powerful verbal expression to its present availability, transcendent importance, and its difference, insofar as it is still to come, from the present age. Some of Jesus' actions also are parabolic—for example, his washing of the apostles' feet (see Jn 13.3-15). So were some actions of Old Testament prophets—for example, Isaiah's walking naked and barefoot (see Is 20.2-4). Jeremiah's lifestyle also was parabolic: as a symbol of impending disaster, he neither married and raised children nor mourned or celebrated with others.[103] Similarly, Jesus' lifestyle manifests in action the kingdom's present availability. His complete absorption in his work indicates that no one should put off seeking the kingdom and points to its transcendent importance; his setting aside normal human concerns—leisure, work, property, family, and marriage—underlines their comparative insignificance.[104] It also manifests the difference between the present age and the coming kingdom: a realm free

103. See Jer 16.1-9; Lucien Legrand, M.E.P., *The Biblical Doctrine of Virginity* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963), 25-30; cf. 1 Cor 7.29-31.

104. In Jesus' case, though, lifestyle is not merely a symbol corresponding to the message of his parables of the kingdom. Rather, his lifestyle, fully warranted by the realities he faced confronted and the mission that was his, was, as I already explained, part of his reasonable response to the crisis confronting him.

of scarcity and property, social insecurity and family clannishness, and the cycle of death and birth.

Jesus' way of exercising authority and of treating people in general also is a prophetic sign of the kingdom. People find themselves subject to thisworldly kingdoms without making any choice, and rulers' commands are backed up by force. Jesus not only talks about faith and love, but shows by his way of acting that God's kingdom is a gift to be accepted by faith and a fellowship constituted by mutual love. He also manifests the kingdom's inclusiveness by his treatment of little children, women, social outcasts, Samaritans, gentiles, and sinners.

His way of treating people also facilitates acceptance of his message. He wins people's trust and draws them to himself by showing his genuine concern for them. He persuades those open to the gospel to repent and believe by offering to serve people, treating them as friends rather than as subordinates, teaching clearly, and providing adequate incentives to believe.

Other aspects of Jesus' lifestyle also make him attractive to others. His detachment from everything but his mission on behalf of the kingdom makes him extraordinarily available. Having no property or public status, he is not separated by wealth and position from the poor and other outsiders, and they can experience his solidarity with them. At the same time, he receives invitations, hospitality, and financial support from people who are better off, then uses his contacts with them to evangelize them. Since he has no wife and family of his own, his little flock is his family, and he is free to lay down his life for it. He does this definitively on Golgotha but throughout his public life, as he gathers up his Church, undertakes to be its good shepherd, and prepares to be its bridegroom.

Jesus never disparages enjoying leisure, working for a living, owning property, marrying and raising children, or any other legitimate element of others' vocations. But in committing himself to the demands of his vocation, he freely gives up all those human goods just as he freely accepts death. His unique service to others leads him to lay down his entire life, not just its end. That entire life thus is the sacrifice he offers the Father: "When Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings thou hast not desired, but a body hast thou prepared for me . . .. Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God'" (Heb 10.5, 7). In sum, Jesus' peculiar lifestyle not only is demanded by his very urgent and overridingly important mission in service to his fellow human beings in general and his fellow Israelites in particular, not only appropriately and powerfully prophetic, not only appropriate and effective for gathering up his little flock and preparing it to be his espoused Church—it also is an essential component of his total self-giving to the Father for our salvation. The years from Jesus' infancy until he began the Last Supper may well have cost him more than the horrible price he paid from that moment until he said, less than twenty-four hours later: "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!" (Lk 23.46).

Jesus was no well-rounded man. Not seeing what he saw and misunderstanding what he comprehended, people close to him naturally were anxious about his sanity, since he seemed to have lost touch with the realities of daily life and become obsessed with the idea of the kingdom: He appeared to be afflicted with a sort of monomania. Note, though,

that the ideal of the well-rounded human being, in any of its many variations, is radically unsound. People are not cogs in a vast machine or cells in a great social body, but neither are they complete in themselves. No one of the divine persons can be himself without the others, and there is a likeness "between the union of the divine persons and the union among themselves of God's children, in truth and charity" (GS 24). "This likeness shows that a human individual—the only creature on earth that God willed for itself—cannot fully find himself or herself except through the sincere gift of himself or herself (see Lk 17.33)" (GS 24). Thus, no human individual can fulfill himself or herself independently. Jesus' total self-giving was necessary for him fully to find himself, to become all that he was to be, according to the Father's plan: "the Perfect Man, the perfection of the Messiah who is the standard of manhood."[105]

Jesus' human life, whose many particular choices and acts implemented his overarching commitment of lifelong obedience to the Father, was the greatest and best of all good human lives. Of themselves, other good human lives safeguard and promote some human goods in a limited group of people in this passing world, but Jesus' human life, lived in perfect cooperation with the Holy Spirit in the carrying out of the Father's plan, saves and restores in the eternal and universal kingdom all human goods promoted on earth in the human lives of all the blessed (see **1-E-3,** above). His overarching commitment determined a lifestyle whose elements either implemented that commitment or were side effects, freely accepted, of making and carrying out its implementing choices. Jesus' peculiar lifestyle, therefore, was the greatest and best of all good human lifestyles.

3) Jesus made many aspects of his lifestyle normative for the Twelve.

Jesus made his own way of relating to people and treating them normative for the Twelve and also, probably, for others who accompanied them.

During the Last Supper, according to John's account, Jesus rose "and girded himself with a towel. Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded" (Jn 13.4-5). Having performed a service a slave might have provided, he explains why:

> Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. (Jn 13.12-17)

Having prepared his disciples truly to cooperate with him, Jesus does not treat them as servants but friends (see Jn 15.15). Their mission, like his, will be to serve others by making God's gifts available to them: saving repentance and faith, and the love that constitutes the fellowship of the new and everlasting covenant. This parabolic act of footwashing calls their attention to Jesus' self-giving on their behalf, soon to culminate in his passion and death. Taking the part of a slave, he points out that slaves are not greater

105. Eph 4.13 in Barth, op. cit., 34A:425; see his comment, "VII Meeting the Perfect Man," 484-96.

than masters, nor are those sent—that is, apostles, which they are to be—greater than the one who sends, Jesus himself. Finally, he makes it clear that the norm of selfless service he is giving them is not an imposition. If they understand their role and fulfill it, they will be blessed: in sincere self-giving they will truly find themselves.

According to Luke's account of the Last Supper, Jesus gives the norm of selfless service *after* he has consecrated the Eucharist and commissioned the apostles to do the same in remembrance of him. First he says that the one who will betray him is among them, and they question which of them that might be. Then:

> A dispute also arose among them, which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. 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 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. (Lk 22.24-27)

Jesus links ambition for higher status and the exercise of the "lordship" that superiority confers and forbids both. Christian leaders are to serve as he has: "Those directed to repeat the rite of the Lord's Supper are now exhorted not to lord it over the community, but to serve it."[106] Pagan authority figures make their power felt, but the fellowship of the new covenant is to be an entirely different sort of community (see **1-D-3,** above) in which leadership must take an entirely different form: "Thus for the Christian disciple the roles are reversed; they *may not* conduct themselves as do pagan kings and lords."[107] Rather, they must serve as Jesus did, thereby winning people's faith and love and enabling them to receive and enjoy the gift of divine-human communion he makes available, especially in the Eucharist. Finally, Jesus goes on to promise the Twelve a share in his future kingship: "You may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Lk 22.30). It is another reminder that self-giving in the present age will lead to genuine self-fulfillment in the age to come.

In Matthew and Mark, Jesus gives the Twelve the norm of selfless service shortly before they reach Jerusalem (see Mt 20.20-25, Mk 10.35-42). He has just predicted his passion for the third time when James and John (or their mother on their behalf) request the places closest to him in the kingdom. Jesus asks if they can share his cup; they say yes. He tells them they will, but the two places of honor are not his to assign. Overhearing, the other ten are angry; they obviously share the same ambition for high places. As in Luke, Jesus uses Gentile rulers to illustrate what would be an abuse of authority for the Twelve to do, then enjoins them: "But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10.43-45, cf. Mt 20.26-28).[108]

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106. Fitzmyer, op. cit., 28A:1412.

107. Ibid., 1415.

108. In Matthew alone, Jesus also warns his disciples against allowing themselves to be set above those they are to serve, as the scribes and Pharisees are, by titles of honor; instead, he insists, they are to gain status precisely by humble service (see Mt 23.1-12).

Slaves must do as they are told, but Jesus does not mean the Twelve should do whatever they are told by those they serve. Like Jesus, they are to obey the Father and the legitimate directives of those to whom the Father gives authority. But like slaves responsible for children who have been entrusted to their care, leaders in Jesus' Church are to serve as if they had no interests or rights of their own, even to the laying down of their lives. "Only this startling denial of self for the sake of others, and not power-politics, can effectively win mankind to the gospel. Church leaders who derive their tools and signs of power from this world betray the gospel of Jesus. This is the basic rule of Church order."[109]

Earlier in the Synoptics, there is another, closely related norm bearing on how to relate to others and treat them (see Mt 18.1-5, Mk 9.33-37, Lk 9.46-48). The details differ, but the three accounts plainly refer to the same incident. The starting point is the disciples' concern about their status. Jesus brings into their circle and draws to himself a little child—small, weak, socially insignificant[110]—and says they are to become lowly like the child (see Mt 18.3-4); they are to put themselves last and serve *everyone*, including the child (see Mk 9.35-36). They are to receive the child, and in doing so they will receive Jesus himself. Those with little or no status in the world are no less important to the kingdom. Since the Twelve will serve Jesus by serving others, they are to serve everyone with the respect and care he deserves.

In Matthew, Jesus immediately reinforces that norm with a dire warning: "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea" (Mt 18.6; cf. Mk 9.42, Lk 17.1-2). Then he adds: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones" (Mt 18.10). He clarifies the point with the parable of the lost sheep—here, the sheep that has *gone astray* (see Mt 18.12-13). He then concludes: "So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish" (Mt 18.14). Since salvific service is to be provided to believers on Jesus' behalf, not serving any of them as they ought to be served is likely to lead them into sin (perhaps the sin of failing to repent). The teaching implies that when it is a question of serving others, it is a very grave matter to discriminate against or neglect small children, poor people, recent immigrants, racial minorities, troublemakers, certain types of sinners, separated brethren, the fallen away, the uncooperative, the mentally ill, the retarded, the handicapped, the repulsive, the uneducated, the elderly, or any other group.

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109. Meier, op. cit., 228-29.

110. See Luz, op. cit., 426-30, for a cogent argument that these are the features of the child most relevant to Jesus' point. Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1997), 391, explains: "Children, whose place of social residence was defined at the bottom of the ladder of esteem, might be called upon to perform acts of hospitality (e.g., washing the feet of a guest), but normally they would not themselves be the recipients of hospitable behavior." To this he attaches fn. 133, which begins: "Children were the weakest, most vulnerable among the population. They had little implicit value as human beings."

Since Jesus tells the Twelve that they must serve selflessly as he does, it is not surprising that he also directs, or at least encourages, them to accept other aspects of his lifestyle.

In remarks recorded only by Luke, Jesus reminds the crowd accompanying him that anyone will count the costs before undertaking a building project, in order to avoid the embarrassment of having to abandon it midway, and before going into battle any king will calculate the odds and, if they are too great, negotiate a settlement (see Lk 14.28-32). The conclusion: "So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14.33). The essential resource for successful discipleship is, paradoxically, renunciation of one's possessions.

If that is necessary for disciples in general, what must be necessary for those called to collaborate most closely in Jesus' mission? His first close collaborators—Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, and John—left their work, families, and homes when he called them; as Luke puts it, "they left everything and followed him" (Lk 5.11, cf. 5.1-10; Mt 4.18-22, Mk 1.16-20). Of course, given his constant traveling about, they had to leave everything, at least temporarily, if they were to follow him. But in sending the Twelve out to do their part in his mission of proclaiming the kingdom, healing, and exorcising, Jesus enjoins them to take no money, no bag of food, and no extra tunic (see Mt 10.7-10, Mk 6.7-9, Lk 9.1-3); according to Matthew, he also forbids them to take either sandals or staff (see Mt 10.10); while according to Luke, he forbids a staff (see Lk 9.3). Accept hospitality from only one host in each town, he tells them, and, if a town is unreceptive, leave and shake its dust from your feet (see Mt 10.11, 14; Mk 6.10-11, Lk 9.4-5). His instructions to the seventy as he sends them out are similar: no purse, no bag, no sandals; greet nobody along the road; remain in one house, eating and drinking what is offered; if a town is unreceptive, wipe off its dust (see Lk 10.1-11).

The instructions reflect the mission's urgency and importance, as Jesus' own lifestyle always did: travel light and waste no time. The intention plainly is to give a sign of the kingdom's coming: material things are no longer important, God will provide what is needed. With no provisions and no staff to defend themselves against attackers, those Jesus sent out manifested "shocking poverty and defenselessness that is appropriate to the kingdom of God. It is a confirming sign for the proclamation and is best understood as analogous to prophetic symbolic actions."[111] To accept hospitality from only one host ruled out seeking better quarters and food, thus subordinating any benefits to be received from the host to the opportunity to offer him or her the benefits Jesus wanted made available.[112]

Sincerely wanting Jesus' advice, a man asked what he had to do to share in eternal life. Obey the commandments, Jesus told him, and listed those that bear upon love of

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111. Luz, op. cit., 78 (his footnotes omitted).

112. Green, op. cit., 359-60, comments on seeking better accommodations: "Not only would this practice call into serious question one's narrow focus on faithfulness to one's commission, not only would this indicate concerns counter to a faith in the ability of the gracious Lord to provide, it would also constitute a serious breach of conventions governing the social role of the guest that would bring the mission unnecessarily into disrepute."

neighbor (see Mt 19.16-19, Mk 10.17-20, Lk 18.18-21). In Matthew, the man then asks what he still lacks, and Jesus begins his reply, "If you would be perfect . . ." (Mt 19.20-21). He begins in Mark and Luke by saying only that the man still lacks one thing (see Mk 10.21, Lk 18.22). What? He should sell what he has and give the proceeds to the poor—he will then "have treasure in heaven"—and follow Jesus. The man goes away sad, because he is very wealthy (see Mt 19.20-22, Mk 10.20-21, Lk 18.22-23).

This incident, usually with a focus on Matthew's "If you would be perfect . . .," was long used to argue for a counsel of self-impoverishment, beyond anything morally obligatory for anyone, that supposedly had to be accepted by those wishing to grow toward perfect holiness. True, Jesus did ask of the wealthy man something more than keeping the commandments that bear upon the neighbor. However, since not all the baptized are called to self-impoverishment but all are called to perfect holiness and effectively pursue it by undertaking their personal vocations, whatever they may be (see **A-2** and **A-3,** above), Jesus' advice to the wealthy man must have been intended for him and others similarly situated. Jesus sees in this earnest man a potential close collaborator, whom he wishes to call just as he had called the Twelve.[113] But the man's attachment to his wealth was incompatible with undertaking that vocation and effectively sharing in Jesus' mission. So, for him and those with wealth and a vocation like his, self-impoverishment was and is necessary to set out on the way toward perfect holiness.[114]

When the wealthy man rejects his vocation, Jesus observes that it will be hard for the rich to enter the kingdom. Assuming that the wealthy should be able to do that if anyone can, the listeners ask: Who then can enter? Jesus replies that it is impossible for people—it would be easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye—but possible for God (see Mt 19.23-26, Mk 10.23-27, Lk 18.24-27). The point seems to be that, though wealth gives power in this world, sharing in the kingdom is a gift only God can give, and he can enable even the rich, who are ill-disposed by their wealth, to enter.

No doubt expressing the concern about this teaching's implications for themselves felt by the Twelve and perhaps others traveling with Jesus, Peter points out that they had left behind everything (see Mt 19.27, Mk 10.28) or their homes (see Lk 18.28). According to Matthew, Jesus begins his reply by assuring the Twelve that they will share in his power and glory—they will "sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of

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113. <Check>Leopold Sabourin, S.J., *The Gospel according to St. Matthew* (Bombay: St. Paul, 1982), 2:739, "Jesus' concluding words, 'and come, follow me,' have to be understood in the physical sense. To this rich young man is offered a particular vocation, that of collaborating directly with Christ in his ministry . . ., which implied, as for the apostles that he would actually abandon his present way of life and his possessions, to take the way of complete detachment, the way of the cross." Meier, op. cit., 220: "Mt, with his OT background, understands *telios* [perfect] in terms of whole-hearted, complete dedication to God (cf. 5:48). . . . In the case of this particular man, God's good will is that he sell all, express his love for his neighbor by giving the proceeds to the poor (assuring him the heavenly treasure or life he seeks), and then literally follow Christ."

114. See Luz, op. cit., 509-23. Though Luz does not employ the notion of personal vocation, he provides a balanced reading of the passage—including the subsequent discussion of wealth in general and of the renunciation the Twelve had made—and the history of its interpretation; he also suggests a resolution somewhat similar to the one I have drawn from Vatican II.

Israel" (Mt 19.28). In all three Synoptics, Jesus makes a general statement about all his future disciples: *all* who have left homes and family members for the sake of Jesus' name (see Mt 19.29) or for his sake and the gospel (see Mk 10.29) or for the sake of the kingdom of God (see Lk 18.29)[115] will receive far more homes and family members, and also eternal life. Mark and Luke make it explicit that the homes and family members will be received *in the present age* and eternal life in the age to come. Mark includes persecutions among the things to be received in the present age (see Mt 19.29, Mk 10.29-30, Lk 18.29-30).

In this exchange, Jesus holds out the prospect of benefits that will more than compensate for the burdens associated with his lifestyle. This reassures the Twelve and others then accompanying him. But he also commends similar sacrifices to future disciples, who will consider spending their entire lives collaborating closely in his mission of service. For all who undertake such collaboration, authentic self-giving will lead to self-fulfillment. And unlike the wealth some refuse to give up, compensations received in the present age will not be an obstacle to receiving God's gift of eternal life in the coming age.

Other passages especially emphasize detachment from family. Having pointed out that he and his message will divide families, Jesus teaches that his disciples must prefer him to their parents and children: "He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Mt 10.37).[116] Detachment from family, which Jesus requires of all disciples, makes special demands on those called to help him proclaim the kingdom.

Jesus called someone to follow him.

> But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." But he said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."[117]

Burying one's father and taking leave of one's family are duties so exigent that only something truly extraordinary could justify going off without fulfilling them.

Jesus wants to share his mission of proclaiming the kingdom only with those who share his vision of its urgency and his love for souls, a love ready to sacrifice everything

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115. Here in Lk alone (though arguably implicit in Mt and Mk), *wife* is listed among the family members given up: "wife or brothers or parents or children." Legrand, op. cit., 53-61, plausibly argues that Jesus was not recommending that those already married abandon their wives but that those not married forgo marriage. Legrand reads (57-58) Paul's indication (see 1 Cor 9.5) that Peter and some other Church leaders were accompanied by "a woman/wife, a sister" to mean that those men's wives, who had embraced the faith, accompanied and assisted them.

116. In this case, Luke, who often prefers milder language, expresses the same thought more harshly: "If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14.26).

117. Lk 9.59-62; cf. Mt 8.21-22. Fitzmyer, op. cit., 28:835-36, discusses various interpretations of "Leave the dead to bury their own dead" and concludes that the most likely is: Leave the spiritually dead (that is, those who do not follow Jesus) to bury the physically dead.

else. Others need not apply.[118] Yet Jesus values companionship not only for himself but for his associates, whom he sends on mission two by two (see Mk 6.7, Lk 10.1).

Jesus commends forgoing marriage for the kingdom's sake. When some Pharisees challenged him about divorce, he answered that divorce and remarriage lead to adultery (see Mt 19.3-9; Mk 10.2-12). Matthew's narrative alone continues:

> The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry." But he said to them, "Not all men can receive this precept [literally: word/saying], but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it." (Mt 19.10-12)

Eunuchs of the third type, commended by Jesus, traditionally have been understood as those who enjoy the charism of celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake and commit themselves to that element of Jesus' lifestyle. Although some exegetes and theologians now suppose that eunuchs for the kingdom are divorced people who live chastely rather than "marrying again," that interpretation is implausible. For making oneself a eunuch for the kingdom's sake can be recommended for voluntary acceptance by some as part of their vocations, whereas living chastely is morally required of everyone and cannot be recommended for anyone's voluntary acceptance.[119]

When Jesus described forgoing marriage for the kingdom's sake as making oneself a eunuch, he made two things clear. First, he does not mean merely being detached from marriage or merely leaving one's family behind temporarily. He means forgoing marriage permanently. Second, just as he does not regard the death he will freely accept, considered in itself, as something good but as the deprivation of the good of life, so he does not regard voluntary celibacy, considered in itself, as something good but as a serious deprivation of the good of marriage and fatherhood: "By pointing to a privation that inflicts suffering, the word 'eunuch' shows that Jesus does not recommend celibacy out of contempt for sexuality. He regards sexuality as a human value whose renunciation hurts."[120]

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118. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 60, *AAS* 84 (1992) 763, *OR*, 8 Apr. 1992, XVI, teaches that a major seminary should provide "those called by the Lord to serve as apostles the possibility of reliving the experience of formation which our Lord provided for the Twelve. In fact, the Gospels present a prolonged and intimate sharing of life with Jesus as a necessary premise for the apostolic ministry. Such an experience demands of the Twelve the practice of detachment in a particularly clear and specific fashion, a detachment that in some way is demanded of all the disciples, a detachment from their roots, from their usual work, from their nearest and dearest (cf. Mk 1.16-20; 10.28; Lk 9:23, 57-62; 14.25-27)."

119. *The Catholic Study Bible: The New American Bible*, ed. Donald Senior et al. (New York: Oxford, 1990), note to Mt 19.12: "Some scholars take the last class [those who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom] to be those who have been divorced by their spouses and have refused to enter another marriage. But it is more likely that it is rather those who have chosen never to marry, since that suits better the optional nature of the decision: 'whoever can . . . ought to accept it.'" Also see Jean Galot, S.J., *Theology of the Priesthood* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1984), 233-34, who offers a similar explanation (234-35).

120. Galot, op. cit., 235.

Though Jesus commends this element of his own lifestyle, he does not say it is *required,* even of the Twelve.[121] By contrast, as we have seen, he very clearly and forcefully prescribes that the Twelve relate to and deal with others as he himself does: as a selfless servant with no ambition for status. By prescribing that they be servants without ambition, he implies that all of them can receive his precept and fulfill it by their self-giving. Not all, however, can receive the word that it is better to forgo marriage for the kingdom's sake; and Jesus commends this sort of self-giving only to those who can receive this word.

Sadducees believed neither in angels nor in the resurrection of the dead (see Acts 23.8). Some of them challenged Jesus with the case of a woman who had successively married seven brothers: Whose wife would she be in the resurrection (see Mt 22.24-28, Mk 12.19-23, Lk 20.28-33)? According to Matthew (22.29-30) and Mark (12.24-25), he replied that the questioners were ignorant of the scriptures and of God's power, for those who rise from the dead "neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven." Luke reports a fuller explanation: "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage; but those who are accounted worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die any more, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection" (20.34-36). According to all three versions, Jesus went on to argue that God raises the dead, because he identified himself to Moses as the God of the long-dead patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—yet is the God of the living, not of the dead (see Mt 22.31-32, Mk 12.26-27, Lk 20.37-38).

Jesus does not commend remaining unmarried in this exchange; on the contrary, he says that in the present age people marry. His point is that children of the resurrection will be free of the cycle of birth and death, and marriage and procreation will no longer be necessary for the continuation of the human race.[122] Reflecting on what is said, however, Pius XII uses it to argue for the superiority of virginity/celibacy for the kingdom's sake; he approvingly quotes St. Cyprian's words to virgins: "What we are to be, you have already commenced to be. You already possess in this world the glory of the resurrection; you pass through the world without suffering its contagion. In preserving virgin chastity, you are the equals of the angels of God."[123]

In fact, though, nobody possesses the glory of the resurrection in this world, and spouses who engage in chaste marital intercourse do not thereby suffer the world's contagion. Developing received teaching, Vatican II avoids those errors. Alluding to Jesus' exchange with the Sadducees, the Council does teach that the religious state "makes more evident to the faithful the heavenly goods already present in this world, gives greater witness to the new and eternal life acquired by Christ's redemption, and

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121. Sabourin, op. cit., 2:757: "Jesus apparently has in mind those among his disciples who like him have opted to stay unmarried or to live as if they were celibate. He does not propose celibacy as an abstract ideal or as a requirement of the kingdom."

122. See Fitzmyer, op. cit., 28A:1305.

123. Pius XII, *Sacra virginitas, AAS* 46 (1954) 173, *PE,* 248:29; St. Cyprian, *De habitu virginum,* 22; *PL* 4:462.

more firmly foretells future resurrection and the heavenly kingdom's glory" (LG 44). Citing Lk 20.35-36, it says that by virginity or celibacy for the kingdom's sake priests "are made a living sign of that world to come, already present through faith and charity, in which children of the resurrection will neither marry nor be given in marriage."[124] But rather than asserting that those who remain unmarried for the kingdom's sake already possess the glory of the resurrection, Vatican II affirms celibate chastity "foretells" or is "a living sign" of the resurrection and life to come. John Paul II similarly teaches that celibate chastity "makes evident, even in the renunciation of marriage, the 'nuptial meaning' of the body through a communion and a personal gift to Jesus Christ and his Church which prefigures and anticipates the perfect and final communion and self-giving of the world to come."[125]

In sum, simply being unmarried has no human value. As has always been taught, celibate chastity's sign value and anticipation of the kingdom lie not just in forgoing marriage but in doing that *for the kingdom's sake*—to focus on the things of the Lord and collaborate closely with him. Giving oneself entirely to Jesus and his Church points to and anticipates the inclusivity of heavenly fellowship gathered into him. That new and unending covenantal fellowship includes union in one flesh with Jesus and one another, a union that, anticipated sacramentally in the Eucharist, will be perfectly realized in the coming age (see **1-E-2,** above). Sacramental marriage also signifies and somehow anticipates that perfect union of Christ and his Church. Thus, celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake and sacramental marriage provide mutually complementary signs and anticipations of heavenly communion.[126] The former points to and anticipates heavenly communion's inclusivity and the latter its bodily realism. Yet neither by itself adequately signifies and anticipates heavenly communion, in which there will be neither marrying and being given in marriage nor celibate living. Rather, all the blessed will live in bodily communion with Jesus and, in him, with one another. That blessed communion will differ

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124. PO 16; in note 41, which refers to Lk 20.35-36, the Council also refers to Pius XII, *Sacra virginitas, AAS* 46 (1954), 169-72; but, significantly, the cited passage stops just short of Pius XII's quotation from St. Cyprian. Still, in note 21 to a statement in OT 10 that celibates "bear witness to the resurrection in the age to come," the Council cites the passage in St. Cyprian quoted by Pius XII.

125. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 29, *AAS* 84 (1992) 703, *OR*, 8 Apr. 1992, VII. In the Latin text, *prefigures* is qualified by *somehow:* "quae omnia praefigurant quodammodo et antevertunt." See also *Vita consecrata*, 32, *AAS* 88 (1996) 406, *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, VI, where John Paul teaches that "the consecrated life proclaims and in a certain way anticipates the future age (praenuntiat consecrata vita et quadamtenus praeripit futurum illud tempus)."

126. John Paul II, General Audience (14 Apr. 1982), 4, *Inseg.*, ???, *OR*, 19 Apr. 1982, 10: "It seems then that the complementarity of marriage and continence for 'the kingdom of heaven' in their significance and manifold importance adequately corresponds to Christ's words recorded in Matthew (Mt 19.11-12). In the life in an authentically Christian community the attitudes and values proper to the one and the other state—that is, to one or the other essential and conscious choice as a vocation for one's entire earthly life and in the perspective of the 'heavenly Church'—they complete and in a certain sense interpenetrate each other. Perfect conjugal love must be marked by that fidelity and that donation to the only Spouse (and also of the fidelity and donation of the Spouse to the only Bride), on which religious profession and priestly celibacy are founded. Finally, the nature of one and the other love is 'conjugal,' that is, expressed through the total gift of oneself. Both types of love tend to express that conjugal meaning of the body which 'from the beginning' has been inscribed in the personal make-up of man and woman."

from both celibate living and marital intimacy while possessing in a more eminent way the personal and interpersonal goods inherent in both.

4) Jesus' teaching and example affected the lifestyle of the Church's early leaders.

The book of Acts describes an infant Church focused on carrying out the commission Jesus gave before his ascension (see Mt 28.18-20, Mk 16.15-18, Lk 24.44-49; Acts 1.7-8). With the coming of the Spirit, the leaders cooperate with and are guided by him. Previously ambitious and frightened disciples now risk their lives in the service of evangelization (see Acts 4.5-22, 5.17-42), and soon the Church's leaders begin to follow Jesus' example by laying down their lives (see Acts 6.8-7.60; 12.1-3).

The Church's communal and collegial aspects were prominent. So, for instance, the important issue about what was to be required of Gentile converts was resolved by a gathering of apostles and presbyters who collegially discerned God's will as manifested by events considered in the light of the Scriptures; the leaders then acted on what they had discerned (see Acts 15.6-29, Gal 2.1-10).[127] And the whole community shared property, apparently by members' voluntary contributions (see Acts 2.44-45; 4.32, 34-37; 5.4).[128]

The First Epistle of Peter includes an exhortation handing on Jesus' emphatic command to the Twelve to serve unselfishly and avoid domination:

> I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ as well as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed. Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock. (1 Pt 5.1-3)

The faithful are to be led by example rather than by imposition. Leadership should be for their sake, not a means to the leaders' own ends.

Since the New Testament tells more about St. Paul than any other disciple, his manner of sharing in Jesus' lifestyle is the most significant evidence we have of its impact on the infant Church. Having become a Christian and discerned his vocation, Paul had no agenda of his own. Like Jesus, he totally dedicated himself to his mission and carried it out with tightly focused drive.

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127. The later confrontation between Peter and Paul (see Gal 2.11-14) concerned a subordinate issue: what should Gentile converts (who need not observe Jewish laws regarding eating) and Jewish Christians (at least some of whom believed they were still bound by those laws) do when they eat and, perhaps, participate in the Eucharist together? Peter did not consider himself bound by the Jewish laws but wanted Gentile members of the mixed group to defer to the Jewish Christians who believed they were bound by them; Paul thought that the truth of the gospel precluded requiring the Gentile converts to conform to the Jewish laws. Thus, the issue was one of principle for Paul and of prudence for Peter, and we do not know how it was resolved: see J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians,* Anchor Bible, 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 228-45. However, it undermined neither Peter's special authority nor Paul's mission: see Salvatore Alberto Panimolle, "L'Autorité de Pierre en Ga 1-2 et Ac 15," in *Paul de Tarse: Apôtre du notre temps,* ed. Lorenzo de Lorenzi (Rome: Abbaye de S. Paul, 1979), 269-89.

128. The story of Ananias and Sapphira (see Acts 5.1-11) makes it clear that the practice of sharing goods extended to the community as a whole, not just to a special group, and that it was voluntary. The couple's fault was not in violating a requirement to contribute but in lying to the community, and thus to the Holy Spirit, about the extent of their self-sacrifice.

His teaching makes it clear that the freedom most people crave and some think they now have is an illusion. In reality, everyone is a slave either to sin or to righteousness—that is, to God (see Rom 6.15-23).[129] Paul not only teaches the faithful to imitate the complete selflessness of Jesus, who took the form of a slave and became obedient unto death on the cross (see Phil 2.3-8), but regards himself as a slave of Jesus Christ.[130] He urges the Corinthians to prefer others' spiritual welfare to the exercise of their own freedom and points out that, in dealing with them, he has forgone many things to which he had a right and made himself their slave: "For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. . . . I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings" (1 Cor 9.19, 22-23). In giving himself completely to others' service, Paul hopes only to share with them in the ultimate fulfillment the gospel promises.

He did not try to exercise lordship over anyone. He regularly manifested his affection and gratitude toward fellow workers, and his concern for Christians who were troubled or suffering. His fruitful service in leading those who had worked with him and would carry on his work is beautifully manifested in his farewell address to the presbyters of Ephesus and their response to him (see Acts 20.17-38).

Paul proclaimed the message he was sent to deliver and did all he could to motivate people to believe it, to love the Lord Jesus, and to live in the Spirit. He answered questions and objections with great care, and in doing so clarified fundamental truths of faith. He searched for things to praise in his converts and showed his delight in their progress. While often very firm, he always manifested deep and tender love, like the tough love of the devoted and wise parent of a young adult involved in gravely self-destructive misbehavior. Sometimes he pleads:

> Our mouth is open to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. In return—I speak as to children—widen your hearts also. Do not be mismated with unbelievers. . . . What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. . . .
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> . . .
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> Open your hearts to us; we have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you

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129. Translations of the Bible often use *servant* to translate the Greek "doulos," but Ceslas Spicq, O.P., *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, trans. and ed. James D. Ernest (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994), 1:380, says: "It is wrong to translate *doulos* as 'servant,' so obscuring its precise signification in the language of the first century. In the beginning, before it came to be used for slaves, *doulos* was an adjective meaning 'unfree,' as opposed to *eleutheros.*" It might be jarring to hear the Virgin Mary say: "Behold the slave girl of the Lord" (Lk 1.38), but as Spicq indicates (383, fn. 14) that would make clearer than *handmaid* does her total "consecration to the work of salvation, conformably to the will of God."

130. See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *Romans*, Anchor Bible, 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 228-29; Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, and the prophets also were slaves of God.

> are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. (2 Cor 6.11-14, 16; 7.2-3; cf. 1 Thes 2.5-8)

Paul did not want to control others; he wanted them to let themselves be led by the Holy Spirit, and to live the truth of faith in love.

As to material goods, Paul declares: "To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are ill-clad and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands" (1 Cor 4.11-12). He seems to have had no savings or other source of income, since he worked part time to support himself when it was necessary or prudent to avoid imposing on others (see Acts 18.1-4, 1 Cor 9.13-15, 1 Thes 2.9). Considering that he obviously was educated and must have been well connected before becoming a Christian, conversion undoubtedly required him to give up some economic assets or sources of support; these appear to have been among the things referred to when he writes: "Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him" (Phil 3.7-9). When Paul sought financial support from the churches he had planted, it was not for himself or his own projects but for the poor of the church at Jerusalem; and he called for donations not only to alleviate material needs but to build up the communio of the universal Church.[131]

Nothing in the New Testament suggests that leadership in the Church was limited to men who remained unmarried. Instructions in the pastoral epistles make it clear that married men were chosen to become clerics.[132]

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131. See 2 Cor 8-9; Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians*, Anchor Bible 32A (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984), 398-453; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 720-23.

132. See 1 Tm 3.2, 12; Tit 1.5-6, which specify that the married man chosen to be a cleric must be "the husband of one wife." Christian Cochini, S.J., *Apostolic Origins of Priestly Celibacy*, trans. Nelly Marans (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1990), 8-13, quotes fourth-century decrees of Pope Siricius and the Roman Synod requiring married clerics to abstain permanently from marital intercourse. One of those documents invokes the authority of the apostles and interprets the requirement that the married man be the husband of one wife to imply that, if ordained, he would permanently forgo marital intercourse. Today, however, the Catholic Church very often chooses married men to be deacons or, often in the East (and occasionally in the West), to be presbyters, without expecting them to forgo marital intercourse. Vatican II (PO 16, fn. 35) cites Tm 3.2-5 and Ti 1.6 for its teaching that celibacy was not required by the practice of the early Church. Plainly, then, the fourth-century decrees, as well as others excluding marriage or marital intercourse for clerics, are disciplinary, not doctrinal. While only propositions believed to be true ought to be employed as premises in arguments to support disciplinary decrees, a proposition is not authoritatively taught by being used as a premise in such a decree. The meaning of a scriptural phrase is, I believe, more likely to be discovered by competent, faithful, Catholic exegetes than by earlier popes and others arguing in support of a disciplinary norm, and a more trustworthy interpretation of "the husband of one wife" is provided, in my judgment, by Ignace de la Potterie, S.J., "'Mari d'une seule femme': Le sens théologique d'une formule Paulinienne," in De Lorenzi, op. cit., 619-38; and Jerome D. Quinn, *The Letter to Titus*, Anchor Bible, 35 (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 85-87. Neither understands "the husband of one wife" as prohibiting marital intercourse for clerics; both understand it to exclude anyone in a second marriage from public ecclesial ministry and to forbid remarriage by any married man engaged in such ministry whose spouse dies.

In dealing with issues about sex and marriage in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul begins: “Now concerning the matters about which you wrote. It is well for a man not to touch a woman” (1 Cor 7.1). That second sentence often has been taken to be Paul’s assertion, as the principle for the rest of the chapter, that complete sexual abstinence is good in itself. More likely, however, it is the slogan of those who had written to Paul.[133] For he goes on at once to explain that married Christians ought to give themselves to their spouses in marital intercourse and abstain only at times by mutual agreement (see 1 Cor 7.2-6). Paul was celibate (see 1 Cor 7.8, 9.5) and wished every Christian were, yet he realized that was not God’s plan: “I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own special gift from God, one of one kind and one of another” (1 Cor 7:7). For Paul, then, both celibate chastity and Christian married life are the Spirit’s gifts for building up the Church,[134] and he affirms the importance of accepting, faithfully persevering in, and fulfilling one’s personal vocation, whatever it is: “Only, let every one lead the life which the Lord has assigned to him, and in which God has called him” (1 Cor 7.17).[135]

Paul specifies one sure sign that the charism for celibate chastity is lacking: “To the unmarried and widows I say that it is well for them to remain single as I do. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion” (1 Cor 7.8-9). *Unmarried* here perhaps refers to widowers.[136] But since many Christians who have never married or who are not living with their spouses also are aflame with passion, one wonders about those who lack the charism for celibate chastity yet cannot marry soon, if ever. Paul surely knew of such people, yet he insists that Christian life has no place for sexual sins (see 1 Cor 6:9-20, 7:1, 9; Eph 5:3-12; 1 Thes 4:1-8) and teaches that Jesus’ grace liberates Christians from sin’s slavery (see Rom 5:2; 6:12-14, 22; cf. Tit 2:11-14; 1 Jn 5:3). It follows that even those aflame with passion *can* be continent without marrying. Evidently, then, the charism for holy single life that Paul has in mind involves something more: being able to deal rather easily with sexual temptations so that one is seldom seriously anxious about them or distracted by them, and thus is peacefully chaste. But since even continent Christians who are troubled by frequent and persistent sexual temptations are not being peacefully chaste, they are advised to marry, assuming they can.

At the same time, Paul, like Jesus himself, advises those who enjoy the charism for celibate chastity to embrace it. He articulates reasons of two sorts.

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133. See Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians,* Sacra Pagina, 6 (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1999), 251-54, 257-58; Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1987), 267-77.

134. See Collins, op. cit., 260-61; Fee, op. cit., 284-86.

135. See Collins, op. cit., 274-77, 282-83; Fee, op. cit., 309-11. While Paul focuses here and in the following verses on elements of the personal vocations of adults who were already settled at the time they were converted, it is reasonable to apply what he says also to young people raised in the faith who must discern God’s call to celibate or marital chastity: Accept the Lord Jesus’ assignment to a role in his Church (when he ordains, consecrates, or sacramentally joins them in marriage); then persevere in that as in other lasting elements of their personal vocations.

136. See Collins, op. cit., 268-69; Fee, op. cit., 287-90.

First, while saying he received no command from the Lord concerning the unmarried (see 1 Cor 7.25, 28) and repeating that marrying is no sin, Paul remarks that "those who marry will have earthly troubles, and I would spare you that" (1 Cor 7.28). His basis for saying this is that he foresees a time of great distress and thinks it best that everyone, whether married or single, remain as he or she is (see 1 Cor 7.26-27).

Second, and more important, the charism for celibate chastity allows devout Christians who embrace it to avoid a certain inner division:

> I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; but the married man is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried woman or girl is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit; but the married woman is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please her husband. I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord. (1 Cor 7.32-35)

The words "interests are divided" translate a single Greek word that literally means *has been divided.* This indicates that it is the man himself, not his interests or something else, who is divided. Thus, commentators offer more precise translations: *he is torn* or *and is divided.*[137] The word "girl" in the phrase "the unmarried woman or girl" is better translated *virgin,* and may well suggest that Paul has in mind women who have chosen to remain unmarried.[138] The words "but to create good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord" translate Greek phrases literally meaning *but for what is seemly and constant to/for/before the Lord in an undistracted way.*[139] Lacking the connotations of "order" and "devotion," the phrases seems to be better translated "but for the sake of propriety and adherence to the Lord without distraction" (NAB) or "but so that everything is as it should be, and you are able to give your undivided attention to the Lord" (NJB).

Many Christian spouses and parents who work outside the home experience tensions between work and family life. Although the two sets of responsibilities are not inherently incompatible, a person has only so much time and energy; so, such people often ask themselves: Am I doing enough here? Am I cutting too many corners there? They are pulled this way and that, torn; they have been divided. And the more devoted to family and committed to work they are, the greater the tension and sense of being divided. Devout married Christians' relationships with their spouses and with Jesus generate similar tensions: At any given moment, one cannot focus on both relationships and be preoccupied both with worldly affairs and the Lord's affairs.[140]

Paul no doubt observed that devout married Christians experience tensions if they try to evangelize the non-Christians they know, undertake demanding ministries when called on to do so, and regularly help other Church members bear their burdens. Serious

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137. See Collins, op. cit., 296; Fee, op. cit., 343.

138. See Collins, op. cit., 296.

139. See Fee, op. cit., 347.

140. See Will Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy: The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 197-205.

involvement in such activities inevitably competes with supporting a family, making a home, and caring for children. By contrast, Christians who have been blessed with the charism for celibate chastity and embraced it keep the time and energy spent on secular matters to an unavoidable minimum. Without a spouse and children to claim their attentive care, they can focus entirely on pleasing Jesus. Rather than divided or torn, they can be "holy in body and spirit"—that is, "especially and exclusively belonging to the Lord, being at his disposal."[141]

C: The Development of Diverse Forms of Consecrated Life

Since all Christians are called to follow Jesus, whose unique lifestyle pertained to his personal vocation, all who live an evangelical life—that is, all who respond to the universal call to holiness by undertaking to live out their entire personal vocations—will live according to the *spirit* of Jesus' lifestyle. They will seek the kingdom first, for themselves and others; they will serve selflessly and avoid lording it over those for whom they are in some way responsible; they will be detached from sensory satisfactions and chaste; they will be obedient to all legitimate authorities and meek in accepting their lot in life; and they will live simply and use money and material goods solely to meet genuine human needs in a moderate way, including the pressing needs of others.

However, Jesus called some people to leave everything behind and accompany him; and throughout Christian history, many have been called not only to follow him but to become his companions by working closely with him and adopting features of his lifestyle that he commended to the apostles.[142] Thus, they developed diverse forms of what we now call "consecrated life." So far as I know, nobody has written a history of consecrated life, and I shall not undertake even to outline it. But, drawing on historical materials and works, I shall show how various forms of consecrated life developed. I shall not deal with institutes of consecrated life whose holy founders and foundresses neither initiated *new forms* of consecrated life nor significantly developed an existing form, even though many institutes like this are outstanding in other respects and many seem greater to me than some I shall deal with. Nor shall I deal with the later histories of the institutes whose founding I shall describe, except insofar as those histories contributed to important developments of existing forms of consecrated life or the emergence of new forms of it.

1) From Mary, Jesus' mother, to the desert fathers

Mary lived an evangelical life by accepting her unique vocation in its entirety, wholeheartedly committing herself to it, and perfectly fulfilling it. She served as wife, mother, and homemaker yet remained a virgin and, when widowed, forwent marrying again. So, Mary is the pioneer both of the kind of lay life most common until recently

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141. This happy paraphrase is provided by <Check> Eugen Walter, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians,* vol. 13, *New Testament for Spiritual Reading,* ed. John L. McKenzie, S.J. (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 84.

142. See John Paul II, *Vita consecrata,* 20 and 29, *AAS* 88 (1996) 393-94 and 402, *OR,* 3 Apr. 1996, V and VII-VIII.

among Christian women and of the consecrated life. As long as she made a home for Joseph and/or Jesus, Mary was inevitably anxious about worldly affairs.[143] But despite that distraction, she always remained primarily the Lord's handmaid, as does every Christian woman who lives a truly evangelical life. When twelve-year-old Jesus implicitly revealed his identity by saying he had been dealing with "my Father's" affairs, Mary "did not understand" but showed herself a contemplative by listening to the word of the Lord and keeping "all these things in her heart" (Lk 2.49-51). After Joseph died, she devoted her remaining years to the affairs of the Lord, as many Christian widows have done.[144]

The New Testament contains other examples of following Jesus in forgoing marriage for the kingdom's sake. These include the Twelve, the women who accompanied and ministered to them and to Jesus (see Lk 8.1-3; cf. Mt 27.55, Mk 15.41), and the first Christian community, which devoted itself to religious activities and shared material goods in common (see Acts 2.42-47, 4.32-37). None of them, however, exemplifies a community committed to consecrated life. All included married people, and the texts do not say whether any, much less all, of these married members permanently separated from their spouses for the kingdom's sake.

Jesus' own example and his commending of various features of it—not least his commending of those "who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 19.12)—is the primary, authentic, New Testament principle of consecrated life. St. Paul is a great model of consecrated life (see **B-4,** above), and his recommendation that peacefully chaste Christians concentrate on the things of the Lord and forgo marriage or, if widowed, remarriage (see 1 Cor 7.8, 32-35) shaped those forms of consecrated life in which Christian men and women rightly renounce the world to concentrate on the Lord's affairs. Although pre-Christian in her commitment, the prophetess, Anna (see Lk 2.36-38), also provides a model of consecrated widowhood.

In the New Testament and through the centuries of Church history, we find what always has served as an inspiration for consecrated life: martyrdom.[145] For the kingdom's sake, martyrs give up everyone and everything else they love—all that they are, have, and hope for in this world. In receiving the supreme charism of communicating, to both nonbelievers and fellow Christians, the Spirit's most powerful testimony to the gospel's absolute truth and splendid promise, martyrs become Jesus'

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143. I think that for years Mary made a home for a family of at least nine and raised at least seven children, for, of the hypotheses about Jesus' four "brothers" and at least two "sisters" (see Mt 13.55-56, Mk 6.3), I consider most plausible that they were children of deceased relatives of Joseph and/or Mary, orphans they adopted.

144. For a somewhat similar, suggestive and helpful consideration of Mary's life, see Von Balthasar, "Mary's State of Life," in *Christian State of Life*, 201-210. Unfortunately, Von Balthasar, not understanding personal vocation, holds (201) that Mary transcended both states of life that exist in the Church and belonged to neither.

145. Bouyer, *The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers*, 190-210, provides an illuminating treatment of martyrdom, from which I have drawn insights; also see Karl Baus, *From the Apostolic Community to Constantine*, vol. 1, *History of the Church*, ed. Hubert Jedin and John Dolan (New York: Seabury, 1980), 292-95.

perfect disciples and most effective apostles. They imitate him—"the faithful witness [Greek: martus]" (Rv 1.5; cf. 3.14)—as fully as possible and so become completely one with him, "the firstborn of the dead" (Rv 1.5; cf. Rv 6.9). Thus, in each martyr the life in Christ that all Christians receive in baptism and nurture with the Eucharist is fully realized and plainly manifested. In laying down their lives with grateful obedience and resignation, martyrs do everything the Father wills and accept everything from his hand; by one act of self-sacrifice, their charity becomes perfect as they fulfill their entire vocation and leave this passing world to share in the resurrection and everlasting life of their risen Lord.

Many others have risked death and/or accepted less serious consequences in confessing their faith. Frequent, widespread, and harsh persecution set the entire Church's spiritual tone between the years 64 and 313. While Christians always should be prepared to sacrifice for the kingdom, in those centuries the urgency to be ready to give up everything must have led many who were faithful to be far more detached than they would have been in less trying times. The persecutions during those two and one-half centuries had to be distressing enough to make the faithful experiencing them appreciate Paul's advice: "Let those who have wives live as though they had none . . . and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it" (1 Cor 7.29, 31).

In that spiritually salubrious environment, Jesus' and Paul's advice about forgoing marriage took root and flowered. Second-century texts make it clear that numerous Christians, including some missionaries, forwent marriage for the kingdom's sake; not only their fellow believers but even some pagans admired them. In the third century, the lifestyle became so common that celibates/virgins, many of them women and not all the men clerics, became a recognized and important group in the Church, both East and West. Having no special rule of life, they usually owned property and lived with their families, though some male virgins lived by themselves and some female ones formed small groups. They made a serious commitment, and fellow believers esteemed them as an elite corps.[146] Moreover, their self-sacrifice was regarded not only as a preparation for martyrdom but as more or less similar to it.[147]

Norms for consecrated life began to take shape in those early centuries. At first, there seems to have been no rite for consecrating virgins and officially receiving their

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146. To express the insight that forgoing marriage for Jesus' sake is not some sort of pagan or inhuman renunciation but an authentic gift of self and a special way of uniting one's soul with the Lord, Christians began to call both male and female virgin ascetics *brides of Christ*—see Baus, op. cit., 295-97. The virgin's espousal to Christ was taken for granted by later Church Fathers, e.g. Tertullian, *On the Veiling of Virgins,* ch. 16: "You do not belie yourself in appearing as a bride. For wedded you are to Christ: to him you have surrendered your flesh; to him you have espoused your maturity. Walk in accordance with the will of your Espoused"; St. Gregory of Nyssa, *On Virginity,* ch. 15: "The chaste and thoughtful virgin must sever herself from any affection which can in any way impart contagion to her soul; she must keep herself pure for the Husband who has married her, 'not having spot or blemish or any such thing' (Eph 5:27)."

147. Edward E. Malone, O.S.B., *The Monk and the Martyr: The Monk as the Successor of the Martyr* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1950), documents the development summed up in his book's subtitle.

commitment, yet the Church's pastors considered them to have assumed a grave obligation and began excommunicating some who violated the commitment, although others, with a special reason to marry were allowed to set it aside. Especially during the third century, some heterosexual couples also tried living together in a chaste domestic partnership or "spiritual marriage." The relationship was not generally well regarded by the faithful and proved too proximate an occasion of sin for many who entered into it. But even though the Church's pastors tried to suppress the practice, it persisted in some places for several centuries.[148]

Some might say those early disciplinary measures, with the possible exception of those applying to clerics, were the beginning of ongoing, undue interference with consecrated life on the part of Church officials. However, pastors had good reasons for disciplining anyone who violated a commitment to celibate chastity. While entirely voluntary and involving no formalities, such commitments were not merely private. Those who made it known that they had made such a commitment were implicitly claiming to have received a charism—a special grace for the good of the Church. Like martyrs, their service was to be exemplary in self-denial and bearing witness. But violating the commitment gave bad example and bore false witness; it broke faith with fellow Christians and discouraged them, just as betrayal of the baptismal commitment to avoid martyrdom did. Then too, since the virgin ascetic was "espoused" to Christ, intimacy with a third party was considered adulterous and attempted marriage bigamous.

By the middle of the fourth century, a rite for the consecration of virgins was being used in the West, though not the same rite everywhere. Such a rite is included in the early sacramentaries. Women undertaking perpetual virginity received a veil from the bishop, who said a lengthy prayer of blessing. The veiling symbolized marriage to Jesus; eventually, it became common to give her a ring and a crown with the same symbolism.[149] Probably for practical reasons, some consecrated virgins began living together in community, but for several centuries some continued living with their families or relatives. Whether they lived in community or not, consecrated virgins became an *order* in the Church, meaning that they had a recognized status distinct from the clerical orders and from spouses, not that they were an organized society, as later religious orders were.

In third-century Egypt, another form of consecrated life took hold: some male virgin ascetics began seeking solitude in the desert. They had precedents. God's People left Egypt and sojourned forty years in the desert, and various Old Testament figures spent time alone there. John the Baptist carried out his mission in the desert, and the Spirit led Jesus there to pray, fast, and overcome Satan's temptations. Desert solitude did not mean loneliness; it meant abiding with God alone in constant prayer. It offered a way to avoid some of the temptations to which many ascetics yielded while living at home or in domestic partnerships. It was appealing, too, when persecutors chose to harass and torture Christian confessors rather than quickly executing them.

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148. See Baus, op. cit., 296-297.

149. See P. T. Camelot, "Virginity," in *NCE*, 14:702-3.

As a young man, Paul of Thebes (c. 230-340), the first recorded desert Father, was betrayed during a persecution by a relative, who coveted his inheritance. Fleeing into the desert, he lived in great austerity for the rest of his long life.[150]

His example was eclipsed, however, by that of Antony of Egypt, celebrated soon after he died in a classic biography by St. Athanasius.

As a child, St. Antony (c. 250-356) shunned other children's companionship and disliked school, but he readily accepted Christian formation from his parents. They died when he was about twenty, leaving him a comfortable inheritance and a younger sister to look after. But he thought about how the Twelve had left everything to follow Jesus, and how in Acts Christians sold property and gave the proceeds to help the needy. After listening to the Gospel readings in which Jesus teaches "Do not be anxious about tomorrow" (Mt 6.34) and advises the rich man to sell all and give to the poor, Antony did what the rich man did not do, entrusted his sister to some respected virgins, and followed the advice and example of holy men in devoting himself to manual labor, constant prayer, and self-denial, including fasting and night vigils or sleeping directly on the ground. He lived at first in a hut near his village, later in some tombs farther away. After about fifteen years, he withdrew into the desert, walled himself inside an abandoned fort—friends periodically dropped him food enough to survive—and continued his struggles for nearly twenty years more.[151]

Antony's friends had made him famous by then, and many people wanted his advice. At his friends' insistence, he began nourishing many spiritual children with the fruit of his long solitude. Athanasius presents Antony's instruction in the form of a long discourse. Steeped in Scripture, on which he had so long meditated, and enriched by personal experience, Antony's discourse offers guidelines for consecrated life—including how to deal with temptations and how to discern between good and evil spirits—that have been handed on and often restated to the present day.[152]

For the rest of his life, Antony provided spiritual direction to many. During a persecution in 311, he came into Alexandria, hoping to be martyred, and openly encouraged and supported the confessors. The authorities ignored him, and when the persecution ended he returned to his solitary cell and intensified his ascetic practices; "he was a daily martyr to his conscience."[153] To maintain solitude, he retreated to a more remote desert place. Still, other monks sought him out. Miracles, for which he took no credit, were attributed to him. When he heard that some Arians claimed his support, he again entered Alexandria, denounced the heretics, proclaimed the true faith, and calmly and joyfully dealt with the crowds who wanted to see him. Then he again sought solitude, but many sought him out until at last he died.[154]

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150. See St. Jerome, *The Life of Paulus, the First Hermit,* in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* ser. 2, 6:299-303.

151. See St. Athanasius, *The Life of Antony,* trans. Robert T. Meyer, Ancient Christian Writers, vol. 10 (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1950), 18-33.

152. Ibid., 33-57.

153. Ibid., 60.

154. Ibid., 60-97.

Antony's aim was simply to be a thoroughgoing Christian by using radical means to detach himself from the world and the flesh, and to defeat the devil. Still, he accepted God's plan for his life as it unfolded, and thus performed a unique service for the entire Church—the service of modeling in a stark way many features of consecrated life. Not least of these is to become a spiritual parent by providing others with wise moral and spiritual advice and guidance drawn from Scripture, credible by one's having lived it. Thus, though he never headed a community, Antony was regarded as a great abbot because so many adopted him as their spiritual father.

Like Antony, some Christians always have been called to eremetical life—a consecrated life of prayer and austerity in great solitude. Having *withdrawn* from human association, such hermits sometimes are called "anchorites" or "anchors" and "anchoresses" (from a Greek stem signifying *to retire, to withdraw*). Instead of retiring into the desert, most have lived in cells near a supportive community.[155] But, like Antony, they have served the Church by bearing striking witness to the kingdom and becoming mothers or fathers of many spiritual children.

The 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, c. 603, takes account of the ongoing practice of eremitical life:

> §1. In addition to institutes of consecrated life, the Church recognizes the eremitic or anchoritic life by which the Christian faithful devote their life to the praise of God and the salvation of the world through a stricter withdrawal from the world, the silence of solitude, and assiduous prayer and penance.
>
> §2. A hermit is recognized by law as one dedicated to God in consecrated life if he or she publicly professes in the hands of the diocesan bishop the three evangelical counsels, confirmed by vow or other sacred bond, and observes a proper program of living under his direction.

Thus, an unmarried, adult Catholic can undertake eremitical life without any formalities, but official recognition requires both profession of the counsels "in the hands of" one's bishop and obedience to him in the shaping of one's life.[156]

With the end of persecution in fourth-century Egypt, Christian communities relaxed and became less conducive to ascetical life. Increasingly, those deeply committed to it were moved to imitate the bloodless martyrdom of hermits like Antony. Many young men went into the desert, where they established camps or small settlements around notably holy, older men, from whom they sought advice to prepare for eremetical life.

Then as now, however, a life of great solitude has drawbacks and pitfalls for most Christians. Alone, one easily becomes self-satisfied and blind to one's defects, and most people acquire polished virtue only by rubbing against others. So, most need ongoing

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155. A well-known example is the Englishwoman called "Julian of Norwich" (1342 to c. 1420), whose cell was attached to the parish church of Ss. Julian and Edward; see J. Walsh, "Julian of Norwich," *NCE,* 8:48-49. For a detailed treatment of some eleventh and twelfth-century examples, see Sharon K. Elkins, *Holy Women of Twelfth-Century England* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 19-42, 150-60.

156. *CCEO*, cc. 481-85, deal with eremetical life but only insofar as it can be an option for monks, who can undertake it (as monks in the West also sometimes do) with the permission of their superiors.

help in Christian formation, which, if authentic, is lifelong conversion. Then too, good resolutions are more likely kept if a group makes and fulfills them together. Moreover, most people sometimes need others' care simply to survive.

2) From the first monastic communities to St. Benedict

St. Pachomius (c. 290-346) came to see that many who enjoy the charism for consecrated life could fulfill their vocation only in an organized community. Born of pagan parents, Pachomius was drafted for military service (c. 312). When he and other conscripts were detained at Thebes, charitable citizens fed them. Pachomius wondered why, and fellow conscripts explained: "They are Christians, and they treat us with love for the sake of the God of heaven," or, according to a different account: they "do good to everyone, putting their hope in him who made heaven and earth and us men." He therefore prayed to the Christian God, seeking deliverance and promising lifelong service to others. Soon released from military service, he obtained Christian instruction in a poor village, was baptized, and began fulfilling his promise by serving those in need, especially the sick. Numerous people were attracted to the village and to Pachomius. Meeting their needs kept him busy but it also left him somehow dissatisfied. So, after three years, he left the village to be formed in a more ascetic way of life by an elderly hermit, Palamon, who cared enough to demand the younger man's very best. Pachomius emulated Palamon as the two lived, prayed, and worked together for about seven years.

While working and praying one day near a deserted village, Pachomius asked what Jesus wanted him to do. No doubt he was still determined to keep his original promise. A voice told him to build a monastery there for the many who would come, be monks with him, and benefit their souls. Initially, he seems to have relied on providing a model for others as Palamon had for him, serving them generously, and living together by consensus. But after about five years, he realized that the community he wished to form had to be organized, with a definite program and firm leadership. So, he began to receive only those ready to renounce the world completely, share in common necessary material goods obtained by their labor, and live together according to a program he set out.

Still, Pachomius remained the unselfish servant he had always meant to be and by then had learned how to be. His program was based on Scripture, not least the model community described in Acts, where believers were "of one heart and soul" (Acts 4.32). His aim was for all the members of the community "to govern each other in the fear of God." Thus, far from being authoritarian, he helped those he received learn how to live the gospel's truth in a covenantal community based on mutual commitment to one another's true welfare and mutual support in ongoing personal conversion.

At first, he established a single monastery, of which he was the superior, but as the community grew he set up distinct houses within it, each with twenty or more monks, and appointed a prior in each. Soon, one monastery was not enough, so he established more, each with its own superior under his general supervision. Eventually, there were nine for men and two for women. There were more than three thousand monks and nuns at the time of Pachomius's death and twice that number by the end of the fourth century.

Those who wished to join were kept waiting a few days, then asked if they could leave their property and families. They also were informed about the monastery's life and rules, so that they realized that in entering they would be undertaking to obey and giving up much of their autonomy. Even pagans and Christians who were far from holy could be admitted, but readiness to change and commitment to seek holiness according to the monastery's program were essential. Postulants began at once to learn Scripture texts and prayers; if necessary, they were taught to read, because their main, even constant, activity would be prayer, which chiefly meant reading, reciting, and reflecting on biblical texts.[157]

The individuality of someone admitted to the monastery was veiled. Everyone wore the same simple clothing and occupied a "cell"—a small, private room, which nobody visited without permission, where the occupant prayed as much as possible and slept no more than necessary. The whole monastery gathered for morning and evening prayer, the main meal at midday, a light meal in the evening (except on fast days), catechesis by Pachomius (or the monastery's superior), and the Eucharist on Sunday and certain other days. The diet was simple—bread, vegetables, fruit, and cheese—but the sick were coddled with soup, fish, and perhaps meat. The monks ate in silence and avoided looking at one another.

The rest of their time was spent with their housemates, mostly in silent prayer and work, usually both simultaneously. Some work was in the monastery: weaving baskets, mats, ropes; baking, preparing meals, other housekeeping; caring for the sick. Other jobs were outside: farm labor, various trades and crafts; marketing the monastery's products and buying needed items. The monastery's superior assigned work and rotated assignments insofar as feasible. In the evening, the prior of each house led a discussion of the catechesis that had been given and perhaps added to it; discussion of the prior's catechesis was encouraged.[158] Those working outside the monastery interacted with outsiders by working alongside them or in other ways, but no one ever left the monastery alone. Nor did someone who had been in the outside world talk about it. Permission might be granted to visit a sick relative, but probably not to attend a funeral. Visitors, including family members, were welcome but ate separately. Visiting clerics were honored and could pray with the community, but clerics who wished to join the community had to meet the same conditions as others and, if admitted, were treated like everyone else. Pachomius thought monks should not seek ordination, because "the clerical dignity is the beginning of a temptation to love of power."[159]

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157. See Philip Rousseau, *Pachomius: The Making of a Community in Fourth-Century Egypt* (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1985), 57-76. Relevant source materials are available in the three-volume collection: *Pachomian Koinonia*, Cistercian Studies, 45-47, trans. Armand Veilleux (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1980-82).

158. See Rousseau, op. cit., 77-86.

159. Ibid., 170; for other points in the paragraph, see 149-73. When a bishop wanted to ordain Pachomius, he refused, and Athanasius said approvingly: "You chose for yourself that which is better and which will always abide in Christ!" (162). Authentic Christian community will remain when sacraments are no longer necessary.

Pachomius's program was not meant to depersonalize those who came to him but to promote their inner peace and genuine freedom, and to help them form a true Christian community, whose members would bear one another's burdens, fulfill Christ's law, and grow in holiness by their asceticism and prayer. He sought intelligent and fully voluntary cooperation, not unthinking adherence to rules. Loving, perceptive, and considerate, Pachomius himself led by example and taught the superiors he appointed to do the same. They were to act in accord with Scripture and the rule, not arbitrarily. Conditions of life and work were moderate, so that most community members could meet them and choose forms of self-denial they judged appropriate. Superiors were to cater for the special needs of the sick and the elderly, while avoiding unfair discrimination. The rule provided ways of resolving disputes with priors and even appealing their decisions, and they were held responsible for correcting their charges' faults. Indeed, Pachomius encouraged all members of the community to look after one another, including being one another's keepers with respect to all the requirements for holiness; and he found a place in those requirements for every genuine human need.

Since ignorance and weakness accounted for most shortcomings, he prescribed that superiors warn often and use discipline only when necessary, mainly with verbal rebukes. The aim was to instruct and strengthen; he wanted offenders, not merely to fear and submit to their superiors, but to fear God, to understand the right and holy, to be honest with themselves, and to become pure of heart. The first response to even serious misbehavior was to counsel the wrongdoer. When necessary, punishment might be isolation in one's cell, perhaps for several days, and a diet of bread and water. But because the objective was spiritual healing—wholehearted repentance and growth in holiness—expulsion from the community was a last resort even in the case of the seemingly hardhearted. Considering themselves responsible to Christ for everyone in the community and believing God's converting grace can be freely accepted by any sinner, Pachomius and other superiors sometimes promoted a member's repentance by themselves fasting for days or keeping vigil for many nights.[160]

Among the generic forms of consecrated life recognized by the Church, the religious life in community that Pachomius initiated soon became predominant and still remains so. Like those who chose other forms of consecrated life, his spiritual sons and daughters have pursued holiness by a program of asceticism and prayer precluding marriage. But although religious life has taken different specific forms, all have included living in a stable community, forgoing individual ownership of material goods, and obeying a rule and superiors' decisions.

In Syria and elsewhere in the Near East, monastic life began independently. When St. Basil the Great (c. 329-379) and some of his relatives and friends were drawn to ascetical life, he first visited Syria, Palestine, and Egypt to learn about developments there, then founded a monastery different from Pachomius's in some important ways.

Like Antony and Pachomius, Basil was only interested in living the gospel perfectly. His sources for understanding the gospel included the whole New Testament, not just

160. Ibid., 87-148.

certain favorite texts, and also the practices of the Church. Thus, he took into account Paul's teaching that Jesus' disciples are to use their diverse gifts in building up his one body. That had at least three implications. First, monastic life is only for those with the charism for it, not for every Christian. Basil therefore required both a period of probation before a candidate was received and a public profession of celibate chastity as the way by which those who proved fit entered the monastery. While entertaining the possibility that married people might enter, he made it clear that they could not do so without their spouses' consent. Second, monasteries should be fully integrated into the rest of the Church. So, Basil rejected eremitical life in principle. Although he does not criticize Antony, one cannot imagine Basil absenting himself from the Eucharist for years, and, unlike Pachomius, he accepted ordination. Basil also attached to his monastery facilities for educating the young and helping the needy. Third, even within the community, members should use their gifts to do the work for which they are best fitted. So, although Basil valued obedience no less than Pachomius, he thought that the rule and superiors could not rightly demand more of anyone than God's law and the community's common good required. He also kept foundations small so that members could pursue their own holiness and promote that of others in and by close, personal relationships. The community prayed the hours of the divine office but also allowed for its members' personal recollection. And while manual work remained important, Basil provided for the use of intellectual gifts.[161]

Basil's elder sister, St. Macrina the Younger (their grandmother was St. Macrina the Elder), and their younger brother, St. Gregory of Nyssa, participated in his foundational work. Macrina, who was brilliant and well educated, contributed significantly to the education and spiritual formation of her younger brothers, as Gregory's brief life of her attests. She guided their mother, Emmelia, to consecrated widowhood, and the two women collaborated with Basil in founding the monastery. When Emmelia died, Macrina became prioress, and after Basil became bishop, she probably was the de facto leader of the monastic community. Gregory also wrote a theological dialogue between the dying Macrina and himself, *On the Soul and Resurrection,* in which she is the *magistra* and he the humble student.[162] Macrina and Gregory—she certainly and he probably—deserve to share credit for the ingenious and wise rule historically attributed to Basil alone.

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161. See St. Basil the Great, *The Long Rules,* in *Saint Basil: Ascetical Works,* trans. M. Monica Wagner, C.S.C. (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1950), especially 247-52, 259-61, 262-63, 264-68, 286-87, 306-11, 314-20 (rules 7, 10, 12, 15, 24, 37, 41-43); Bouyer, op. cit., 331-41. On Basil's requirements of probation and profession, see Wolfgang N. Frey, O.S.B., *The Act of Religious Profession: A Brief Historical Synopsis and Commentary* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1931), 15-17. Frey explains (33) that Basil, regarding Catholic monastic profession as quasi-consent to marry Christ, holds that it (but not a religious undertaking of virginity/celibacy made before becoming a Christian) invalidates a subsequent attempt to marry and causes the unfaithful virgin's intercourse to be adultery. Philip Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 190-232, offers a helpful summary of Basil's relevant work, together with some historical background.

162. See J. P. Kirsch, "Macrina the Younger, St.," in *Catholic Encyclopedia,* 9:508; *The Life of Saint Macrina* and *On the Soul and the Resurrection* in *Saint Gregory of Nyssa: Ascetical Works,* trans. Virginia Woods Callahan (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1967), 161-272.

Eremitical life remained strong in the East even though Basil rejected it. But his practical regulations did much to shape Eastern monastic communities. His ideas, made available in Latin by Rufinus of Aquileia, also greatly influenced Western monasticism.[163] Athanasius, while exiled in the West (335-37 and 339-46), spread news about Egyptian monasticism.[164] But it was John Cassian (c. 360-432) who became the great purveyor of Eastern monastic spirituality in the West.

Born in the East, Cassian entered a monastery in Bethlehem, spent about a decade in Egypt gathering wisdom from monks, went to Constantinople where St. John Chrysostom ordained him deacon, traveled to Rome on Chrysostom's behalf, and was there ordained presbyter. Finally, he went to Marseilles (c. 414), where he founded two monasteries, one for men and one for women, and set out in two works what he had learned in Egypt about monastic life.[165] Containing many helpful truths and being very readable, these works spread widely and greatly influenced consecrated life up to the present day. However, they also contain serious mistakes: (1) the view, derived from neo-Platonism, that growth in holiness requires renunciation of the things of this world; and (2) a conception of the relationship between grace and free choice subsequently condemned as semi-Pelagian.[166]

St. Eusebius (d. 371), a member of the Roman clergy who became bishop of Vercelli (c. 344), adapted monastic discipline for the community in which he lived with his clergy.[167] When St. Augustine (354-430) became bishop of Hippo (396), he developed that form of monasticism by requiring his clergy to live with him in community under a rule and to share material goods. By combining monastic life with clerical ministry, these communities' members were bound together by a charity specifically pastoral.[168] Augustine also provided guidance for a group of religious women, and relevant writings believed to be his were later identified as *The Rule of St. Augustine*.[169] His ideas shaped, among other groups of religious, the Canons Regular of St. Augustine, a

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163. Bouyer, op. cit., 341. See M. Simonetti, "Rufinus of Aquileia," *NCE,* 12:702-4, regarding one way in which Basil's program reached the West. Benedict explicitly mentions Basil in the final chapter of his rule, and many passages seem to reflect his influence, though scholars disagree about its extent.

164. See C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages,* 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 1989), 13.

165. John Cassian,*The Conferences,* Ancient Christian Writers, 57, trans. Boniface Ramsey, O.P. (New York: Newman Press, 1997); *The Institutes,* Ancient Christian Writers, 58, trans. Boniface Ramsey, O.P. (New York: Newman Press, 2000).

166. See P. Chiovaro, "Cassian, John (Johannes Cassianus)," *NCE,* 3:181-83; Bouyer, op. cit., 500-510. On Evagrius Ponticus (345-99), who influenced Cassian, see Bouyer, op. cit., 380-94, and M. J. Higgins, "Evagrius Ponticus," *NCE,* 5:644-45. He became a cleric in Constantinople, later entered a monastery in Jerusalem, and finally became a monk in Egypt, where he made questionable use of Origen's thought in developing a theology and a form of monastic mysticism imbued with neo-Platonism. Bouyer says (394): "It is most remarkable . . . that certain of the works [including those of Cassian] which exercised the greatest influence on the later development of monasticism and its spirituality accepted as a whole, often without knowing it, the entire framework of Evagrius' thought."

167. See V. C. de Clercq, "Eusebius of Vercelli, St.," *NCE,* 5:637. For a time, Eusebius was exiled in the East; he may have got the idea for his monastery there and carried it out when he returned (c. 363).

168. See Bouyer, op. cit., 498-99.

169. See J. J. Gavigan, "Augustine, Rule of St.," in *NCE,* 1:1059-60.

very large family that developed early in the second millennium and flourished for several centuries.[170]

Generally, however, Western monasticism began as a lay movement. Instead of continuing to live with their families, ascetics began sharing common quarters. St. Augustine, while in Milan and Rome after his baptism (c. 387), observed true monastic communities of men and of women. About the latter, he says: they "live together in great numbers as widows or virgins, gaining a livelihood by spinning and weaving, and presided over in each case by a woman of the greatest judgment and experience, skilled and accomplished not only in directing and forming moral conduct, but also in instructing the understanding." Members lived austerely, but Augustine emphasizes that their asceticism was within reasonable limits and that they were very anxious to practice mutual charity.[171]

In Ireland, too, monasticism began as a lay movement. St. Patrick (c. 389-461) not only established churches and ordained bishops and priests to care for them but fostered monasticism, and it quickly flourished. In his *Confession,* he rejoices at the many men and even more numerous women who had become monks or virgins.[172] Rather than living in monasteries, consecrated women initially lived in their own homes or formed small communities that did charitable works and assisted the clergy, some of whom also formed small communities. But by the end of the fifth century, St. Brigid, a consecrated virgin against her parents' wishes, established her monastery at Kildare.[173] By then, there also were monasteries of men, some of whom must have been priests or bishops who ministered to their communities, probably in some cases serving as abbots. In any case, during the sixth century, Saints Finnian, Columba of Iona, Comgall, Kevin, and other monks, all of them ordained, founded more than one hundred monasteries.[174] The Irish monks strongly embraced the view that life should be a bloodless martyrdom. Their program was very demanding; extreme forms of mortification were practiced; and severe corporal punishments were prescribed for many faults, even slight ones.[175]

The great zeal manifested by this asceticism transformed Irish monasticism into a new form of consecrated life, whose apostolate included evangelization and pastoral service. Some Irish monks carried their Christian faith and monasticism abroad. St. Columban (c. 540-615) is the most famous. Sent with twelve companions as missionaries to Gaul (c. 591), Columban founded several monasteries in Burgundy before being expelled for teaching the truth about a king's sexual misbehavior. He ended his life at

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170. See J. C. Dickinson, "Canons Regular of St. Augustine," *NCE,* 3:62-64.

171. See *On the Morals of the Catholic Church,* i, 33, in *Basic Writings of Saint Augustine,* ed. Whitney J. Oates (New York: Random House, 1948), 1:352.

172. See John B. Ryan, S.J., *Irish Monasticism: Origins and Early Development* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1931), 82-92.

173. See ibid., 93, 134-36. Ryan argues (142-44) that it was a double monastery: the women under the abbess and the men under the bishop/abbot, with the two groups carefully separated but following the same plan of life and worshipping together in a partitioned church.

174. See J. Ryan, "Monasticism, Early Irish," *NCE,* 9:1048-49.

175. See Ryan, *Irish Monasticism,* 278-85, 327-403.

Bobbio, Lombardy, in another monastery he had founded.[176] Most of the monks and nuns who contributed to that missionary work did so not by traveling about and preaching but by staying in their monasteries and making them centers from which Christianity and its culture spread through entire nations.[177]

Simultaneously, monks who remained in Ireland brought about a development unparalleled in the Church before or since: the monasteries increasingly supplied pastoral care to the faithful, and the nonmonastic hierarchy and clergy faded. Some abbots became bishops and reorganized their dioceses on a monastic basis, but sometimes an abbot—or, in Brigid's case an abbess—headed a local church, with someone else ordained bishop solely to provide services that required episcopal ordination.[178] Monastic oratories became parish churches, and monasteries, in which learning flourished beyond that necessary to read Scripture and participate in the liturgy, operated schools.[179]

Together with monasticism, another form of consecrated life developed in Ireland: penitential groups—devout people who committed themselves to ongoing conversion—associated with monasteries and churches. By a promise, laymen and laywomen permanently bound themselves to the "order" of penitents, which precluded marriage or, for the married, required complete abstinence. Although penitents remained in the world, often in their own homes, they lived frugally and devoted themselves to following the liturgy and private prayer. These groups of Irish penitents clearly were neither mere pious associations nor monastic communities.[180]

St. Benedict (c. 480-547), after being educated in Rome, living in solitude, and leading other communities, founded the monastery atop Monte Cassino for which he drafted and polished the rule that made him famous. Several monastic rules and other relevant literature, including Cassian's works, were available. Benedict obviously studied and drew on all those materials.[181] But he knew how to write clearly and concisely, and had learned from his experiences, matured in holiness and wisdom, and reflected long and well. His effort met the need for a monastic rule far better than others, and *The Rule of St. Benedict* came to form monastic life throughout the West.[182]

The Benedictine form of consecrated life is that of a family, alive in Christ, whose members are always learning to follow the Lord more perfectly.

The abbot is called to be the father. Regarded as Jesus' representative, he serves for life and is responsible to the Lord for his monks. He should know them personally and

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176. See Lawrence, op. cit., 41-56.

177. See Jean Leclercq, François Vandenbroucke, and Louis Bouyer, *History of Christian Spirituality*, vol. 2, *The Spirituality of the Middle Ages* (London: Burns and Oates, 1968), 58-59.

178. See Ryan, op. cit., 97-133, 167-90, 275-76. Lawrence, op. cit., 48-49, partly explains this development by the sociopolitical structure of sixth-century Ireland.

179. See Ryan, op. cit., 365-83.

180. See Leclercq, Vandenbroucke, and Bouyer, op. cit., 49-51.

181. In *Rule*, Benedict includes (ch. 42) Cassian's *Conferences* and includes (ch. 73) both it and *Institutes* in short lists of works recommended for refectory reading (ch. 42) and for monks who are progressing in virtue (ch. 73).

182. See Bouyer, op. cit., 511-22.

love them equally, find appropriate ways to form and guide each personality, teach them primarily by example—and so must himself obey the rule perfectly—and let nothing prevent him from helping each monk follow Christ to eternal life (ch. 2). He should be firm about what is good for his monks but not domineering; hating their sins but treating them mercifully, not rigorously; neither disappointing the strong nor dismaying the weak.

The choice of a new abbot normally involves the entire community, but is subject to oversight by the bishop and the abbots of nearby monasteries (ch. 64). The abbot appoints, removes, supervises, and directs various subordinate superiors; they are his assistants, answerable to him in everything, with no independent authority (chs. 21, 31, 65, 66).

God's law and the rule must shape the abbot's decisions. On important matters, he will call the whole community together and listen to everyone's advice; on lesser matters, he will consult the senior members. Then, considering everything carefully, he must decide fairly, and everyone must listen to him and cooperate (ch. 3). Obedience is essential for the community's welfare and for the complete submission of each one's will to God. Obedience therefore must not be legalistic and grudging, but eager and generous (ch. 5), and Benedict warns repeatedly against murmuring. Monks are to obey not only the abbot but one another (ch. 71).

Of course, obedience is voluntary inasmuch as a monk always could leave if he chose (ch. 58). Discipline is enforced with a graded series of sanctions, including corporal punishment; the severest, to be used only as a last resort, is expulsion. In disciplining, superiors should take into account relevant individual differences. Even monks who leave voluntarily or are expelled can be readmitted, if suitably disposed, not once but twice (chs. 23-30, 44-46).

Silence is prescribed for the sake of recollection and to avoid sins of word (ch. 6); the requirement is stringent at night (ch. 42), in the oratory, which is solely for prayer (ch. 52), and during meals, when only the voice of an appointed lector doing assigned readings or a superior giving a brief moral exhortation should be heard (ch. 38). Austerity in food and drink is moderated by considerations of health and the needs of the weaker; here, too, differences among individuals are taken into account—for instance, the sick may eat the meat of quadrupeds (chs. 36-37, 39-40). Adequate clothes and bedding are provided; they are given to the poor before they are worn out (ch. 55). Monasteries are to be as self-contained as possible, so that monks will not need to go out; if there is to be any going out, the abbot's permission is required (chs. 66-67).

The most important monastic work is prayer, primarily the Divine Office (Liturgy of the Hours), for which Benedict provides a detailed program. The entire Psalter is to be chanted each week, with psalms and canticles distributed to appropriate hours and days. This *work of God* is to be done with great reverence and from the heart; its content is to be appropriated by brief, intense, personal prayer (chs. 8-20, 43). Monks also are to practice *lectio divina*—primarily, a meditative reading of Scripture with a view to accepting what the Spirit wishes to give. Besides their various forms of prayer, monks are to occupy themselves with craftsmanship or manual labor, which includes a turn at kitchen and laundry service for all but those with more important responsibilities (chs.

35, 48, 57, 73). The daily schedule apparently allows about eight hours sleep, and hardly seems burdensome.

Benedict deals in a single chapter (58) with incorporating new brothers into the monastery. He assumes they will be attracted, not recruited. Those seeking entrance are not welcomed with open arms but put off for awhile, then at first treated as guests. Those who persist are accompanied by a novice master, without coddling, in a year-long process of mutual discernment. He carefully checks their intentions and dispositions, and they learn what joining really would entail. The rule is read three times to a novice during that year, and each time he must choose between accepting it and leaving.

If the joint discernment so indicates, the novice then makes his commitment. In the oratory, before God and the whole community, he solemnly promises God and the saints, and at the same time also promises the abbot and the community, to remain with the community until death ("stability"), to be faithful to its monastic lifestyle (*conversatione morum suorum*), and to obey its superiors. He then places these promises, written and signed, on the altar, and three times chants: "Receive me, Lord, according to your promise and I will live. Do not disappoint me in my hope" (Ps 119.116). The community echoes his petition, adding the *Gloria Patri.* Finally, he prostrates himself at the feet of each of the brothers, who prays for him. Now he has become a member of the monastic family.

Benedict significantly adds that, if the new brother owned anything, he should have already given it to the poor or bound it over to the monastery, reserving nothing at all for himself. For "he knows that from now on he has no power even over his own body." The new brother at once changes into the monastery's habit, and his own clothes are stored away. Benedict ends the chapter by explaining that if the brother ever leaves, he will give up the habit and be expelled in the clothes with which he entered. "Yet he will not get back that document [petitionem] of his, which the abbot took up from the altar; instead it will be kept in the monastery."[183]

The bond the monk has formed is a covenant both with the monastic community and with God. While the two relationships are completely integrated, they can be distinguished in thought.

Just as the marital covenant formed by mutual consent is sealed by the intercourse that consummates the marriage, the bond between each monk and the community formed by his profession in accord with the Rule is sealed by two cooperative acts: first, the individual's and community's "Receive me, Lord," by which they join in giving themselves to God for his glory; second, the new monk's humbly seeking the spiritual support of each of his brothers and their supporting him with their prayers. The latter act is the first realization of the monks' mutual undertaking to help one another live out their personal commitments to God. The covenantal commitment is not negative—to renounce worldly goods—but affirmative: to live faithfully until death as the whole monastic family does, having no agenda of one's own but cooperating in the life shaped by the

183. On the interpretation of ch. 58, see Terrence G. Kardong, *Benedict's Rule: A Translation and Commentary* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1996), 462-85.

abbot with the community's advice. However, having formed a covenantal bond with his monastic family, a faithful monk could not marry or exercise the autonomy implied in owning personal property. So, there is no need to renounce marrying by a commitment of chastity, and the Rule therefore makes no mention of such a thing. Also, while it has norms about material goods (chs. 32-34, 46, 54-55, 58-59), it treats poverty as a presupposition of monastic life (ch. 58).

The covenant is also with God. In making his profession in accord with the Rule, a man makes three specific commitments and undertakes to live an evangelical life (see **A-9,** above) shaped by them—the life to which he is convinced God has called him. The thrice-repeated "Receive me, Lord" expresses profession's integral meaning: that the new brother has thereby entirely bound himself over to God. Like people who sell themselves into slavery, he no longer has power over his own body, as Benedict points out. Therefore, no longer may he keep anything he previously owned; no longer may he marry and have children; no longer, even for a moment, may he rightly do just as he pleases. Until death, his real family will be the monastic community; anything he receives or earns will belong to it, and its goods will meet his needs; all his time and energy will be used in cooperating with his brothers, under their abbot's headship, in serving the Lord. That an unfaithful monk must take his leave without the written and signed document containing his promises signifies that, although he can give up what he received *after* making his commitment—the habit, which manifested his good standing in the monastic family that reluctantly marks his departure—he cannot retract his solemn promise to God and his promise to the community.[184]

Benedict plainly assumed that the monastic community, like a Christian family, should treat outsiders not only fairly but with charity. Jesus' "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Mt 25.35) shapes the Rule's norms for humbly and generously treating guests with the respect and concern due Jesus himself (chs. 53, 56, 61). That hospitality, at first mainly for traveling monks and pilgrims, gradually was extended to the destitute and the sick; many monasteries not only operated infirmaries for their own members but hospitals for outsiders.[185]

Still, the Rule focuses on the pursuit of holiness by asceticism and prayer, and does not direct the monks to undertake any apostolic works or clerical services to benefit outsiders. Benedictine monasteries did eventually develop a splendid educational apostolate, the seed of which may have been Benedict's wrongheaded provision for parents to deliver their little boys to the monastery as an offering to God; but the monks' care and education of those children was not an apostolate toward outsiders, since the children at once became little monks, with the same obligation to remain in the community as adults who had made their own profession (ch. 59).[186]

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184. Although it is true that Benedict does not use the word *vow,* making the profession plainly is vowing stability, *conversatione morum suorum,* and obedience.

185. See E. Nasalli-Rocca, "Hospitals, History of," *NCE,* 7:160.

186. On the later history of child oblation, see Derek G. Smith, "Oblates in Western Monasticism," *Monastic Studies,* 13 (1982):50-54. L. E. Boyle, "Oblates," *NCE,* 10:610, states that by the twelfth century, child oblation had almost ended, and the legal schools taught that a valid act of oblation or profession

Similarly, many Benedictine monks eventually were ordained for clerical ministry in parishes, and the seed of that may have been the Rule's- provisions for receiving clerics as monks and having monks ordained for service within the monastery; but those provisions in themselves are concerned entirely with the cleric-monks' and monastery's welfare (chs. 60, 62).[187]

Benedict's twin sister, St. Scholastica, probably was a consecrated virgin. She established a women's monastery near Monte Cassino, conversed with her brother from time to time, and is considered the foundress of the Benedictine nuns. Although no biography of her has come down to us, there is a brief but telling story in St. Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* about the final meeting of the two, in a house between their monasteries. In the evening, Benedict was about to leave; Scholastica asked him to remain through the evening. He refused; she prayed, and a violent storm prevented his departure. Offended, he prayed that the Lord would forgive her. She replied: "I asked a favor of you, and you refused it. I asked it of God, and he has granted it." Shortly after, Scholastica died, and Benedict had a vision of her soul entering heaven. He buried her in the grave he had prepared for himself and directed that he be buried with her.[188]

Many monasteries existed in the West by Benedict's time, and more were founded after his death. Irish monasticism, mentioned above, is only part of the movement; there were numerous foundations in Gaul, Italy, Spain, and northern Africa. Within forty years of Benedict's death, his foundations were destroyed by Lombard invaders, but the monks escaped to Rome, and Benedict's Rule began to become known. One important means for bringing that about was the mention of the Rule in the admiring account of Benedict's life and miracles that Gregory the Great, who had been a monk, included in book two of his *Dialogues* (c. 593).

3) From St. Benedict of Aniane to the Hospitallers of St. John

The fame of the Rule of St. Benedict spread in other ways, too. In the ninth century, Charlemagne and Louis the Pious strongly promoted its adoption as part of an effort to renew and regulate monasteries within their jurisdiction. They put St. Benedict of Aniane (c. 750-821) in charge of them, and he summoned their abbots to two meetings in Aachen (816-17), which legislated a uniform reform program.[189]

By then, most manual labor in monasteries was being done by serfs, renters, and hired hands. For their part, many monks were providing services for outsiders, such as conducting schools, engaging in missionary work, or getting ordained and providing

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could not be made before puberty, but there was no general Church law on child oblation "until the Council of Trent fixed 16 years as the minimum age of profession."

187. While underlining the specific aim of Benedictine monasticism, I also recognize its good fruits, which Pius XII praised on the occasion of the 1400th anniversary of Benedict's death: *Fulgens radiatur*, *AAS* 39 (1947) 137-55, *PE,* 232.

188. See *Dialogues*, ii, 33-34; http://www.osb.org/gen/scholast.html

189. See J. Leclercq, "Benedictine Spirituality," *NCE,* 2:285-87; S. Hilpisch, "Benedict of Aniane, St.," *NCE,* 2:280-81; Lawrence, op. cit., 19-22, 38-39, 69-81; David Knowles, *From Pachomius to Ignatius: A Study in the Constitutional History of the Religious Orders* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 6-9.

clerical ministry. Benedict of Aniane wanted monks to stop providing services, but instead of restoring manual labor, he sought additions to the Divine Office and a more elaborate celebration of it. Before his program went far, however, central government in civil society collapsed. Well endowed, enriched by donations, and wealthy in land and revenues, many monasteries attracted exploiters and thieves. Already kings and other authorities, civil and religious, had entrusted some monasteries to outside overseers or commendatory abbots—nonmembers of the community, sometimes laymen—who drained their resources. Now and for the rest of the ninth century monasteries all over the West were expropriated by warlords or plundered.[190]

In 909, William, Count of Aquitaine, established a monastery at Cluny, ensuring its independence from the local bishop and secular power by putting it under the direct protection of the Holy See. As monastic founder, William enlisted an abbot who already was directing two monasteries. He and the abbots of Cluny who followed for most of the next two and one-half centuries were pious, energetic, and creative leaders, who carried out the monastic renewal envisaged by Benedict of Aniane and worked against the control of monasteries by outsiders. They gained the support of many civil and ecclesiastical officials, including several popes, and Cluny gradually became the mother-abbey of a family of monasteries all over the West.

Some were newly founded, but many were transformed under the leadership of abbots or monks of Cluny or Cluniac monasteries. At least one thousand dependent monasteries had no abbot of their own but were priories of Cluny: their monks made their profession to Cluny's abbot, who appointed and supervised their superiors. Some Cluniac monasteries remained abbeys while conforming completely to Cluny's practices, and their abbots were nominated by Cluny's abbot or needed his confirmation. Others were associated more loosely, by either electing or being given an abbot from the Cluny family, or adopting its discipline and usages.[191]

Building on Benedict of Aniane's proposals, the Cluniac monasteries added psalms and readings to the Divine Office, multiplied celebrations—for example, by adding the office for the dead—rather than choosing between them, and introduced litanies, processions, and other elements. The oratory at Cluny was twice reconstructed to provide a more splendid setting for its increasingly elaborate liturgy. Learning the long services and singing them absorbed the lives of boy-oblates.[192] Adult monks still had some time for reading and, if they were priests, saying individual Masses for intentions specified by the monastery's financial supporters. Lay people making appropriate donations also shared in the monastery's spiritual benefits.

The point of this Cluniac monastic life was subtly different from that implicit in the first Benedict's Rule. More occupied with vocal prayer, Cluniac monks were less

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190. See Stephanus Hilpisch, O.S.B., *Benedictinism through Changing Centuries,* trans. Leonard J. Doyle (Collegeville, Minn.: St. John's Abbey, 1958), 26-45); Michael Ott, "Commendatory Abbot," *Catholic Encyclopedia,* 4:155-56.

191. See Knowles, op. cit., 10-15; Hilpisch, *Benedictinism,* 46-67; Lawrence, op. cit., 86-110.

192. Smith, op. cit., 53-54, states that the oblation formula and other documents make it clear that Cluniacs maintained that child oblates were as bound as professed adults were.

concerned with sanctifying other elements of life, such as work. The liturgy was more focused on intercession for salvation, and less on joyful praise of God. And the monastery itself became less a close-knit Christian family seeking holiness and somewhat more a band of penitent refugees from the sinful world.[193]

Even so, most Cluniac monasteries, like others, were enriched by donations of money and lands, and became too comfortable to be authentically ascetic. Thus between 1000 and 1300 a more profound reform movement spread throughout the Church. It included attempts to reform Benedictine monasticism along with the development of some non-Benedictine institutes of consecrated life.

Perhaps the most important Benedictine reform was the foundation in 1098 of a new monastery in a wooded wilderness at Cîteaux, near Dijon. The founders were St. Robert and a group of likeminded monks who had been frustrated in their effort to follow the letter of the original Rule of Benedict in their monastery at Molesme. The project of these Cistercians meant departing from Cluny's model in many ways. The abbot, as the community's father, actually lived with it. The monastery had a simpler oratory for a simplified liturgy that left time for *lectio divina* and personal prayer. Monastic solitude was maintained by choosing an isolated location, minimizing outside activities, and not making the monastery into a landed manor. Communal poverty was practiced with real simplicity and austerity. Manual labor supported the monastery. The Cistercians also refused child oblates and in other ways departed from Benedict's Rule for the sake of carrying out its central provisions.

St. Stephen Harding, abbot from 1109-33, in 1112 welcomed a young man who brought along about thirty relatives, and a few years later that dynamic monk, St. Bernard (1090-1153), established a daughter abbey at Clairvaux. Instead of following Cluny's example and making the abbot of Cîteaux supreme, these leaders invented a new constitution, the *Charta caritatis.* Each abbey remained a distinct family with its own abbot; none of the abbots headed the order. Instead, all met regularly for general chapters, which not only advised but legislated and judged. The *Charta* also required annual visitations to maintain common observance of the rule. Thus, every abbot was accountable to his peers. Bernard's great influence, not only within the Cistercians but throughout the Church, did not arise from his official position but from the power of his teachings and example. With its well-planned constitution and Bernard's prestige, the new order grew to more than five hundred houses by 1200.[194]

At first, the Cistercians made no provision for nuns. But their ideals attracted female disciples, and in 1125 some Benedictine nuns, with the cooperation of Stephen Harding, established a Cistercian monastery for women at Tart (near Dijon), whose members founded many other monasteries.[195] When the women's monasteries sought recognition under the *Charta caritatis*, Cistercian general chapters raised objections, and the nuns

193. See Lawrence, op. cit., 98-103.

194. See M. Basil Pennington, O.C.S.O., "The Cistercians," *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1994), 178-79; Knowles, op. cit., 23-30; Hilpisch, *Benedictinism,* 74-81.

195. See F. M. Gildas, "Cistercian Sisters," in *Catholic Encyclopedia,* 3:790-91.

began developing a parallel structure of their own. But the nuns' need for clerical ministry drew the two groups together, and individual abbots and abbesses developed working relationships. Cistercian nuns adopted most of the practices of the monks and followed a very similar schedule of prayer and work, but their work included sewing and the education of girls. Monasteries of women increased rapidly, and in 1213 the Cistercian general chapter finally gave the nuns the recognition they had long sought by legislating that they were to be strictly cloistered and that abbots were to oversee women's monasteries associated with their abbeys. However, that paternalistic relationship was difficult for both sides.[196]

Though the Rule of St. Benedict provides for members of only one kind, some institutes already had two: members who concentrated on various sorts of prayer and members who provided various services. In one such arrangement, the first group consisted of ordained monks and the second of lay brothers.[197] The Cistercians adopted this plan. Their lay brothers were integrated into the community by vows following a year's novitiate. They were supposed to be treated as equals, but they did not receive the same habit or participate in electing the abbot. Often more numerous than the choir monks, they had their own quarters and refectory. Drawn mainly from the peasantry and occupied with heavy work, they were generally illiterate and were forbidden to read books. When they lived on the land they worked or lived with the animals they tended, they could come to the oratory only on Sundays and feast days. So, their pattern of work and prayer was more like that of devout peasants than that of the choir monks.[198]

In another plan, a monastery founded by Robert of Arbrissel shortly before 1100, the first group was a community of nuns, and the second an adjacent community of ordained monks and lay brothers, who cared for the nuns' external affairs, protected their solitude, and supplied clerical ministry. Both groups worshipped in a single oratory. A prioress, who presided over the complex, was owed everyone's obedience, and the nuns supported their male auxiliaries.[199]

By the early twelfth century, some monasteries of nuns had groups of sisters who performed service functions and wore a distinctive habit. Like the monks' lay brothers,

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196. See Lawrence, op. cit., 227-30.

197. Thomas Aquinas Brockhaus, O.S.B., *Religious Who Are Known as* Conversi: *An Historical Synopsis and Commentary* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1946), 1-15, explains that "conversi" originally referred to monks who entered as adults and underwent conversion from worldliness to monastic life, that monasteries had long employed lay people without professing them as religious, and that eleventh-century Benedictine reformers began professing a distinct class of brothers. Being religious, those brothers obviated the need for hired hands to provide the services required to free monks to fulfill their ideal.

198. See ibid., 16-25; Brockhaus reports (28-32) that the Holy See eventually declared the Cistercian lay brothers' vows to be solemn. Also see Louis J. Lekai, S.O.Cist., *The White Monks: A History of the Cistercian Order* (Okauchee, Wis.: Our Lady of Spring Bank, 1953), 229-32; Lawrence, op. cit., 174-82.

199. See Elkins, op. cit., 57-60, regarding that monastery and daughter priories in England. St. Gilbert of Sempringham (c. 1083-1189), a British priest who himself made vows only after he retired, established and was master general of a similar complex institute, made up of convents of Benedictine nuns served by canons regular and both lay brothers and lay sisters; see ibid., 78-84, 105-17, 125-44; Lawrence, op. cit., 224-26; Knowles, op. cit., 34-36.

they were professed, but unlike other religious women, they were not held to strict cloister and sometimes conducted necessary business outside the monastery. In subsequent centuries, these serving sisters sometimes became more closely integrated with the nuns. But sometimes laywomen with only a private vow of virginity filled this role, without receiving even second-class membership in the community.[200]

The implication of such differences among professed members was that the commitment of one's entire self to God, expressed by the Benedictine "Receive me, Lord," could be carried out in entirely different ways by Christians with different gifts. That insight led Bernard of Clairvaux in 1128 to support Church approval as a monastic institute of the Knights of the Temple and to adapt both Benedict's Rule and its Cistercian practice for that singular form of consecrated life. The Templars had begun in 1119 when a group of knights vowed to protect the crusader kingdom of Jerusalem and pilgrims to the holy places; Baldwin II housed them near the temple enclosure. Crusading was understood by those most nobly committed to it as a penitential self-offering to God, and the first Templars apparently already meant to devote their lives to service as knight-monks. Their rule required monastic profession and elements of monastic life compatible with their military duties; but, like Cistercian lay brothers, they prayed less than monks typically did, and only listened to the chanting of the Divine Office and to readings. The Templars had several classes of members: the knights, an auxiliary that included men-at-arms and workers, chaplains, and, eventually, even a confraternity of married knights. Every member owed unconditional military and religious obedience to the Grand Master.[201]

While the forms of consecrated life peculiar to the Templars never became widespread in the Church, it was common throughout the second millennium for lay brothers and lay sisters—so-called to distinguish them from the choir monks and nuns—to be part of men's and women's religious communities respectively. Some communities of sisters also devoted their lives to work in male religious houses or diocesan clerical residences that otherwise might have been performed by paid housekeepers, cooks, chambermaids, and so on. Thus, dedicated, humble service has been one of the major forms of consecrated life.

Benedict's Rule (ch. 1) allowed for the possibility that a well-formed monk might undertake an eremetical life, and allowed for some solitude within the community. While there was little solitude in Cluniac monasteries and most others, Cistercian monasteries were more suited to those with eremetical tendencies. But even they hardly allowed anyone with the charism to be an anchorite to fulfill this calling. Hence, institutes developed in which common life was minimized and structured to facilitate individual spiritual growth in the greatest possible aloneness with God. That movement, already

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200. See Dismas W. Bonner, O.F.M., *Extern Sisters of Monasteries of Nuns* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1963), 3-37. Extern sisters in the modern sense—women religious with simple vows living with the nuns in a single, complex religious family—originated in the seventeenth century with the Visitation Nuns, and eventually became common in all strictly cloistered women's communities (38-50).

201. See Knowles, op. cit., 36-38; Lawrence, op. cit., 208-11.

underway in Italy before 1000, flourished both there and in France in the early centuries of the new millennium.

The Carthusians, founded by St. Bruno in 1084 and given permanent shape by Guigo, who was prior from 1109 to 1136, are an outstanding and enduring example. Except for Sundays, when the monks assembled for the liturgy, had dinner together, and conversed, they spent almost all their time praying, working, eating, and resting alone in their cells or in adjoining, small, walled-in, individual gardens. Life was very austere, and everything possible was done to forestall distractions from contemplation. As with the Cistercians, the service of lay brothers was required, and as the order expanded, the Carthusians adopted constitutional arrangements similar to those of the *Charta caritatis.*[202] Never large, this institute has through nine centuries been so faithful to its initial purpose as never to require reform.[203]

For several hundred years, the clerics attached to many cathedral churches and some other large churches had been called "canons." Drawing mainly from Benedict, St. Chrodegang (712-66), Bishop of Metz, formulated a rule for his presbyters, without imposing it. Although he recommended poverty, his rule did not exclude private ownership. It was adopted elsewhere and became one of the rules of the order of canons.[204] In general, clerics were expected to be celibate, to obey their bishops, to live in community, and to chant the Divine Office. Unlike monks, they ordinarily did not take vows, and they legitimately received stipends and owned property. These differences led the Church to consider canons and monks two separate orders.

By the beginning of the second millennium, many canons were no longer living in community, some were married, and their lives in other respects were far from edifying. They were severely criticized from the start of the reform that, beginning earlier, climaxed during St. Gregory VII's pontificate (1073-85) and continued through the first quarter of the twelfth century. Pointing to the New Testament's description of apostolic life, critics argued that many features of monastic life should be accepted by canons or imposed on them. As the reform proceeded, canons who followed a rule forbidding private property and requiring vows came to be called "canons regular" while the rest were called "canons secular."[205]

Initially, some canons regular took the New Testament's indications as their rule, but by the second quarter of the twelfth century many were following the so-called

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202. See Lawrence, op. cit., 156-63; Friedrich Kempf et al., *The Church in the Age of Feudalism,* vol. 3, *History of the Church,* ed. Hubert Jedin and John Dolan (New York: Seabury, 1980), 458-59.

203. See ibid., 459. In England, Carthusian residences were called "charterhouses." As a young man, St. Thomas More spent four years at the London Charterhouse, and eighteen of its members were martyred (1535-37); see H. Farmer, "London Charterhouse," *NCE,* 8:982-83.

204. See Leclercq, Vandenbroucke, and Bouyer, op. cit., 72-73.

205. See Lawrence, op. cit., 163-69; Idung of Prüfening, *Cistercians and Cluniacs: The Case for Cîteaux,* trans. and ed. Jeremiah F. O'Sullivan et al. (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1977), 204-7; J. Gaudemet, "Gregorian Reform," *NCE,* 6:761-65. Von Balthasar, op. cit., 292-99, argues that the canons as such, though not monks, were in a consecrated state of life (which many were not living faithfully); he implies, without asserting, that the effort to reform them erred by trying to make them into monks rather than to get them to fulfill the rule intrinsic to their canonicity.

Rule of St. Augustine. Though any rule followed by canons regular included some features of Benedict's Rule, they, unlike monks, were committed to common life for the sake of cooperating in clerical ministries, not for its own sake. This required modifying the content of monastic profession, and at least one institute of canons regular did so in 1148 by vowing celibacy, community of goods, and obedience. At the same time, many groups adopted monastic practices, like Cistercian government by confederation and general chapters.[206]

While remaining within the framework of the canons regular, St. Norbert of Xanten (c. 1080-1134) was in many ways a harbinger of thirteenth-century developments. After experiencing a profound conversion, Norbert spent some years as a hermit, and was ordained to the priesthood for his home diocese. Evidently, he meant to imitate the apostles whom Jesus sent, with practically nothing, to carry on his work. When his fellow canons spurned Norbert's apostolic vision, he gave everything to the poor and went barefoot to Pope Gelasius II, who authorized him to preach wherever he wished. For several years, he traveled about evangelizing in France until the bishop of Laon persuaded him to found a monastery nearby.

Settling with a group of disciples at Premontre in 1121, Norbert adapted the Rule of St. Augustine for a complex monastery with communities of clerics, lay brothers, and lay sisters. Other monasteries were quickly added, some of them new foundations and others attracted by Norbert's vision and leadership. Being a friend of St. Bernard and admiring the Cistercians, he organized his new order on their model but kept the focus on preaching and other active apostolic works. In 1126, Norbert was made bishop of Magdeburg and, overcoming resistance, made its clergy into Premonstratensian canons. Some other dioceses in the region followed suit. However, probably because Norbert was preoccupied with his episcopal responsibilities, the Premonstratensians as a whole did not develop into a corps of pauper preachers, and even before his death, the order began to withdraw from active apostolates into traditional monastic life.[207]

Some groups of canons over the centuries probably were assisted by groups of celibate/virginal women and men in meeting the bodily needs of members of their bishops' flocks. By 1100 and thereafter during the later Middle Ages, hospitals throughout Europe were served by communities which, while usually directed by clerics, included celibate/virginal sisters and/or brothers.[208] At least some of the nursing sisters and brothers took vows and followed the Rule of St. Augustine.

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206. See John M. Lozano, C.M.F., *Discipleship: Towards an Understanding of Religious Life,* trans. Beatrice Wilczynski (Chicago: Claret Center for Resources in Spirituality, 1989), 122-23; J. C. Dickinson, "Canons Regular of St. Augustine," *NCE,* 3:62-64.

207. See Lawrence, op. cit., 169-72; Knowles, op. cit., 32; J. R. Sommerfeldt, "Norbert of Xanten, St.," *NCE,* 10:492; R. J. Cornell, "Premonstratensians," *NCE,* 11:737-39.

208. See Lawrence, op. cit., 211-14; Nasalli-Rocca, op. cit., *NCE,* 7:159-61; L. Butler, "Hospitallers and Hospital Sisters," *NCE,* 7:155-6; Hans Wolter, in Hans-Georg Beck et al., *From the High Middle Ages to the Eve of the Reformation,* vol. 4, *History of the Church,* ed. Hubert Jedin and John Dolan (New York: Seabury, 1980), 183-87.

Blessed Gérard (c. 1055-1120), in 1099, founded the institute later called "The Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem." Earlier in the eleventh century, while the Holy Land was under Muslim rule, Amalfitan merchants had restored an ancient Benedictine monastery and hospice near the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Gérard, who probably was a Benedictine lay brother, was in charge of the men's hospice before the crusaders arrived and remained on duty during the taking of Jerusalem. Known chiefly as a humble, holy, gentle, and charitable man, he was a competent administrator as well. After the battle, he and his companions took in and cared for many sick and wounded crusaders, and the Christian rulers supported and soon greatly enlarged the facility. The institute also received other gifts of income-producing properties and quickly began to establish houses and provide services in both the crusader kingdoms and Europe. Gérard obtained a royal charter from Baldwin I in 1112 and papal approval of the order from Paschal II in 1113. Pope Pascal also took it under the Holy See's protection, confirmed its possessions, exempted it from tithing, and decreed that only professed brothers would elect Gérard's successor as the order's leader.

That successor was Blessed Raymond du Puy (c. 1080-1160). During his long tenure as Master, the order grew rapidly and became one of the best endowed organizations in Christendom. It also began participating in military actions, with the result that, although continuing to care for the sick and injured, it developed in many ways into a military order, similar to the Templars. Raymond gave the Hospitallers their first written rule or constitutions. Undoubtedly formulated and revised over many years, these probably reached their received form, in which a chapter that included both clerical and lay members endorsed them, after 1150.

Though the document has similarities to the rules of Augustine and Benedict, it also differs from both. As some canons regular were beginning to do at the time, brothers make their profession by promising three things to God: chastity, obedience to superiors, and doing without property of their own. They are to consider themselves servants of the poor and to regard the sick as their lords; therefore, they are to claim no more than subsistence and humble clothing as their due, and they are to see to it that alms are accounted for and given to the poor or else used for them. Initially, all the brothers were laymen; a bull of Anastasius IV in 1154 allowed them, among other privileges, to have their own priests as chaplains for themselves and their patients.[209]

Although changes soon occurred in the Hospitallers of St. John, during its first half-century it clearly exemplified a distinctive form of consecrated life as a society of lay faithful dedicated to a specific apostolate of charitable service which they themselves organize and carry out. Blessed Gérard's Hospitallers consecrated themselves for their service to Christ in his poor and sick members, but unlike local groups of brothers and

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209. See Edward J. King, *The Knights Hospitallers in the Holy Land* (London: Methuen, 1931), 11-63, 324-28; Gérard T. Lagleder, O.S.B., "Blessed Gérard Tonque and His 'Everlasting Brotherhood': The Order of St. John of Jerusalem," http://www.smom-za.org/bgt/index.htm. There also were Sisters of St. John, probably working in the female ward of the Jerusalem hospital in the early days, but it seems that, as the order evolved, these women became cloistered nuns; see Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Knights of St. John in Jerusalem and Cyprus (c. 1050-1310)* (New York: St. Martin's Press,1967), 240-42.

sisters who helped canons or worked under the direction of clerics in caring for the sick and the poor, and who also took vows, in providing their service the Hospitallers acted not as others' assistants but as a distinct organ of the Church competent to act on her behalf. This made them a prototype of nonclerical, religious institutes whose members' consecrated life is shaped by some specific charitable activity or activities.

Some institutes that used the original plan of the Hospitallers of St. John as their model remained truer to it than they themselves did. For example, the Order of Hospitallers of the Holy Spirit founded by Guy de Montpellier around 1180 maintained the focus of its apostolate on the care of the sick. Innocent III confirmed the order in 1198 and in 1204 called Guy to Rome to take charge of a hospital that became the model for Holy Spirit hospitals throughout Europe. Still, that institute soon began receiving clerics, who were not merely adjuncts to its lay members.[210]

4) From the Humiliati to St. Francis and St. Dominic

During the twelfth century, industry, especially weaving, increased in some places and travel became more common. Able and energetic peasants resettled in towns or along travel routes where they engaged in trades, crafts, and commerce. Many began learning to read and write, so that literate people who were neither nobles nor clerics became more numerous. At the same time, most people in the countryside had heard little or no preaching and had not been catechized. Itinerant preachers like Norbert drew crowds of curious people whose faith was immature but had not yet been subjected to sophisticated rationalizations. Clear, earnest, and detailed proclamations of the gospel moved many to apply evangelical norms to corruption in the Church and society at large as well as to their own ways of living and making their living.

The lifestyle of Jesus and the apostles, who lived in real poverty as they evangelized, and the description in Acts of the primitive Christian community inspired some people to attach themselves to evangelists like Norbert who practiced what they preached. Some laypeople committed themselves to ongoing conversion and formed penitential communities whose members prayed and fasted more than the Church required and lived more frugally than they had to. They also tried, sometimes only by their lifestyle and apostolic works but often also by explicit preaching, to spread the gospel as they had come to understand it. While most lay townspeople who took the gospel to heart led conventional domestic life, they also formed confraternities, gilds, and lodges whose objectives were simultaneously and inseparably religious and economic.[211]

This religious awakening among the laity was not in itself a form of consecrated life.[212] But it was one part of the wider *vita evangelica* or *vita apostolica* movement that

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210. See J. Daoust, "Guy de Montpellier," *NCE,* 6:869.

211. See Hans Wolter, in Hans-Georg Beck et al., op. cit., 98-106, 244-46; Lawrence, op. cit., 170-72, 231-35, 239-43; Knowles, op. cit., 41-43; E. W. McDonnell, "Beguines and Beghards," *NCE,* 2:224-26; M. F. Laughlin, "Humiliati," *NCE,* 7:234; S. Clasen, "Poverty Movement," *NCE,* 11:652-53; Y. Dossat, "Waldenses," *NCE,* 14:770-71.

212. While ascetic communities such as those of the Beguines and the Humiliati did not require vows, many members may well have permanently forgone marriage by their permanent commitment to

affected the whole Church in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. That renewed focus on the gospel ideal and desire to return somehow to the primitive Church bore both bad and good fruit. Among the good fruits were the so-called Gregorian reform, most of the institutes of consecrated life founded after the Cluniac reform, the sound preaching of itinerants such as Norbert, the readiness of many people to sacrifice themselves for God by risking their lives in the crusades or serving as lay brothers and lay sisters, steps toward an authentic lay spirituality and apostolate, increased devotion to Jesus' humanity and to Mary, and the ecclesial environment in which a new form of consecrated life, that of the mendicant orders, would take root and flourish. Among the bad fruits were the spread of heresies and of disrespect not just for corrupt officeholders but for clerical ministry itself and, at times, even for the sacraments that clerics alone could administer; and Church authorities' mistaken efforts to control some legitimate activities.

Some penitential groups, such as the Albigenses and Waldenses, either were heretical from the start or became such, but some remained in general faithful. Among the latter were the Beguines-Beghards and the less famous but more interesting Humiliati. Beginning in Lombardy well before 1200, that predominantly lay movement drew in unmarried men and women, married couples, and some clerics. Disgusted with greed and corruption in the Church, sensitive to the adverse spiritual impact of growing wealth on themselves and their neighbors, and sincerely trying to live by all the gospel's requirements, the Humiliati fasted often, talked little, refused to take oaths or fight, did manual labor (many in the wool industry), lived austerely, adopted a simple habit, and preached publicly. They performed corporal works of mercy such as caring for the sick, helping the poor, and providing jobs for the unemployed. Some of the unmarried lived in community and shared in austerity.

The Humiliati preached against both heresies and abuses within the Church. Some no doubt went too far, and, while monks were not required to take oaths, the refusal of lay people to do so posed a serious threat to the legal and social order. In 1179, Alexander III commanded them to stop preaching and in 1184 Lucius III excommunicated them along with the Waldenses. But despite refusing to take oaths and preaching without authorization, the Humiliati accepted all Catholic dogmas and essential practices. Realizing they were inadequately organized, they asked Innocent III both to reconsider their case and to help them achieve greater unity. After investigations and negotiations, he recognized their essential soundness and in 1201 approved a plan for rejoining them with the Church in a complex congregation. Its unity was ensured mainly by a Cistercian-like structure for governing all the houses of three, distinct "orders" of Humiliati. Significantly, the annual general chapter was to include representatives of all three orders, though lay members were not to deal with certain issues.

The third order consisted of lay people living in the world, most if not all of them married people living in their own homes. What they were committed to was spelled out in a papal letter addressed to them. Most of its provisions, explicitly drawn from New

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asceticism, common life, and/or apostolic services, such as preaching and/or caring for the indigent and sick.

Testament texts, reflect their desire to live in full accord with the gospel. Among them are the Golden Rule and specific precepts to do penance, to make restitution of usurious and ill-gotten gains, and to obey the leaders of the Church. A long passage on oaths argues from New Testament texts that some oaths are rightly required and must be taken, while any oath not rightly required is forbidden. Some specific norms also are laid down for the tertiaries. They are to help one another materially and support one another spiritually; avoid luxuries and distribute excess income to the poor; dress simply but not shabbily; fast on a stricter schedule than the Church generally requires and eat frugally when not fasting; say seven *Pater nosters* at each of the seven canonical hours of prayer, and the Creed at Prime. They may gather every Sunday at a suitable place to hear the word of God, and no bishop is to prevent their meetings. With the bishop's permission, they may preach exhortations to upright living and Christian piety, but not deal with the articles of faith or the sacraments.

The first and second orders were given a rule, largely common to both, adapted for them from the Augustinian and Benedictine rules. Communities of canons and nuns made up the first order; lay sisters and brothers, also living in community and mainly engaged in manual labor, the second. Members of both were professed with a vow or vows that permanently precluded marriage, though married couples who vowed permanent continence sometimes were admitted, even along with their young children. The sexes were, of course, separated within any establishment and may even have had separate chapels. But members of the first and second orders seem sometimes to have lived together under the same superiors.[213]

St. John de Matha (c. 1154-1213), a diocesan priest of Paris, founded an institute that eventually called itself "The Order of the Most Holy Trinity for the Redemption of Captives" and was devoted to the ransoming of Christians held by Muslims. The rule of the Brothers of the Holy Trinity, approved by Innocent III in 1198, manifests John's plan. The Brothers are to live in obedience to the Minister, in chastity, and without personal property. Each house can have three cleric-brothers, three lay-brothers, and a Minister; the Minister, who must be a priest, is elected by majority vote. Otherwise, the clerics and laymen are to live, pray, and work together as equals, providing pastoral services and doing works of mercy in the neighborhood. The Trinitarians' churches are to be of simple construction, and the Brothers are to live austerely. Income is to be divided into three parts: one part for the ransom of Christian captives or captives who can be exchanged for Christians, two parts for other works of mercy and the moderate sustenance of the Brothers and their hired workers. No restricted donation is to be accepted unless the donor agrees that one-third is to be used for ransom.[214]

In this new form of consecrated life, clerics and laymen became equal partners in an entity established for a specific charitable work: ransoming captives. Their other ministries and apostolates, though worthwhile in themselves, were subordinate and

213. See Frances Andrews, *The Early Humiliati* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 99-135, though some matters are treated elsewhere in the book and often repeatedly under different aspects.

214. See http://www.trinitarianhistory.org

brought the ransoming institute into contact with the Christian community that would fund its work. While the Trinitarian Rule did not require those accepted for profession to give anything to the institute, the commitment to poverty that was included in profession presupposed that the man being professed had disposed of whatever he had, and some surely did so by donating everything for ransoming captives.

St. Peter Nolasco (c. 1182-1245) and a few friends, all of them laymen, also began collecting alms to redeem captives. In 1218, Peter had an extraordinary religious experience that convinced him that he and his companions were to establish an institute of consecrated life under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary for redeeming captives. The king of Aragon and his advisers, including the bishop of Barcelona, readily accepted the plan. The group made its profession before the bishop on 10 August 1218. The institute quickly grew and received donations of income-producing property to finance its work. In 1235, Gregory IX approved the order, with the Rule of St. Augustine.[215]

The brothers of the institute, which became known as the Order of the Virgin Mary of Mercy for the Ransom of Captives, adopted a structure similar to that of the Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem and were prepared to use force, if necessary. But the Mercedarians were not a military order, because their whole focus was on a single charitable activity: ransoming captives. They gathered alms for this purpose and lived austerely to conserve resources for it. Unlike mendicants, however, they neither avoided communal ownership nor focused on evangelization. Like the early Hospitallers of St. John, they were a society of lay faithful dedicated to a specific apostolate of charitable service which they themselves organized and carried out. But they soon admitted clerics and began acquiring churches, and the clerical members took control of the institute in 1317. Its character then changed as it assumed increasing pastoral responsibilities.[216]

St. Mary Cervellon (1230-90), a Barcelona woman of noble family, became acquainted during childhood with Peter and his companions, and eventually wished to join in their apostolate. She was received as a sister of the order in 1265 and formed a community with several companions. This convent was not cloistered; its members participated in ceremonies in the order's churches and engaged in charitable works. But in 1272, the order's chapter decreed that henceforth no woman was to be received unless she could support herself living in her own house.[217]

St. Francis of Assisi (c. 1181-1226) also willingly risked his life in doing works of charity. However, his apostolic interest was focused more on evangelization than on serving other needs. In some respects the Humiliati anticipated Francis, and he might well have been acquainted with them, but their conception of poverty was not nearly as radical as his, and even if they influenced him, their transient work cannot compare with his classic masterpiece.

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215. See http://www.orderofmercy.org/HistoricalSurvey.htm.

216. See ibid.; James William Brodman, *Ransoming Captives in Crusader Spain: The Order of Merced on the Christian-Islamic Frontier* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 15-101.

217. See I, 3 and 11 at http://www.orderofmercy.org/HistoricalSurvey.htm

Francis was wellborn—his mother from a good family and his father a successful merchant—and suitably educated. As a young man, he spent freely and was a leader among his fun-loving peers, but he was also generous to the poor and concerned about the unloved. He wanted to become a knight, but, beginning in 1205, he received several "divine visitations"—experiences in which he discerned his vocation. The Lord first made Francis realize that he was not called to become a knight, next that he was to make some sort of religious commitment, and then that he was to serve the Lord and his Church in poverty that required renouncing his father and all his possessions. He found lepers repulsive but felt sorry for them, was kind to one, and experienced joy. He thought he was called to restore tumble-down churches and worked at that project. But, finally, hearing on St. Matthias's feast the reading from Matthew 10.5-14 in which Jesus sends the Twelve, with practically nothing, to announce the kingdom, Francis realized that the Lord was sending him in the same way. His vocation was clear: to help restore the Church of living stones. He was to obey literally and fully Jesus' instructions, to go about preaching, with nothing but the clothes he wore.

Having begun doing just that, Francis was soon joined by men of diverse classes, some of whom renounced greater wealth than he had. They scraped out an existence by working, not for cash but for the necessities of life, and begging as a last resort. They went about in pairs calling people to repentance and a penitential life, and generally were not well received. Following Jesus, they also helped the suffering, including lepers. Profoundly realizing that the Church is Christ's body, Francis went to Rome with his little band around 1209-10 to submit a brief "rule" he had composed of gospel passages and obtain Innocent III's approval of the band's evangelical life and service. The bishop of Assisi was supportive, for he knew Francis and his companions to be Catholic in their faith and practice, sincere in their commitment to evangelical life, and submissive to Church authority. The Pope informally approved. Francis swore obedience to him, and his companions to Francis. Calling themselves "Friars Minor" ("Lesser Brothers"), they were technically made clerics by being tonsured. Though Francis loved the Eucharist and revered the priesthood, he accepted—either then or sometime later—ordination only to the diaconate, probably to avoid the greater dignity.

The Friars Minor went back to Assisi and lived in huts around the "Portiuncula" chapel, which Francis had repaired. They carried on their good works and preaching, but now with greater success, and Francis sometimes preached in the cathedral. On the road, they accepted whatever shelter they were given. Traveling not only in Italy but Spain, the friars rapidly attracted new members, including some well-educated men and priests. New Franciscan communities were established in many towns, and the order began regularly gathering for chapters at Assisi. When, in 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council was about to forbid the founding of new orders, Francis obtained Pope Innocent's confirmation of his earlier approval of the Friars Minor. At their 1217 chapter, the friars defined provinces, appointed provincial ministers, and sent mission parties to various countries. After earlier unsuccessful attempts to evangelize the Saracens and risk martyrdom, Francis reached the Near East in 1219 and managed to preach before the Sultan, Melek-el-Kamel, who was impressed but did not become a

Christian. Since Francis was not martyred either, he returned home, safe but doubly disappointed in 1220.[218]

The Friars Minor were struggling with constitutional problems. There were many contributing factors, including the decreasing effectiveness of Francis's charismatic leadership as the order grew and became geographically dispersed, the requirements of the priest-friars' ministry, relationships with diocesan bishops and priests, the friars' needs for formation and advanced studies, and the difficulty of maintaining poverty while fulfilling other responsibilities. Solutions required compromises and a more formal rule than Francis wanted. While he participated in efforts to resolve the problems, so did others with leadership responsibilities in the order. Another central figure was Cardinal Ugolino, a strong supporter of the Friars Minor, who had become their Cardinal Protector at Francis's request. The process was painful for everyone, especially Francis. Its result was the *Regula bullata* promulgated by Honors III in November 1223. Meanwhile, Francis resigned leadership and, his health waning, withdrew into solitude.[219]

The essential features distinguishing Francis's original band from monks and canons remain in the 1223 rule. It is based on following Jesus' gospel; and real poverty, individual and communal, is maintained. The friars are to work and beg; they may not even touch money, and are not to own a house or anything else. They are to live an apostolic life in the world, and all those tested and approved by the minister general may preach wherever bishops allow it. When a candidate completes his novitiate, he irrevocably joins not a particular house but a community in principle mobile: he promises always to observe the life and rule of the Friars Minor, and never to withdraw from this brotherhood. Friars, whether clerics or laymen, share the same ministry and life. The minister general owes obedience to the pope, and all friars to the minister general.

Nevertheless, the 1223 rule begins by at best obscuring, and arguably abandoning, Francis's original, basic, affirmative commitment to follow Jesus by a formula that reduces integral evangelical life to the triad of obedience, poverty, and chastity: "The rule and life of the Friars Minor is this: to observe the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, without anything of their own, and in chastity" (ch. 1). Also, in caring for the infirm and providing adequate clothing, provincial ministers and local custodians may use the help of "spiritual friends" (ch. 4)—which opens the way to accepting and managing substantial donations, even of real estate. These specifications, along with ambiguities in the *Regula bullata's* other provisions, and issues that the rule did not address, eventually led to further conflicts and resolutions that surely would have horrified Francis.[220]

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218. For the preceding, see John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order: From Its Origins to the Year 1517* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1988), 3-31, 46-49; Lawrence, op. cit., 244-49.

219. See Moorman, op. cit., 46-61. In September 1224, Francis received the stigmata; after that, he tried to preach again, but soon had to be cared for until he died (3 October 1226).

220. See ibid., 57-58, 88-204; Lawrence, op. cit., 249-51; Knowles, op. cit., 46-48. The *Regula non-bullata* ("The Earlier Rule") and the *Regula bullata* ("The Later Rule") are in: *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, trans. and introduced Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius C. Brady, O.F.M. (New York: Paulist, 1982), 107-45. The Holy See was beginning to impose the three vows (see 109, fn. 4)

To understand St. Dominic (c. 1172-1221), one must understand Albigensianism, a complex heresy of obscure origin that flourished in southern France in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Its proponents rejected the Old Testament and claimed to recover the truth of the New, which they thought had been lost by the Catholic Church. In replacing her hierarchy, sacraments, and discipline, the Albigenses might be said to have caricatured a misunderstanding of accepted but debatable Catholic views: that worldly goods impede the exercise of charity, that those who renounce them to pursue spiritual goods are in the state of perfection, and that those who marry and have a family, own property, and participate in worldly affairs can be saved only by activities of those in the state of perfection. Those views have been misunderstood by many ill-catechized Catholic lay people to mean that the Devil regularly uses worldly goods to tempt them, that priests and religious who renounce those goods can be expected to be virtually immune from temptation and sin, and that lay people can hardly avoid sinning and can hope to be saved only by the prayers of holy nuns and the ministrations of priests, especially shortly before death. The Albigensian caricature is that so-called worldly goods are a bad god's evil creations, that those who rigorously avoid those evils after receiving *consolamentum* (the sole sacrament, which, significantly, was administered by laying on of hands) are Perfect, and that everyone else inevitably sins but can be saved by listening to the Perfect, honoring them, and receiving *consolamentum* when in danger of death—and, if death fails to come, bringing it about by starvation or poison. These bizarre ideas were attractive—to the many, of whom they asked less than Catholic faith, to those who stood to gain economically and/or politically from the downfall of the Catholic establishment, and to the Perfect, few in number, who were promised honor in this life and salvation in the next.[221]

Although Dominic's well-off parents belonged to the Castilian nobility, they were not powerful or very rich. His charitable and devout mother obviously hoped he would be a priest. For primary education, she entrusted him at seven to her brother, a priest, and at fourteen, he was sent to Palencia to study liberal arts and theology. He was ordained in 1196 for Osma. Diego d'Acebes, prior of the cathedral canons, had reformed them, and he and the bishop chose Dominic for the chapter, thus giving him experience of community and ministry as a canon regular. Diego became bishop in 1201 and took Dominic along on business trips to Denmark in 1203 and 1205. On the second trip, they met Danes who were spreading the gospel to the east. Eager to join them, Diego and Dominic went to Rome to seek Innocent III's authorization. He sent them home. Passing

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and the formula of the *Regula bullata* implies that observing the gospel requires nothing more than living according to the three vows. By contrast, Francis, in the *Regula non-bullata,* included the three in the content of profession but did not treat them as specifying the following of Jesus and his teaching; instead, obedience, chastity, and poverty were parts of the original *propositum,* namely, to obey literally and fully Jesus' instructions: "The rule of life of these brothers is this: to live in obedience, in chastity, and without anything of their own, and to follow the teaching and the footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who says: *If you wish to be perfect, go* (Mt 19:21) and *sell* everything (cf. Lk 18:22) *you have and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me* (Mt:19.21)."

221. See J. E. Bresnahan, "Albigenses," *NCE,* 1:262-63.

through southern France in 1206, they met the abbot of Cîteaux and some of his monks, who had been sent by Innocent to preach against Albigensianism. Their preaching was sound, but their well-equipped effort was not going well. Diego suggested they imitate Jesus and the apostles: go with nothing and live by people's charity. When the monks challenged him to show them how, he agreed, and everything the Castilians and the monks had with them was sent home. The small band of beggars then set to work preaching. Soon they sought and received a mandate for this work from Pope Innocent.

Diego and Dominic had learned about Albigensianism on their 1203 trip by talking with its adherents and with faithful Catholics. Dominic once spent an entire night questioning and reasoning with an Albigensian inn-keeper in Toulouse and won him over. Diego plainly realized that, unless Catholic preachers fully embraced Jesus' lifestyle, their witness would not be credible to heretics who idealized the *vita evangelica.* That not only meant going with nothing but taking seriously Albigensian beliefs and their purported ground in the New Testament, just as Jesus and Paul took seriously their opponents' beliefs and arguments. The little band therefore challenged the heretics to disputations that sometimes lasted two weeks, and sought to deal straightforwardly with their opponents' real positions and arguments.

Other priests joined the band; the Cistercian component increased for a time, then ended. In the fall of 1207, Bishop Diego went home, probably partly to get reinforcements. He also meant to seek the pope's consent to a permanent organization of preachers, something plainly needed since most priests were neither equipped nor authorized to preach and many bishops, although supposed to preach, failed to do so. But Diego died in Osma in December. Dominic, closely mentored up to that time, was on his own in his mid-thirties. He now showed himself an excellent disciple of his parents, his priest uncle, his Palencia teachers, and Bishop Diego. While making his headquarters at a nunnery which Diego had set up for women who had converted, Dominic usually was on the road, driven by love to bring the word to souls who otherwise would be lost, practicing severe asceticism, praying and preparing to preach as he trudged along, and preaching wherever he could. Some heretics, though not many, returned to the faith, and Catholics welcomed Dominic's support. He was one of the few who continued preaching even after Simon de Montfort launched a crusade against the Albigensians in 1209. Although not directly involved in that action, Dominic nevertheless was a sympathizer and provided priestly ministry to Simon and his family.

In 1213-14 Dominic was given new bases of operation by bishops who trusted him, and early in 1215 the Cardinal Legate invited him to preach in Toulouse. There, one Peter Seila not only joined Dominic and his companions but deeded property to Dominic as the head of their "house of regular life." Soon, the community was approved, authorized to preach, and given financial support by Bishop Fulk of Toulouse, whom Dominic accompanied to Rome that fall. There, with Cardinal Ugolino's help, Dominic obtained Innocent III's promise to confirm the order provided they agreed on an acceptable rule.

In 1216, Dominic and his companions, by then numbering about sixteen, agreed to the Rule of St. Augustine, to which Dominic was already committed. Since it was very

general, they needed further, specific norms. Although they could have adopted less strict ones, they accepted the austere practices of the Premonstratensians, except for the requirements of manual labor and *lectio divina*, which were to be replaced by preaching and the intellectual work required to prepare for it. For the same reason, the Divine Office was not to be done in an elaborate or drawn out manner. Among possible faults listed were some that related to teaching and study. The Premonstratensians' tie to a local church and their whole governance structure were omitted. Dominic was not prior of a local chapter of canons regular but of an order of them whose members might live and work anywhere.

By spring 1217, he had Honorius III's confirmation of the Order of Preachers and his mandate: the Friars Preachers were to take every opportunity to preach. That summer he sent most of his friars to set up houses near universities in Paris and Bologna, and in two major cities: Madrid and Rome. Some were reluctant to go; Dominic told them: "I know what I am doing." Explanations offered by biographers are that he foresaw Simon de Montfort's defeat and death at Toulouse, which would make the survival of preachers from outside the area impossible, or that he had a vision showing him what to do. Perhaps so. But he may simply have realized that the need for preaching was universal and that dispatching most of his men to found houses where there were many more potential friars was the only way to build the order so as to meet the need. During the next four years in any case, Dominic worked harder than ever. From Honorius, he obtained explicit authorization for the order's universal mission and messages urging bishops to cooperate. He received and trained dozens of men to be preaching friars, and established about twenty new houses. Traveling on foot, he visited the houses, dealt with their problems, and shaped and encouraged their life, study, and preaching. Dominic himself kept on preaching, and presided with failing health at chapters in 1220 and 1221. Even then, he resumed traveling and working, but two months later became too ill to continue and soon died.[222]

Dominic had begun the 1220 chapter by trying to resign. Then he assigned legislative power to an elected committee (*diffinitors),* which, after general discussion, drafted norms, later called "constitutions." Since the legislation did not change the Rule of St. Augustine, no approval by the Holy See was sought either for it or for later additions and revisions. Yet, like the Cistercians' *Charta caritatis,* the Order of Preachers' basic constitutions were new and unprecedented. Two fundamental decisions were that superiors can dispense from the order's law whenever adhering to it would impede study, preaching, or the benefit of souls; and that only superiors' decisions, not the order's laws, bind under pain of sin. The friar's profession would therefore simply be a promise of obedience until death to God and to the Blessed Mary and to the Prior (after 1221 called the "Master") of the Order of Preachers—obedience of course embracing the chastity and poverty that the Rule of St. Augustine required.

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222. See M.-H. Vicaire, O.P., *Saint Dominic and His Times,* trans. Kathleen Pond (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964); William A. Hinnebusch, O.P., *The History of the Dominican Order: Origins and Growth to 1500,* vol. 1 (Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1965), 13-118.

The constitutions distinguished the executive and judicial powers. Together with the Prior of the Order and his successors, the chapter was to have certain administrative functions; moreover, it was empowered to name visitators and to judge superiors, including the Prior himself. The chapter also retained, but updated, the specifications agreed upon in 1216. Regarding prayer and austerity essential in preparing to preach, it did not mitigate the monastic elements. Regarding constant intellectual formation as essential for preaching, it required that every priory include a doctor of theology. Poverty was to apply to both individuals and houses: friars may not carry money, houses may not accept revenues or income producing property, and buildings, chapels, and other things are to be unpretentious and serviceable. Plans were adopted for educating and training preachers, for preaching, for relations of itinerant preaching bands with bishops and diocesan clergy, for begging, and for doing the Divine Office.

The chapter of 1221 organized the order into twelve provinces with provincial priors, chapters, and diffinitors; it also named the first set of provincial priors. Dominic and his successors would be called "Master of the Order" and the superiors of houses "conventual priors." The general chapter retained its legislative function, but shared its other functions with the provincial chapters. By 1228, that structure of governance was completed. All preachers general—those examined and approved to carry out the order's apostolate—participated in provincial chapters. The friars as a whole directly or indirectly elected all their superiors and the diffinitors of the provincial and general chapters. The general chapter's diffinitors could correct and even remove the Master; a provincial chapter's diffinitors could correct and suspend the provincial prior, with whom the general chapter then dealt. Regular visitation was established, with the visitators indirectly elected. All who held elective office could lose it and revert to the status as those who never held it.[223]

With this structure, governance was representative enough and power was shared widely enough that those in authority were held accountable and friars had recourse. Yet the lines of authority, the powers of each office holder, and the obligations and reasonableness of obedience were clear and precise enough that the friars' common life, cooperative work of study and preaching, and other business could be carried on fairly efficiently. Arbitrary, uninformed decisions were kept to a minimum as were unreasonable submissiveness, resentful submission, rebellion, and legalistic evasion of responsibility. Unprecedented in its time, this structure of governance even today seems remarkable.

Dominic accepted poverty as essential to his commitment, but, unlike Francis, did not consider it central. For him, it was a necessary means. But contrary to what someone might conclude from the Dominican form of profession, Dominic did not give obedience the priority Francis gave poverty. Rather, obedience and the whole, unprecedented system of governance that Dominic constructed were also means. The principal

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223. See Vicaire, op. cit., 301-19, 356-67; Hinnebusch, op. cit., 80-87, 91-96, 119-33; the constitutions of 1228 are in Francis C. Lehner, O.P., ed., *Saint Dominic: Biographical Documents* (Washington, D.C.: Thomist Press, 1964), 209-51.

proximate end of Dominic's new form of consecrated life was preaching. He realized—as Francis, at least initially, did not—that it had to be a clerical ministry carried on in close collaboration with the bishops and their presbyterates, inasmuch as successful preaching reawakens or bears fruit in faith, which at once calls for sacramental absolution or baptism and the Eucharist.

Still, Francis and Dominic were much more alike than different in the new form of consecrated life they inaugurated. Both found their starting point in Jesus' sending of the apostles to preach and his instructions that they take nothing with them. Since Francis set out to restore the Church by preaching, the Friars Minor were at their inception as much an order of preachers as the Dominicans. The love of neighbor of both was pastoral love; their love of Christ, like St. Paul's, was the love of apostles for their Lord, the savior and head of the Church. The Franciscan Constitutions of Narbonne, adopted in 1260 while St. Bonaventure was Minister General, reshaped the order for clerical preaching.[224] Consequently, the commitment of the two great mendicant orders is the same: to preach in order to save souls, to cooperate with Jesus' self-sacrifice for those souls, and to glorify the Father, who wants them saved.

St. Clare of Assisi (c. 1194-1253), must have heard about Francis and listened to him for some time before talking with him, discerning that she shared his charism, and leaving her noble and well-to-do family to join him. She made her profession and was clothed in poverty on the evening of Palm Sunday 1212. The Friars temporarily lodged their new sister with nearby Benedictine nuns. Her male family members tried to bring her home, but Clare, unyielding, prevailed; and her sister Agnes, only fifteen, soon joined her. Francis prepared a place for them at San Damiano, the first of the churches he had restored, and more young ladies entered. Precisely what these Clarisses did during their first few years is unknown; perhaps they went about as a group helping people in need. Not being Friars Minor, however, they were a new institute, and in light of Lateran IV's prohibition of institutes with novel rules, San Damiano in 1215 became a monastery, with Clare as abbess and the sisters as strictly cloistered nuns. Neither having nor desiring lands or endowments, they would depend on what they could grow in their garden, earn by the work of their hands, and receive as alms. Clare promised obedience to Francis, and he promised to take care of the sisters.

For the rest of her life, Clare struggled tenaciously with popes and other Church officials for two things: evangelical poverty as Francis had helped her understand it and close bonds with the Friars Minor. Despite some temporary defeats, she generally won. Consequently, the Clarisses, cloistered but still living in Assisi and linked with Francis, were able to preach by their silence and poverty, receive the friars' support and clerical ministry, and in turn support the friars' apostolate with prayer and advice. Indeed, it seems to me that, in respect to what was most essential, Clare and her sisters, who eventually included her own mother, realized the charism they shared with Francis in a more splendid and enduring way than his own Friars did.

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224. See Moorman, op. cit., 105-54; Lawrence, op. cit., 249-51, 255-61.

On 9 August 1253, two days before she died, Clare received Innocent IV's approval of the rule she herself had prepared for her order. Ingeniously synthesizing much of the *Regula bullata* with provisions derived from Benedict's *Rule*, she produced a document clearer and more orderly than either of its sources. Unfortunately, Clare's *Rule*, which enshrined the things for which she had always fought, applied only to her own house and perhaps a few others; almost all the many other Franciscan women's communities either sought, or in any case were given, a rule less informed by the charism Francis and Clare had shared. Moreover, although Franciscan nuns were eager to receive priestly ministry from the friars and several popes wanted them to supply it, the order would not accept that responsibility, and in 1263 Urban IV told the nuns' cardinal protector to make sure each convent had a chaplain—who might or might not be a Franciscan.[225]

Cloister was not something new. Replacing desert solitude, monasteries had always offered separation from the world. Their walls were not meant to keep monks and nuns in, but to keep the world out, while the community strove to anticipate and provide a living model of the better, heavenly home. Separation also facilitated fidelity to the vows, a blessing for those who ardently desired to be faithful. While the Cistercians and Carthusians had undertaken to restore solitude by minimizing outside involvements, many other monasteries had become wealthy, walled enclaves amidst rural poverty. Clare made her urban monastery an enclave of material poverty suited to house sisters whose great wealth was to dwell in intimate communion with the poor Jesus. Clare and her sisters almost never went out or allowed an outsider to come in. Her *Rule's* silence about penalties for violating cloister indicates that there was little or no inclination to do so. Interest in observing cloister strictly can be seen in the care and detail with which she spells out its rules, including a few reasonable exceptions.[226]

Dominic established three monasteries for women, and women's foundations rapidly multiplied after his death. They followed the Rule of St. Augustine but with diverse constitutions. In 1259 the Dominican Master and general chapter, having obtained papal authorization, imposed uniform constitutions on all nuns who wished to be Dominicans. Those constitutions provided for self-government within each local community, but gave the male Dominicans' chapters and superiors authority over Dominican nuns as well. Even so, some friars resisted caring for the nuns. In 1267, Clement IV ruled that the friars must provide the priestly ministry the nuns needed and also should conduct visitation of their monasteries, discipline the nuns when necessary, confirm the prioress's election and remove her, and so on. In some cases, the friars found a secular priest to provide pastoral care; in others, priories of friars were established.[227]

From the time Francis began preaching, some people who experienced conversion and undertook a penitential life wished to become his disciples but could not share his

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225. On St. Clare, see *Francis and Clare,* 169-85 (introduction to "Clare of Assisi"), 209 (introduction to Clare's rule), 210-25 ("The Rule of Saint Clare" with editorial notes); also Moorman, op. cit., 32-39, 205-15.

226. See Garrett Francis Barry, O.M.I., *Violation of the Cloister: An Historical Synopsis and Commentary* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1942), 27-30.

227. Hinnebusch, op. cit., 377-400.

charism as the Friars Minor and Clarisses did because they were married or had other duties. Francis and his companions surely responded sympathetically to such people and encouraged them to be faithful to their commitment; scholars believe Francis wrote for them the two versions of the "Letter to the Faithful" included among his few authentic works.[228] By 1221, he and Cardinal Ugolino agreed upon a rule for such "Brothers and Sisters of Penance," who thus became members of what was soon called the "Third Order," a designation no doubt borrowed from Innocent III's document for the Humiliati. The text of the 1221 rule has not been found, and the earliest available text of a rule for the third order probably was partly drafted after Francis's death in 1226. It provides a constitution for communities of penitents and specifies some essential practices, but includes nothing peculiar to Francis's charism. Only its final chapter, apparently added by the third order's own leaders, even mentions Francis and the Friars Minor. In 1289 Nicholas IV provided an authoritative, orderly version.

Though the document was rather pedestrian and many Friars Minor were unwilling to oversee and support third-order communities, many were established and flourished. For the rule, when enlivened by love for Francis and his charism, provided a sound framework for joining together and seeking holiness according to the entire gospel—that is, trying always to do God's will and trust him. Moreover, neglect by the Friars Minor allowed third-order communities to develop independently by their own members' cooperation, with more self-confidence and solidarity than might otherwise have been the case.

Within a few decades of Francis's death, many unmarried third-order penitents had begun living communally, while some existing penitent communes, such as those of Beguines and Beghards, had accepted the rule of the third order.[229] When the members' commitments permanently precluded marriage, they were living a form of consecrated life. Soon, members of some such communities publicly made the three vows, and additions were made to their third-order rule that made them recognized religious institutes. They then were called "third order regular." Some of these communities engaged in an active apostolate, such as caring for the sick or teaching children. Others, usually very small, devoted themselves to prayer and lived rather like Carthusians, while some of the male communities were hardly distinguishable from Friars Minor. Originally autonomous, the third-order-regular communities eventually were organized into congregations with general and provincial ministers, regular chapters, and so on.[230]

Dominic did not establish a third order. But, just as some lay penitential groups sought pastoral care from Friars Minor, others, including many Beguine and Beghard houses, gravitated to Friars Preachers. Existing rules for such groups no doubt were adapted, but in 1285 the Dominican Master General provided a rule for penitential groups

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228. See *Francis and Clare*, 62-73, for both versions of the "Letter to the Faithful" with helpful introductions and notes.

229. On Beguines and Beghards, see Leclercq, Vandenbroucke, and Bouyer, op. cit., 353-57.

230. See Moorman, op. cit., 40-45, 216-25; S. Hartdegen, "Third Orders," *NCE,* 14:93-94; L. Secondo, "Franciscans, Third Order Regular," *NCE,* 6:71; Nicholas Sastre Palmer, T.O.R., "History of the Franciscan Third Order Regular," http://www.franciscanfriarstor.com/resources.

who sought affiliation with the Order of Preachers. Some third-order members, either individually or as communities, vowed themselves to celibate chastity. St. Catherine of Siena and St. Rose of Lima are outstanding instances of Dominican third-order, individual, consecrated life.[231] Some third-order communities of women eventually became second-order monasteries; others became third-order regular communities.[232]

Many other religious institutes subsequently established a third order, or something like it, in which married members probably tried to live according to God's entire plan for their lives, making them authentically *evangelical* in the sense defined in **A-9,** above.[233]

With the success of the Friars Minor and the Friars Preachers, existing communities of Carmelite and Augustinian hermits transformed themselves into mendicant communities engaged in clerical apostolates.[234] Some new institutes were founded as mendicant—for example, the Minims and Servites—and others eventually became mendicant.[235] While all mendicant institutes have their own special charisms and fascinating histories, none of them and none of the second and third orders associated with them seem to me to exemplify a form of consecrated life different from that of the Franciscans and Dominicans.

5) The Church's stricter regulation of women's consecrated life

Between 1000 and 1300, the interplay between Church authority and consecrated life had consequences that must be borne in mind to understand the development of consecrated life in modern times.

From the beginning, the Church's pastors regulated consecrated life. In 451, the Council of Chalcedon legislated:

> that no one is to build or found a monastery or oratory anywhere against the will of the local bishop; and that monks of each city and region are to be subject to the bishop, are to foster peace and quiet, and attend solely to fasting and prayer, staying set apart in their places. They are not to abandon their own monasteries and interfere, or take part, in ecclesiastical or secular business, unless they are perhaps assigned to do so by the local bishop because of some urgent necessity. No slave is to be taken into the monasteries to become a monk against the will of his own master.

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231. Catherine plainly shared the Dominican charism; see Leclercq, Vandenbroucke, and Bouyer, op. cit., 409-16.

232. See Hinnebusch, op. cit., 400-404.

233. *CIC,* c. 303: "Associations whose members share in the spirit of some religious institute while in secular life, lead an apostolic life, and strive for Christian perfection under the higher direction of the same institute are called third orders or some other appropriate name." In some cases, such an association's rule or the direction provided might suppose that Christians who are not trying to live by God's entire plan for their lives nevertheless can seek Christian perfection by certain religious exercises and other worthy practices. Members of such associations might well be exemplary without living an evangelical life.

234. See Lawrence, op. cit., 265-70.

235. See L. E. Boyle, "Mendicant Orders," *NCE,* 9:648-49.

Transgressors were to be excommunicated.[236] In 787, the Second Council of Nicaea legislated that "from now on no more double monasteries are to be started" and gave rules for existing ones to prevent intimacy between monks and nuns.[237]

Beginning in the twelfth century, regulatory measures became more radical. Unauthorized and sometimes unorthodox preaching provoked measures against emerging forms of consecrated life—for instance, Lucius III's excommunication of the Humiliati. Their reconciliation by Innocent III established a precedent for new institutes to seek papal approbation. This is how Francis and Dominic were able to work around Lateran IV's decree in 1215 forbidding "anyone henceforth to found a new religious order" and commanding someone establishing a new religious house to "take the rule and institutes from already approved religious orders." At Lyons II, in 1274, Gregory X not only renewed Lateran IV's prohibition but permanently forbade "all the forms of religious life and the mendicant orders founded after the said council which have not merited confirmation of the apostolic see."[238]

We saw above that some clerics who became canons regular in 1148 seem to have been the first to make religious profession by vowing celibacy, community of goods, and obedience; that triad was used to specify living according to the gospel in the *Regula bullata* of the Friars Minor. In confirming Clare's rule, Innocent IV stated that obedience, poverty, and chastity are "essential to every religious institute" [substantialia cuiuslibet religionis]," [239] thus authoritatively specifying essential content for any religious profession. St. Thomas soon afterwards explained and defended that position (see *S.t.,* 2-2, q. 186, aa. 6-7), and canon law eventually incorporated it: "The religious state is a stable manner of living in common, by which the faithful take up, besides common precepts, also the evangelical counsels of observing by vow obedience, chastity, and poverty."[240]

Although Clare suffered for her fidelity to the charism she shared with Francis, the problem was not cloister, which she and her sisters apparently gladly accepted. In 1298, however, Boniface VIII's Constitution *Periculoso* "ushered in a new era in the historical life of the cloister for women" by imposing on all nuns, *including those who had not previously accepted it and those who were only tacitly professed,* "the strict obligation of thenceforth observing the rigorous and perpetual cloister." With few exceptions, nuns were never to go out, and outsiders were never to enter the cloister. Considering cloister mainly as a safeguard of chastity, Boniface plainly thought it indispensable for all women

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236. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils,* ed. Norman P. Tanner, S.J. (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 89.

237. *Ibid, 153-54.*

238. Ibid., 242 (Lateran IV) and 326 (Gregory X).

239. *Bullarium Franciscanum Romanum Pontificium,* ed. Giovanni Giacinto Sbaraglia, 4 vols. (Rome: Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fidei, 1759-68), 2:474.

240. This is the formulation of 1917 *CIC,* c. 487. Today, canon law (*CIC.* 573) adds a theological account of consecrated life drawn from the documents of Vatican II, eliminates reference to common life so as to include secular institutes, and allows the commitment to be carried out in various ways: "Through vows or other sacred bonds according to the proper laws of the institutes . . .."

religious. While not attaching penalties to violations, he commanded local Church authorities to enforce cloister.[241] Where they did, most nuns' cloister became stricter than it had been and stricter than that of monks. But the enforcement of cloister was rare in France and Spain.[242]

Because the unevenness of *Periculoso's* impact was due partly to the distinction between solemn and simple vows, one must understand that distinction in order to understand later developments in the Church's efforts to regulate the consecrated life of women.

The distinction between solemn and simple vows originated with Gratian, a twelfth-century monk who collected normative decisions of popes and others and tried to synthesize them. While it was universally agreed that nobody who had vowed virginity should marry, authoritative decisions variously indicated that those who attempted marriage were and were not validly married; a recent decree of Callistus II held that Church law required any ordained cleric or monk who had attempted marriage to separate from his partner. Gratian solved the problem by saying the judgments favoring the validity of such marriages concerned people who had simply vowed virginity, while those favoring invalidity concerned persons who, after vowing, were blessed or consecrated by being ordained or professed as a religious.[243] Gratian's distinction was soon encapsulated in the expressions *simple vows* and *solemn vows.*

Gregory IX held early in the thirteenth century that not even the pope can dispense the solemn vows of a religious. St. Thomas, reflecting on that statement later in the same century, explained that religious profession consecrates the person—sets him or her apart for the Lord—and so is absolutely unchangeable.[244] Plainly, Gregory IX and Thomas thought that something intrinsic to solemn vows makes them solemn. Around the end of the same century, however, Boniface VIII, the pope who issued *Periculoso*, having said that the solemnity of a vow arises solely from the determination of the Church, himself

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241. Barry, op. cit., 32-33; see *Corpus iuris canonici,* ed. Emil Friedberg and Emil Louis Richter (Leipzig: Bernard Tauchnitz, 1879-81), 2:1053-54. Elizabeth Makowski, *Canon Law and Cloistered Women:* Periculoso *and Its Commentators* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1997), provides (133-36) the text of the decree in Latin and English. She also explains (31-42) that the cloister of the Cistercian nuns and Clarisses was a precursor of the papal enclosure imposed by Boniface VIII, but points out (35) that Clare "clearly accepted the life of the cloistered contemplative" and adds (41) that earlier popes "were responding to the requests of religious rather than taking initiative."

242. See Barry, op. cit., 44.

243. See Friedberg and Richter, eds., op. cit., 1:100 (*Decretum Gratiani,* d. 27, c. 8). Callistus II's decree is (in some manuscripts) Lateran I's c. 21; see Tanner, ed., op. cit., 194. Lateran II's cc. 7-8 (ibid., 198) clearly state that attempted marriages of ordained clerics, canons regular, monks, professed lay brothers, and women religious are contrary to Church law and therefore invalid. Frey, op. cit., shows (31-40) that the history was more complex than Gratian realized; e.g., he reports (36-37) a letter Gratian overlooked in which Leo I did not treat consecrated virgins' marriages as invalid and even said that some monks' marriages could be considered lawful.

244. See *S.t.,* 2-2, q. 88, a. 11. In his commentary on Peter Lombard's treatment of vows (see *4 Sent.,* d. 38, q. 1, a. 4, qu'la 1), Thomas explained solemn vows differently and tentatively thought they could be dispensed. Gregory IX's teaching is at the end of the decretal "Cum ad monasterium" in Friedberg and Richter, eds., op. cit., 2:600.

determined: a vow is to be called "solemn" only if it becomes so either through the reception of holy orders or through express or tacit profession in a religious institute *approved by the Holy See*.[245]

To reject the assumption that a solemn vow's solemnity is intrinsic to it implied that even solemn vows could be dispensed. Around 1515, one of the greatest commentators on Thomas's *Summa,* Thomas de Vio ("Cajetan"), noted that popes often had "interpreted" the decretal of Gregory IX by dispensing religious so that they could marry; he concluded that the opinion Thomas offered on the basis of that decretal was mistaken. While doing his best to avoid contradicting Thomas, Cajetan clarified the matter as follows. The solemnity of solemn vows is a property given them by the Church, a candidate's very vowing *is* his or her religious profession, and any subsequent blessing is only a prayer for God's grace rather than a constitutive consecration.[246] Most other theologians came to similar conclusions, and the twentieth-century codes of canon law provided that the pope can dispense the solemn vows of a religious.[247]

In determining that only a vow pertaining to profession in a religious institute approved by the Holy See is solemn, Boniface VIII no doubt had in mind Gregory X's 1274 prohibition of all forms of religious life founded after 1215 without such approval. Thus he probably intended that there be no religious institute without solemn vows and no religious women outside strict cloister.[248] However, Boniface VIII's determination also implied that profession could be made by simple vows in associations that were not approved by the Holy See but otherwise were similar to approved religious institutes, and that sisters belonging to such associations could avoid cloister and engage in active apostolates like nursing.

Many such associations existed after 1300. For example, by 1217, the Hôtel-Dieu in Paris was staffed by women committed to caring for the sick and living according to the Rule of St. Augustine; the community continued its work, even during the French revolution, until it was expelled in 1907.[249] Around 1335 a community of Beguines formed near a Dominican priory in Augsburg; in 1394, the bishop recognized them as religious with the Rule of St. Augustine and the Dominican third-order rule. The sisters took vows but remained uncloistered and without the obligation of praying the Divine

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245. See Friedberg and Richter, eds., op. cit., 2:1053; Frey, op. cit., 41.

246. See the commentary to *S.t.*, 2-2, q. 88, aa. 7 and 11, in Thomas Aquinas, St., *Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII edita* (Rome: Polyglot Press of S. C. de Propaganda Aide, 1882-). Cajetan also offers the interesting suggestion that the consecration, independent of religious profession, of someone willing to be a consecrated virgin *might* constitute a state beyond the Church's power to dispense.

247. See Francis X. Wernz, S.J., and Peter Vidal, S.J., *Ius canonicum,* vol. 3, *De religiosis* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1933), 461-65. Technically, *CIC* (1917), c. 640, decreed that the dispensation happened when a religious separated from the institute after receiving an indult of secularization; the current code (*CIC,* cc. 691-92) is essentially similar but says that one who receives and accepts an "indult of departure" is dispensed "by the law itself."

248. See Frey, loc. cit.

249. See F. Roth, "Augustinian Nuns," in *NCE,* 1:1061; C. M. Frank, "Nursing, History of," in *NCE,* 10:582. The sisters then continued their work elsewhere, and their community still exists. Many other hospitals were served by similar communities of religious women.

Office until the seventeenth century. They earned their living by artistic work, caring for the sick, and other charitable works.[250] Similar groups continued to emerge during the fifteenth century, and in 1509 and 1510 Julius II issued bulls that approved of Dominican tertiaries living "in a community with the three vows and without the cloister."[251] Franciscan third-order women, called "Grey Sisters," also took vows and said the Divine Office but remained uncloistered and engaged in health care and other charitable works. Papal decrees in 1377, 1413, 1428, and 1471 both recognized these tertiaries as religious and allowed them to continue their active apostolate. In 1521, Leo X made it clear that only those who had committed themselves to cloister were bound to observe it.[252]

In the low countries and nearby German cities after 1300 there also were groups of unmarried women who devoted themselves to health care—"cell sisters," who sometimes worked alongside "cell brothers." The cellites had evolved from, or were, Beghards and Beguines, or members of similar communities, engaged in health care. *Cell* referred to either the graves in which they buried the dead or the minimal personal space allotted each member in their houses. While many healthy people abandoned the stricken during the Black Death, which in the years 1347-50 reduced Europe's population by about one-third, some cellites ministered, physically and spiritually, to the afflicted, saving some, comforting the dying, and providing the dead with Christian burial. Even if they had made a vow of celibate chastity, their social status had been unclear and insecure, but cellites increasingly gained respect and standing with their service during the Black Death and subsequent epidemics. Papal decrees now distinguished them from Beguines, Beghards, and other groups against which measures were being taken.

Many female cellites eventually became Augustinian Hospital Sisters and Augustinian Black Sisters, while some of the men formed a nonclerical order of nursing brothers, which also followed the Rule of St. Augustine and gained the approval of Sixtus IV in 1472. As various houses constructed chapels with St. Alexius as their common patron, the order gradually acquired the name, *The Alexian Brothers,* under which it still exists. Retaining its character as a nonclerical religious institute focused upon a specific apostolate, it more perfectly realized the form of consecrated life that the Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem and the Mercedarians embodied in their early days.[253]

St. Frances of Rome (1384-1440), a precocious daughter of noble and wealthy parents, began reading around three and quickly learned pious practices from her devout mother. While still very young, she began praying and acting like a holy adult. By eleven, she had a Benedictine spiritual director and hoped to become a nun. But before she told her father, he pledged her in marriage to a young and upright Roman noble, Lorenzo Ponziano. Her model behavior as a wife and in-law charmed her husband and

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250. See Hinnebusch, op. cit., 402-3.

251. James R. Cain, "Cloister and the Apostolate of Religious Women," *Review for Religious,* 27 (1968): 277.

252. See Moorman, op. cit., 427, 560-68; Craig Harline, "Actives and Contemplatives: The Female Religious of the Low Countries before and after Trent," *Catholic Historical Review,* 81 (1995): 541-55.

253. Ibid; also see Christopher J. Kauffman, *Tamers of Death*, vol. 1, *The History of the Alexian Brothers from 1300 to 1789* (New York: Seabury, 1976), 25-94, 141-63.

his family, who were themselves devout, so that they supported her extraordinary spirituality, in which she was joined by Lorenzo's elder brother's wife, Vannozza. Together, the two engaged in charitable works, and Frances began experiencing frequent, helpful visions and timely miracles. She became a loving and conscientious mother, and, when her mother-in-law died, was made head of the household. Now she and Vannozza could increase their aid to the sick and starving, even when Rome was sacked by opponents of the pope, and the Ponziani, who supported him, were themselves in need. Sometimes the two women begged; occasionally, their charitable intent was fulfilled by a miracle. Sufferings drew Frances and Lorenzo closer together, and, as his health deteriorated, he grew more like her in holiness. She persuaded him and many others to forgo revenge, forgive enemies, and make peace. Awed by her holiness, he offered to abstain permanently from marital intimacy provided she would continue to live in their home and take care of him. She gratefully agreed.[254]

Benedictine oblates had by now become the Benedictine equivalent of the mendicant tertiaries, and on 15 August 1425, Frances, Vannozza, and eight other women formed a chapter of oblates associated with the Benedictine monastery to which Frances's lifelong spiritual director belonged. The oblates continued their pious practices and works of charity. Several years later, Vannozza died, and now Frances's supernatural experiences became almost constant. With her guidance, the oblates, without making vows, committed themselves to celibate chastity and obedience, gave up their possessions, and on 25 March 1433 began living together in uncloistered community, becoming known as the Oblates of Torre di Specchi from their convent's location. Frances, who continued to live with Lorenzo in their own home, obtained papal approval for the community and its simple rule, and the privilege of having their own chapel. She refused special treatment when she visited the convent, pitched in to help, and treated the superior with great respect. Lorenzo died early in 1436, and Frances humbly asked to be admitted to the convent, whose members insisted that she serve as superior. She died after a short illness on 9 March 1440, but the community continued without significant change.[255]

Thus, St. Frances of Rome introduced a new form of consecrated life: a community of women within the Benedictine family, entirely without vows. Since they lacked vows, these consecrated women were not subject to *Periculoso's* requirement of cloister.

Because many communities of women with vows rejected cloister or regularly violated it, however, the Council of Trent in 1533 commanded bishops to enforce it. No nun was to go out of her monastery after profession, except for a legitimate reason approved by the bishop, nor was anyone to enter except for a necessary reason and with written permission of the bishop or superior. The Council specified no penalty for violations by nuns but imposed automatic excommunication on those who entered cloister without the required permission.[256] St. Pius V issued constitutions in 1566 and

254. See Georgiana Fullerton, *The Life of St. Frances of Rome* (New York: D. and J. Sadlier, 1855), 1-86.

255. Ibid., 87-136.

256. See Tanner, ed., op. cit., 2:777-78.

1570 implementing Trent's canon. He required cloister for all women with solemn vows, including tertiaries, and decreed that those with simple vows who lived in community must make solemn vows or be suppressed, either at once or, if the members' lives were exemplary, by receiving no new candidates. If his prohibition of new candidates were violated, he decreed, any attempted profession would be invalid. Even communities whose members took no vows or vowed only virginity were to take solemn vows or disperse. If necessary, extern sisters and professed nuns over forty could go out to collect alms. Otherwise, nuns were allowed to leave their cloister only in certain life-threatening situations, and even then only with the superior's and bishop's written permission unless the threat were immediate. For the first time in the Church's history, moreover, automatic excommunication was imposed on any nun who illegally left cloister, and the excommunication could be lifted only by the pope unless a repentant nun were in imminent danger of death. The same penalty was provided for those who wrongly authorized a nun to leave, helped her leave, or harbored her. Gregory XIII, Pius V's successor, in 1572 eliminated the provision allowing nuns to go out to collect alms.[257]

This strict legislation regarding cloister remained in force with some tightening amendments into the nineteenth century.[258] Before considering its impact on religious women, however, we need to consider the innovations in consecrated life introduced by the Society of Jesus.

6) St. Ignatius of Loyola and St. Angela Merici

St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) was the last-born son in a large family. Baptized *Iñigo,* he began using *Ignacio* only in 1537. He lost his mother early. His father, a propertied and well-connected Basque with chivalric ideals, marked Iñigo for the clergy, but the boy was a reluctant student. Around 1506, Iñigo's father sent him to a friend, King Ferdinand's chief treasurer, to be a page at court. The youth learned courtesy and refined manners along with some bad habits, including sensuousness and an addiction to romantic literature. But despite his desire for glory and honor, he remained faithful when the chief treasurer lost his position. When Iñigo's patron died a broken man, however, he attached himself to the Duke of Nájera and, after successfully providing various services, participated in the defense of Pamplona against a French invasion in 1521. On 20 May, bravely but imprudently refusing to surrender, Iñigo was hit by a cannon ball, which shattered one leg. The French patched him up and carried him to Loyola, where Iñigo received the last rites and nearly died. Then, dissatisfied with his disfigured leg, he underwent additional, excruciating surgery.

During his recovery he read the only things available: books on the lives of Christ and the saints, which, providentially, presented Jesus as a prince and the saints as holy knights. Admiring the saints' heroism and their absolute dedication to their prince, Iñigo began to find it more satisfying to think about emulating Francis and Dominic than about pursuing his former ambitions. Since changing required repentance and penance, Iñigo decided to imitate the saints' asceticism and make a pilgrimage to the

257. See Cain, op. cit., 277-80; Barry, op. cit., 37-45, 47-53, 60-65.

258. Ibid., 63-64.

Holy Land. His conversion was soon confirmed by a vision of Mary with the child Jesus that permanently freed Iñigo from carnal temptations. Meditating on God's greatness, manifested in the splendor of the heavens, he grew in the desire to serve him. Around 1 March 1522, Iñigo set out from Loyola, riding eastward on a donkey. A few weeks later, at the shrine at Montserrat, having vowed celibate chastity and resolved to imitate Francis, he made a general confession, gave away everything but a pilgrim's outfit he had purchased, kept all-night vigil for the feast of the Annunciation, and received Communion at the dawn Mass.

Meaning to write down some ideas that had occurred to him, he then decided to stop at a nearby town, Manresa. The stop lasted almost a year, and Manresa became Iñigo's desert. He begged for his livelihood and cared for the sick in town, while spending long stretches in a cave outside town doing penance and praying. Tormented by scruples and doubts, he became depressed for a time and adopted extreme penitential practices, to which his prudent confessor set reasonable limits. Iñigo then received extraordinary graces: peace of soul and mystical experiences that strengthened and enlightened him. The notes he had stopped to write became a draft of the *Spiritual Exercises,* and he began to discern that he was called to work alongside others for the good of souls. Around the end of February 1523, he finally set out for Jerusalem. Visiting the holy places was so spiritually rewarding that he wished to stay permanently. Only when the Franciscan superior threatened excommunication did he leave.

Back in Barcelona, Iñigo had decided by March 1524 to study for the priesthood. Making up for his misspent youth, he studied Latin for two years alongside children, but study still did not come easily, and now he had to resist the tempting distractions of contemplative prayer. Meanwhile, he begged, did charitable works, taught children catechism, and attracted as companions a few men studying for the priesthood. They went on to Alcalá in 1526-27, but their studies were not well planned and their dealings with adults, which included at least elements of the *Spiritual Exercises,* attracted the Inquisition's notice. The book and the group's teaching were not condemned, but the men were ordered to quit teaching and behave like other students. They tried Salamanca with similar results. Iñigo therefore headed for Paris, arriving in February 1528, to begin seven years of better-planned studies, during which he repeated his basic education, earned a Licentiate in Arts, and did two years of theology with the Dominicans. His earlier companions did not follow him, but he gradually attracted others, sharing with them his hope of joining in service to Christ and using the *Exercises* to give them spiritual formation. Not all persevered, but on 15 August 1534, Iñigo and six others, one already a priest, came together to celebrate the Eucharist; before receiving Communion, they vowed poverty, chastity, and cooperation in working for the good of souls by journeying to Jerusalem to work among the Muslims or, failing that, putting themselves at the pope's disposal.

Illness compelled Iñigo to go home early in 1535, but the others continued their studies and, with three additional companions, renewed their vows on 15 August 1535. In January 1537, Iñigo had been studying theology for some time in Venice; there the group rejoined him and a new companion he had acquired. In March, fearing that his presence

would provoke opposition at the papal court, Iñigo stayed behind when the ten others sought Paul III's authorization for the group's project in Palestine and the priestly ordination of those not yet ordained, including Iñigo. Pope Paul granted the requests and offered support for their project. Iñigo and the others were ordained on 24 June 1537. The legate authorized them to preach, teach, and interpret Scripture throughout the Venetian territory while waiting to go to the Holy Land; but threats of war prevented their departure. As members of an identifiable group, they now needed a way of referring to themselves, and, to signify their desire to cooperate with Jesus' saving work, decided on the Company (Latin: *Societas*) of Jesus.

That fall, they dispersed to preach in different places, Iñigo heading for Rome with two companions. At Venice, as at Manresa, he had enjoyed extraordinary graces, and, before reaching Rome, a further mystical experience confirmed that God wished him to serve Jesus closely and in a special way. The preaching in Rome went well, and the entire Company regathered there by Easter 1538. In November, lacking any prospect of getting to Palestine, they put themselves at Pope Paul's disposal. Expecting to be dispersed and wishing to maintain the Company, they began discussions that led them, on 15 April 1539, to commit themselves to form a new institute if the Pope consented. By July, they had drawn up a document, later called the *Formula of the Institute,* and submitted it to Pope Paul, who received it favorably. Although its many novel features provoked lengthy curial debate, the Pope approved it, with only minor changes, on 27 September 1540. That approval brought into being the Society of Jesus, with the *Formula* as its rule.

In early April 1541, Ignatius's companions unanimously elected him their General over his objections. During the next few years he drafted an *Examen*, which blends a check list for those evaluating men wishing to join the Society, an instruction for candidates regarding what they are undertaking, and a formation program. Several more papal documents, culminating in Julius III's reconfirmation of the Society in 1550, supported its development. By then, Ignatius had drafted the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* to implement the *Formula*, much as the 1220-21 chapters of the Order of Preachers drafted its *Constitutions* to implement the *Rule of St. Augustine,* which Dominic and his companions had adopted in 1216. In January 1551, Ignatius brought many professed members to Rome to discuss and amend his draft *Constitutions.* He then circulated it to other members for their suggestions, and continued revising it until he died. General Congregation I, which elected Ignatius's successor in 1558, finalized the document and made it binding.[259]

The *Spiritual Exercises* is the heart of the Society of Jesus' body of fundamental documents. Although derived in part from Ignatius's experience, that little book is not autobiographical, nor is much of it inspiring spiritual reading. It is a practical manual laying out a program, preferably to be conducted by a spiritual coach, for exercising

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259. On Ignatius and the founding of the Society of Jesus, see James Broderick, S.J., *Saint Ignatius of Loyola: The Pilgrim Years (1491-1538)* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1998); William V. Bangert, S.J., *A History of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1972), 3-45; St. Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus,* trans. with an introduction and commentary by George E. Ganss, S.J. (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970), 3-59 and 341-57.

imagination, feelings, mind, and will so as to improve one's spiritual health and vitality. The project assumes a committed believer eager to progress in holiness and prepared to be formed by the Holy Spirit. As explained in **A-5,** above, the project centers on discerning God's plan for one's life and committing, or recommitting, oneself to carrying it out. Ignatius prescribes an ordered series of self-examinations and reflections to prepare for discernment and commitment, and others to confirm the commitment and prepare for carrying it out.

The preparatory phase begins by recalling the fundamental reason for pursuing holiness, realistically considering how far one is from it, repenting, and reflecting on the disastrous consequences of failing to persevere in repentance. The preparation continues by considering Jesus as the great king who leads his people in fighting the all-important war for human salvation against the forces of evil, meditating on aspects of Jesus' life that promote enthusiasm for him and his cause, and considering the excellence of giving up whatever one must to devote oneself entirely to one's part in that cause. Having set aside every other agenda and readied oneself to follow Jesus unreservedly, one discerns God's plan and makes (or renews) one's commitment to live by it. The remainder of the *Exercises*, which confirm the commitment and strengthen the person to carry it out, consists mainly of meditations on Jesus' passion, death, resurrection, and ascension. The final exercise consists of considerations to intensify love for God, and the loving act of submitting unreservedly to him.

Holy men and women had of course given others spiritual guidance and advice since the earliest Christian times. Often, it was unsystematic: in response to questions or manifest need; when planned, the assumption generally was that the only way to pursue holiness was to become a good monk or nun, or as much like one as possible. Ignatius's genius was to devise a systematic plan for helping Christians with charisms of every sort to discover and pursue appropriately the unique way of holiness God has in mind for each. Spelling out the Society's apostolate in the *Formula of the Institute*, Ignatius explicitly mentions spiritual exercises among the means its members are to use in promoting the progress of souls in Christian life; the *Examen* puts spiritual exercises first among the experiences required of those seeking to enter the Society.[260]

At its founding, the Society of Jesus was more like the Order of Preachers than any other institute described above. But the *Formula of the Institute*, an entirely new rule, shows how it was a new form of consecrated life. The *Formula* begins:

> Whoever desires to serve as a soldier of God beneath the banner of the cross in our Society, which we desire to be designated by the name of Jesus, and to serve the Lord alone and the Church, his spouse, under the Roman pontiff, the vicar of Christ on earth, should, after a solemn vow of perpetual chastity, poverty, and obedience, keep what follows in mind. He is a member of a Society founded chiefly for this purpose: to strive especially for the defense and propagation of the faith and for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine, by means of public preaching, lectures, and any other ministration whatsoever of the word of God, and further by means of the Spiritual

260. No doubt, in both cases, Ignatius had in mind the exercises he conducted often and fruitfully. But he hardly supposed his work so perfect that it could never be revised.

> Exercises, the education of children and unlettered persons in Christianity, and the spiritual consolation of Christ's faithful through hearing confessions and administering the other sacraments. Moreover, this Society should show itself no less useful in reconciling the estranged, in holily assisting and serving those who are in hospitals, and indeed in performing any other works of charity, according to what will seem expedient for the glory of God and the common good. Furthermore, all these works should be carried out altogether free of charge and without accepting any salary for the labor expended in all the aforementioned activities. Still further, let any such person take care, as long as he lives, first of all to keep before his eyes God and then the nature of this Institute which he has embraced and which is, so to speak, a pathway to God; and then let him strive with all his effort to achieve this end set before him by God—each one, however, according to the grace which the Holy Spirit has given to him and according to the particular grade of his own vocation.[261]

The Society is a regiment in God's army. Members agree to accept any assignment given them by Jesus acting through the pope and the Society's General. Jesuits will do any sort of clerical ministry or charitable work. The Society is a pathway to God for them: they save their own souls by carrying out their assignments as well as possible with the spiritual resources given them.

The Dominicans did not consider themselves members of a highly disciplined body receiving assignments through a chain of command but a gathering of presbyters discerning collegially how to use their gifts. The Order of Preachers' focus also was narrower than the Jesuits' very broad apostolate. But other differences were still more significant. More completely than the Dominicans, the Jesuits regarded their service as the way to their own salvation and therefore took into account how individuals' pathways to God are diversified by the diverse graces they receive.[262]

Shaping everything toward apostolic service, the *Formula* and *Constitutions* exclude regular, communal performance of the Divine Office or other liturgical celebrations—except for Vespers to attract and please the people. Jesuits normally are to pray the Office privately, as good secular priests do, and also are to do as secular priests do in regard to externals, like clothing and food. There are no specific, common norms laid down for prayer, meditation, study, fasts, vigils, and other ascetic practices; rather, in consultations with his confessor or immediate superior, each Jesuit is to determine all these matters with a view to the overarching purpose, which also excludes involvement in secular affairs and even personal pastoral commitments that would limit the individual's availability for assignments.[263] The Society's formation of its own members and apostolic service generally merge. So, for example, educating those not members of the

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261. Ignatius of Loyola, op. cit., 66-67. The text is that of the 1550 version of the *Formula.*

262. The two institutes' initial commitments to poverty were very similar, and both subsequently relaxed them. Like Francis and Dominic, Ignatius wanted to leave things behind and set out on the apostolate. He meant the Society to be mendicant; he also prescribed complete gratuity of service. But later, especially after 1838, the Society obtained papal dispensations to accept stipends and charge tuition; see ibid., 79, fn. 15; 226, fn. 4.

263. See ibid., 70, 259-64.

Society began incidentally to preparing its own candidates, as a way of instructing the externs in Christian doctrine and forming them in Christian living.[264]

Compared with members of earlier institutes and especially with Pachomius's monks, Jesuits are individualistic, since maximizing apostolic service requires that each one develop and use his unique gifts. Yet seeking fulfillment entirely in their service, these individualists are to abandon every self-interest. The *Constitutions* proscribe ambition and strictly forbid seeking any dignity or prelacy in the Society or outside it, and accepting such outside positions except at the order of someone empowered to impose it as a moral obligation.[265] Even more significantly, anyone entering the Society undertakes a two-year novitiate and commits himself by simple but permanent vows before the Society commits itself to him. Some permanently have a subordinate status as lay brothers or even as priests; according to the *Formula,* they are to be retained in the Society only as long as the General chooses. Others, after ordination, are eventually professed with solemn vows, including a vow to accept whatever assignment they receive from the pope, and only they are eligible to participate in electing the General and other important decisions. Even these professed, according to the *Constitutions,* are to be dismissed if it harm the Society and ill-serve the Lord to retain them, and those who have made only simple vows may be dismissed more easily.[266]

Ignatius's provisions in the *Constitutions* regarding obedience often have been criticized, even ridiculed.[267] In fact, his views are in many ways similar to those of Benedict and Dominic. But Ignatius insists not on mere outward conformity but on thinking with superiors and cooperating wholeheartedly. Another, and perhaps greater, difference is the range of matters about which Jesuit superiors have decisions to make. In a Benedictine monastery, many things are settled by the *Rule* and by customs; a good abbot's decisions can seldom surprise a good monk. More matters must be settled in a Dominican province and priory, but the order's structure of governance provides ways of doing this collegially in many cases. The Society of Jesus' purpose and structure generate the need for very many decisions. Supreme legislative power belongs to the general congregation, but general congregations are infrequent and provincials have considerable control over who participates in them. The *Constitutions* give authority for assignments and decisions required to shape cooperation among members of the Society to the General and subordinate superiors, all of whom the General directly or indirectly appoints and can remove.[268]

St. Thomas neatly expressed the Dominican ideal: to contemplate and give others the fruits of contemplation (see *S.t.*, 2-2, q. 188, a. 6). That presupposes a real distinction between contemplation and action, with both involved, but alternately; and the

264. See ibid., 172-74, 198-200.

265. See ibid., 334-35.

266. See ibid., 71-72, 81-84, 141-44, 231-43. Some of these provisions have been changed over the centuries.

267. For these provisions, see ibid., 245-50.

268. See ibid., 312-17.

alternation could not be transcended within an Aristotelian framework: human beings could think about Aristotle's god, but they could not cooperate with him, since he neither spoke nor acted in this world. The extraordinary graces with which Ignatius was blessed apparently caused him to experience his intimacy with God as his enlistment, formation, and companionship with Jesus in redemptive service.[269] Contemplating the redeeming and sanctifying God our Lord, Ignatius not so much received fruits to give others as became a more apt means of Jesus' self-giving to others. One could express the Jesuit ideal: to glorify God by sanctifying oneself in preparing to do and doing whatever apostolic service Jesus assigns.[270]

With the threefold "Receive me, Lord" of his profession, the Benedictine, like a man selling himself into slavery, gave himself to God so completely that he no longer had power over his own body. A *Suscipe* also completes the *Spiritual Exercises.* But in replacing the monastic family with a regiment prepared to accept any assignment Jesus wishes to give, Ignatius introduced a new form of consecrated life.

The Society became the inspiration and model for many later religious institutes, especially of women who undertook apostolic works, such as nursing or teaching, and made only simple vows. The *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* were easily abbreviated and adapted for those institutes of active life, whereas previous rules and constitutions were far less serviceable. Moreover, the Society's *Formula of the Institute,* as approved and confirmed by Julius III in 1550, became an important precedent. It provided that the permanent vows of some Jesuits would be simple, not solemn; and, when some denied that those who make only simple vows are true religious, Gregory XIII declared in 1584 that they are true religious. The Society thus became a conspicuous and lasting model for religious institutes with simple vows. Without that example, Pius V's 1566 constitution requiring all women's communities either to disperse or take solemn vows and be cloistered probably would have been more effective.[271]

St. Angela Merici (1474-1540) was among the younger children of a family of land-owning farmers in Lombardy. Her parents were loving, attentive, and devout; her father read aloud from Scripture or other religious books. The family was cheerful and close, and Angela enjoyed playing with other children. Still, her mother had to limit Angela's ascetic practices when she was only a sweet and pretty seven-year old. She learned to read but not to write. By thirteen, when she made her first Communion, she had decided never to marry. A few years later, her father died, then within a year her mother. She and her sister went to live in a nearby town with their prosperous uncle and aunt. The girls acquired homemaking skills and did their share of the work. When male cousins teased them, they sometimes escaped into crowds listening to preaching friars. Angela practiced

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269. See ibid., 20-25.

270. See ibid., 78, fn. 11.

271. See Frey, op. cit., 41-42; Cain, op. cit., 428-29; Ignatius of Loyola, op. cit., 71. The editor, Ganss, explains (ibid., 41-42) that documents called "constitutions," whether based on those of the Society or not, often are the basic law of modern institutes with only simple vows; their "rules" are subordinate and more easily changed legislation.

asceticism, made friends easily, and enjoyed their companionship. When she was about twenty, her sister died.

Having inherited her family's farm, Angela returned there at twenty-three, with a younger woman companion. She joined the Third Order of St. Francis, wore its simple habit, enjoyed the privilege of frequent Communion, and gave up her land, retaining only the house. Becoming known as a holy woman, she attracted people seeking spiritual advice. Angela and her companion helped others, taught children catechism, and lived on alms. Around 1500, the companion died. Angela grieved and sought to discern God's will. Picnicking one fall day with other young women, she went off to pray. Suddenly she heard lovely music and saw beautifully dressed maidens ascending a ladder to heaven. Filled with joy, she saw among them her companion, who said: "Angela, know that God has shown you this vision to signify that before you die, you are to found, in Brescia, a company like these virgins."[272]

Reassured, Angela devoted herself to charitable works, such as nursing the sick and helping the needy. She had a natural sympathy for children, especially poor, orphaned, neglected, or mistreated little girls. In her, they found a friend who paid attention to them, understood them, gave them motherly love, and tried to meet their real needs. She never undertook to teach them what the schools were teaching girls—reading, writing, arithmetic, sewing, and so on—and never showed any interest in establishing a school. Rather, believing sound formation in Christian faith and living to be their deepest need, she focused on that. Her apostolate to young girls attracted many enthusiastic young women who lived with their families and looked after themselves. This experience of working with collaborators helped shape Angela's thinking about the company she was to form.

The work with youngsters also drew financial support from some wealthy matrons, among them Caterina Patengola, a noble lady from Brescia who vacationed nearby with her family and asked Angela to join them for a few days each year. In May 1516, Brescia, which often had been fought over, was seized yet again. Caterina told Angela about that city's unrelieved needs; and a few weeks after Caterina returned home in the late fall, her two little boys sickened and died, and she begged Angela to come. Angela did, staying six months with the Patengolas, and becoming the friend of many of their friends, devout people who admired her and readily supported her work. One of them, a wealthy merchant named Antonio Romano, provided her with a house to use as long as she liked. By now many people in Brescia knew her, and she was becoming better known all the time. Drawn by her wisdom and goodness, women and men, including professionals and clerics, sought her advice and guidance—and sometimes got more than they expected, as when she succeeded in reconciling enemies. She again did works of mercy, including working with young girls, and again attracted cooperators.

272. Sr. Mary Monica, O.S.U., *Angela Merici and Her Teaching Idea (1474-1540)* (New York: Longmans Green, 1927), 44; for biography, see 3-44.

Angela and they transformed the alms of the wealthy into desperately needed assistance to poor girls and women.[273]

In 1524, one of Angela's male cousins and Antonio Romano took her on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. As the pilgrim ship arrived at Crete, she almost completely lost her sight, but she insisted on going on. In Jerusalem she spent most of her time in the hospice, but her companions led her, hand in hand, to Bethlehem, Gethsemane, and Calvary. At the holy sepulcher, she prayed and wept a long time. Visiting a shrine on Crete on the way home, she prayed for her sight, and it was restored. In the Jubilee year of 1525, Angela went with friends to Rome. The papal chamberlain, who had been on the same pilgrim ship the year before, arranged a private audience with Clement VII. He asked her to stay in Rome managing charitable works; she declined. Probably she told him about her vision a quarter-century earlier and obtained his oral approval of the plan she was slowly developing.[274]

But she proceeded gradually, first enlisting only twelve young women as she refined her plan and prepared them to help carry it out. Most continued to live with their own families. Angela also consulted many devout matrons and gained their support. She obviously meant to integrate into the Company's life and work women of different socioeconomic classes. Around 1530 she moved to a small house, which she shared with one of her twelve; it was near St. Afra's Church, which became the group's spiritual home. A widow, Elisabetta Prato, created a large room in her home near the cathedral for the group's meetings. Fifteen others joined the original twelve. On the feast of St. Catherine of Alexandria, 25 November 1535, Angela and her twenty-seven companions went to Mass, received Communion, and formed the Company of St. Ursula by inscribing their names in a special book. Being both virgins and martyrs, Catherine, who supposedly experienced a mystical espousal to Christ, and Ursula, who supposedly had eleven thousand virgin companions, were suitable patrons for the Company, whose members gave their lives in virginity to Jesus.[275]

Angela enlisted Gabriel Cozzano, a diocesan priest, to help her draft the rule she had worked out. It assumes, rather than says, that members normally will live with their own families, and no one may join without permission of her parents or guardians. Profession is excluded before age eighteen; minors are admitted only for formation. Members may, but need not, make a public, simple vow of virginity. But anyone joining the Company must be a virgin committed to dedicating her virginity to God. Members are to dress simply and modestly, but no habit is prescribed. Contact with others is greatly restricted, and public activities are to reflect the commitment to virginity and modesty. A program of fasting beyond what the Church requires is offered but is to be undertaken only with

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273. See ibid., 44-93. Since the contrary often is mistakenly asserted, it is important to note that, even after Angela moved to Brescia: "At no time and in no sense did she design the establishing of a school" (92). She sought only to supply what the schools "were failing to supply, if not actually counteracting,—the principles of right living, and these taught correctly to the young on the foundation of the Christian religion, as the only reasonable basis for morality" (284).

274. See ibid., 135-50.

275. See ibid., 160-79.

the advice of a spiritual director and the superior. Members are to be solicitous about prayer, and mental prayer is encouraged; some vocal prayer is prescribed, but not the Divine Office. Members are to assist at Mass daily, and the Company assembles for Mass and Communion every First Friday. Regular confession is encouraged. Members are exhorted to practice poverty and obey all legitimate authorities, including their own parents and the Company's superiors. The bishop is to name a priest as his vicar and spiritual Father for the Company, and another to serve as his substitute.[276]

Angela also designed a plan for leadership and supervision. Alongside the Mother General, who is to be at least forty and who serves for life, are her Vicar and three other Assistants. For anything important, the Mother General needs the advice and consent of at least two of the four. Eight Lady Governors, devout and mature women, direct admissions and look after members of the Company residing in the eight neighborhoods into which Angela divided Brescia. Eight Mistresses, exemplary young members, provide instruction and formation for members under the supervision of the Lady Governors. Each neighborhood also has an Adviser, a woman at least fifty who helps the other superiors by checking up on members and reporting anything that calls for discipline. The superiors of each neighborhood regularly meet with all members who reside there to give formation, correct faults, and deal with other problems. At these assemblies, the Lady Governor exhorts everyone to observe the Rule and sees to it "that all are exercising themselves in teaching Christian Doctrine, in which each should particularly strive to produce fruit." All the superiors are confirmed by the bishop after being chosen by a two-thirds majority of everyone who has been admitted to the Company and comes to its General Assembly. The superiors, together with the spiritual Father and his substitute, constitute the Company's Governing Board, which meets regularly, discusses matters arising between General Assemblies, and expels obdurately deviant members. It makes decisions by majority vote.[277]

The Ursuline way of life is similar in some ways to that of Franciscan tertiaries, but the Company's system of leadership and supervision is entirely original. Like a religious institute, it has superiors; but their authority is maternal and shared, so that governance is virtually by a committee of mothers. Like the rule for Franciscan tertiaries, which Angela herself followed, the Company's rule is loose, not detailed; but it provides for constant instruction, exhortation, and personal direction of members. Like Frances of Rome's Oblates, members commit themselves without making vows; but unlike the Oblates, Ursulines neither live in community nor are associated with any male religious institute. Moreover, unlike tertiaries and like some religious institutes, the Company's members have a specific apostolate. As well-formed Christians and committed virgins, they are to serve as leaven in an ecclesial and social movement. They begin their works of mercy in their families, with which they live, and extend them within their parishes. Growing in holiness in the world, not in a monastery, and working within their own neighborhoods, they renew the Church and society.

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276. See ibid., 180, 245-56, 297-99.

277. Ibid., 274; see 255-73 for other the provisions regarding supervision.

Cardinal Carnaro, the Bishop of Brescia, approved a first version of the rule in August 1536. In March 1537, Angela conducted an assembly at which her companions unanimously elected her Mother General. She declined, but they appealed to the Cardinal, and he required her to accept. By then the Company numbered seventy-two, but, expecting it to grow and spread beyond Brescia, Angela soon submitted the rule to the Holy See. But after a terminal illness of about six months, Angela died, 27 January 1540. During those final months she had continued instructing and exhorting her daughters, as she also did by her last will and testament. While the clerics of three churches argued for a month over which would entomb Angela's body (St. Afra's prevailed), that body lay as if sleeping, with no perceptible sign of decomposition.

On 9 June 1544, Paul III finally approved Angela's rule, thus firmly establishing a new form of consecrated life: an institute of uncloistered virgins, fully committed and canonically protected but not necessarily vowed, with an apostolate of charitable works in their own neighborhoods, centered on but not limited to the Christian formation of girls. The papal bull also included two special features Angela had sought: legislation protecting members' rights to any property that would have come to them had they either married or entered a monastery, and authorization to adapt the rule in other dioceses with the bishop's approval while maintaining the unity of the Company as a papal institute.[278]

Never before had women founded an institute of consecrated life independent of any already-existing male institute. Moreover, the Company of St. Ursula, as Angela formed it, was not just another institute but a radically new form of consecrated life. In her lifetime she achieved something comparable to the development of monasticism during the whole period from Antony to Benedict (250-547). Angela Merici is one of the creative geniuses of consecrated life, and perhaps the greatest.

Her Company was, however, countercultural. This was a time when social classes knew their places, even members of third orders wore distinctive dress, and decent women normally belonged to their parents' households only until either marrying or entering a monastery. But the new institute mingled women of different classes, members neither wore a special habit nor dressed fashionably, and young Ursulines went about unescorted doing their charitable works and were likely to inherit eventually and live entirely on their own. Angela had done those things, but she was a special person. Already over thirty when introduced into Brescian society, she lived nearly twenty years in the little city and gained a unique place there before forming the Company. When death removed Angela, the Company's many departures from prevailing conventions became starkly apparent.

Almost at once some churchmen suggested a habit. Members divided on the issue. A recently installed Bishop of Brescia decreed in 1546 that Ursulines would "wear a black dress, a long leather cincture with an iron buckle [a symbol of chastity and penance], a white linen veil, a bandeau with a guimpe."[279] Some parents, especially of the upper classes, had second thoughts about their daughters' Ursuline lifestyle. But proposals that

278. See ibid., 180-85, 221-39.

279. See ibid, 308.

the members become cloistered nuns initially were resisted by the clerics who served the Company, and Rome supported them.[280]

Meanwhile, the Ursulines' apostolic service in Brescia attracted other bishops' interest, and the Company began to spread. St. Charles Borromeo, who began residing in Milan as Archbishop in 1566, soon brought twelve members there and gave them a house. Despite Pius V's legislation requiring all communities of women to take solemn vows and be cloistered, Borromeo obtained a bull from Gregory XIII in 1572 authorizing, but not requiring, the Ursulines of Milan to live in community without cloister. Although some Milanese Ursulines did choose to become nuns, Borromeo did not encourage them. By his death in 1584, however, about six hundred had accepted the Brescian habit, gathered into five communities with a total of eighteen houses, accepted a cleric instead of an Ursuline as superior over all five communities, and devoted themselves almost entirely to teaching girls who came to classes.[281] These were drastic changes from Angela's plan. An arguably more drastic departure occurred with the "Ursuline" foundation in 1595 at Parma: only women belonging to the nobility were admitted to the community; besides providing Christian formation they taught secular subjects; and they were served by a contingent of lay sisters.[282]

By 1600, the Ursuline idea had spread to France, at first usually in a form like that given it by Borromeo. In some cases, bishops took the initiative, while in others the initiative came from existing or newly formed groups of devout women who wanted to engage in an apostolate and adopt a lifestyle more or less like that of the Company as it was in 1540. Within a few decades, however, virtually all of those groups were transformed into cloistered communities with solemn vows, including a fourth vow of *instruction.* On 13 June 1612, Paul V approved this "Order of St. Ursula," directing the nuns to follow the Rule of St. Augustine and make monastic profession after a year's novitiate. This order had no central government; rather, each monastery was overseen by clerical superiors, under the authority of the Archbishop of Paris. These Ursulines, who were like other nuns in most respects, differed only by making room in their cloistered monasteries for the girls they educated and making time for that work in their monastic schedule.

This radical transformation of Angela's plan resulted from complex factors. The Church's law and clerical power had much to do with it but by no means everything. Dispersed and without vows, except perhaps the optional simple vow of virginity, those who were determined to follow Angela's rule, as approved by Paul III in 1544, remained free to do so. More important in the transformation were the values of society at large and prevailing attitudes with respect to women in consecrated life. And in France as at Parma, the preferences of upper-class women and their families played an important role. Most Ursuline communities founded in France after 1612 were founded as monasteries,

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280. See ibid., 306-9.

281. See ibid., 310-14; Cain, op. cit., 434-36. Sr. Mary Monica affirms (314) while Cain denies (435) that the Milanese Ursulines made simple vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

282. See Sr. Mary Monica, op. cit., 315.

and eventually almost all the nuns and their students were from upper class and/or wealthy families.[283] The girls' education, which might well have been unavailable without Angela's work, benefited them and, indirectly, the Church and society at large. Yet cloistered Ursulines never provided the motherly love and Christian formation to the waifs whom St. Angela had wanted her virgin companions to meet on the streets and lead up the ladder to heaven.

7) St. Philip Neri to Mary Ward

St. Philip Neri (1515-1595) was born in Florence and lost his mother at five. His father remarried a cheerful woman, who devotedly mothered Philip and his two sisters. The boy received some spiritual formation from the Dominicans at San Marco. In adolescence, he was prayerful, handsome, lighthearted, witty—a good and charming young man. At eighteen, he left Florence and spent some months working for an uncle near Monte Cassino. Philip prayed in solitude there and underwent what he later called a "conversion." Having discerned a calling to follow Christ very closely, he moved to Rome, tutored two sons of a Florentine in exchange for lodging and food (both boys later became priests), lived simply, studied, became engrossed in prayer, and lived for years as a hermit in the midst of the city. But he had a knack for making friends, and often directed others toward holiness and helped them find their own calling. In 1544, while offering himself to the Holy Spirit, Philip experienced an influx of divine love that so inflamed him that it not only drove his apostolic work for the next half-century but permanently affected his heartbeat and body temperature.[284]

He tried to learn how he was to serve by plunging into serving. He worked in hospitals; he struck up friendly conversations with all sorts of people, always coming around to spiritual matters; he began contributing short, spiritual talks to the Forty Hours Devotion celebrated monthly by a group of diocesan priests at the church of San Girolamo. When some young men taunted his lay preaching, he won them over. Persiano Rosa, a priest at San Girolamo, became Philip's spiritual director, and in 1548, the two founded the Fraternity of the Most Holy Trinity for Pilgrims and Convalescents. Rosa thought Philip should be ordained a priest. At first, he demurred, but Rosa argued that ordination would enable him to do more for people. That and his devotion to the Eucharist were decisive for Philip. Ordained in 1551, he joined his friends at San Girolamo, where he had free room and board and lived austerely. He began hearing confessions, and his love for each person together with his suavity, patience, sensitivity, and skill in communicating soon drew many penitents. He encouraged frequent confession and used it to foster spiritual progress and provide direction.[285]

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283. See ibid., 336-45; Cain, op. cit., 436-38; Elizabeth Rapley, *The Dévotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 48-60. Rapley (59) remarks: "A consequence of clausura [cloister] was aristocratization," and goes on (59-60) to explain that process by economic factors.

284. See Paul Türks, *Philip Neri: The Fire of Joy,* trans. David Utrecht (Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1995), 1-20.

285. Ibid., 21-36.

Wishing to do more to promote the spiritual growth of his penitents, Philip began inviting groups of them to his room for informal afternoon conversations. He spoke as he preached, simply and from the heart, but he also was a good listener, who encouraged everyone to say what he thought. People were attracted by his approach; he had his room enlarged and later had a hall constructed above part of the church. The topics always were religious, and the starting point generally was a passage from the Bible or another book. The group also prayed, took walks—even day-long pilgrimages to various churches—and picnicked. As the numbers grew, the program became more formal: prayer, a spiritual reading, an hour's discussion, three half-hour talks, concluding chants and prayer. Philip commented briefly on the reading but otherwise stayed on the sidelines. He never gave the talks himself, but chose others and encouraged them. Being on Scripture, saints' lives, and Church history, some were lay preaching while others became lecture series. These sessions, which Philip called "the Oratory," drew mostly laymen, both well educated and illiterate, and also some clerics. Some were young men, others mature. There were simply dressed workers and finely clothed nobles. Singers and musicians from the papal chapel came, and some contributed original compositions—"oratorios."[286]

Many who participated in the Oratory changed for the better. Some were ordained and became Philip's associates. Others already held important positions and helped reform the Church. The wealthy gave him money, which he used to help the poor. His lifestyle and that of his associates' contributed to an ecclesial movement of evangelical reform, but their activities also caused anxiety in high places. In 1559, under Paul IV, Philip's faculty to hear confessions was removed and the Oratory was suppressed by the Cardinal Vicar. But after their deaths, Pius IV ended the suppression. Other churchmen opposed Philip, but he also had strong supporters, including Charles Borromeo during later difficulties; some who were sent to check up on the Oratory became participants.[287]

When residents in the Florentine quarter wanted Philip named rector of their church, San Giovanni, Pius IV in 1563 did as they wished. Philip sent several associates to live in the large rectory, while he continued living and conducting the Oratory at San Girolamo and commuting daily between the two churches. The priests living at San Giovanni formed a real community, not only cooperating in pastoral service but cleaning and maintaining the church, doing their own cooking and housekeeping, reading and discussing during their meals. They held an evening session together, with vespers. They did not have a superior, but lived and worked in brotherly charity under the influence of their spiritual father, Philip. He strongly insisted on one rule: "No one should dare to endeavor under whatever pretext to belong to the court and the retinue of cardinals. All should consider that they are here only to serve God and the Church." Philip well understood Jesus' teaching that apostles must serve without ambition and never lord it over the faithful. In 1574, the Florentines provided

286. Ibid., 39-48.

287. Ibid., 49-67.

an adequate room for the Oratory, and its sessions moved there. But then the trustees were a problem, and Pius V's curia no help.

Still, the community grew despite difficulties, including an attempt by Charles Borromeo to take some Oratorians to Milan. In 1575, Gregory XIII issued a bull creating the Congregation of the Oratory; at the same time, he assigned it the parish of Santa Maria in Vallicella. A new church had to be built, and members of the Congregation lived dispersed around the neighborhood. On 15 March 1577, the Congregation held its first assembly in the new, still incomplete, church. The members formalized their existing structure: they would decide important matters together; five fathers, elected as Deputies, would manage the community's affairs; any decisions they made would require the approval of the Provost—to which office they elected Philip. But even when the Oratory moved to the new location, he continued living at San Girolamo for six years, until the community got the Pope to order him to move. He promptly obeyed and made the transfer of his few personal belongings into a comic procession.[288]

The Congregation had grown, and some members wished to expand beyond Rome. Bishops wanted the Oratorians too, since their simple and direct preaching was fruitful. Indeed, similar institutes were being established independently here and there. But Philip, though ready to expand if God willed it, was inclined not to do so. In 1583-84, however, he reluctantly tolerated steps by his most able and closest associate, Francesco Tarugi, who was receiving medical treatment in Naples, to set up a new foundation there. Tarugi carried out the project with the Congregation's approval in 1586, and Philip accepted the decision. But the new foundation and the many pastoral commitments of members still in Rome caused their Oratory sessions to deteriorate for a time, while policy divergences between Naples and Rome impeded efforts to formulate written constitutions for the two communities.[289]

Work on the Constitutions of the Congregation of the Oratory was finally completed in 1612, seventeen years after Philip's death. Since several of the early Oratorians served the Oblates of Torre di Specchi, Frances of Rome's plan may well have influenced them. Each Oratory of the Congregation is an autonomous community of celibate laymen and secular priests. Ideally, their relationships are those of mature, upright, adult brothers who get along well. The norms of community life are meant to maintain and strengthen it, while helping members devote themselves to prayer, study, and service for others' salvation. Though not chanting the whole Divine Office, members engage in regularly scheduled common prayer. Since the Congregation's charism is to follow the evangelical counsels without making vows or promises, members are bound only by charity and apostolic commitment. If some members, even a majority, ever want vows, they must transfer to some other institute, while those who remain keep the community's property. Members must not be ambitious; none may accept any ecclesiastical dignity except at the pope's command. They retain their own property but avoid letting it be a distraction; they contribute reasonably to the community and avoid accumulating wealth by putting any

288. Ibid., 68-86; quoted rule: 70.

289. Ibid., 87-94.

excess to pious uses. With respect to ministry, members obey the bishop; with respect to community matters, its leaders. In each Oratory, priests belonging at least ten years elect its leaders and also make major decisions by majority vote. Detailed customs shape community life, promote modesty, and protect everyone's privacy. After careful screening, a man wishing to join undergoes three probationary periods: the first, a month; the second, a year; the third, two years. Those accepted belong to the Oratory they join, typically with no less stability than had they vowed to remain in it.[290]

Thus, St. Philip Neri and his associates introduced a new form of consecrated life: laymen and secular priests living in stable communities, following the counsels without making vows or promises, and seeking mutual sanctification through their common life and cooperation in pastoral service. A similar form of life was adopted for various reasons at different times by many other priestly societies without the specific charism of the Oratory—for example, the Sulpicians, the Vincentians (Congregation of the Mission), and the Maryknoll Missionaries.[291]

When St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622) and St. Jeanne Frances de Chantal (1572-1641) met, he was Bishop of Geneva and she had been widowed a few years before. On 2 September 1604, she made a vow of perpetual chastity and of obedience to the Bishop—and thus became a consecrated widow—and he became her spiritual director. The two became close friends. Francis understood well that every Christian is called to holiness, which he saw lies in doing God's will in all things and accepting from his hand whatever one suffers. Jeanne, a devout widow, seemed called to contemplative life but her physical limitations and parental responsibilities precluded her becoming a nun. Knowing that many other women were similarly prevented from undertaking what seemed to be their vocation, Francis considered how religious life might be adapted for them. Like nuns, they would live together in community, praying, working, and maintaining silence. But physical austerities could be minimized and self-denial practiced in other ways, not least by forms of obedience and community of goods more demanding—and more conducive to humility and mutual love—than the practices in many monasteries. As with Frances of Rome's Oblates, cloister could be flexible so that sisters with responsibilities, such as Jeanne's toward her children, could go out a few days each year to attend to them, and mature sisters could deepen their own love and help the sick and needy by at times going

290. Ibid., 155-62; E. V. Wahl, "Oratorians," *NCE,* 10:713-14; H. Bowden, "Oratory of Saint Philip Neri," in *Catholic Encyclopedia,* 11:272-74. Some provisions have been changed. In 1611 in France, Cardinal Pierre de Bérulle independently established the Oratory with somewhat different constitutions, including a general superior over all the houses; see A. M. P. Ingold, "Oratory, French Congregation of the," in *Catholic Encyclopedia,* 11:274-75.

291. See J. G. Nugent, "Societies of Common Life," *NCE,*- 13:384-86. *CIC,* c. 731, distinguishes such institutes from institutes of consecrated life, and classifies them as *societies of apostolic life;* at the same time, it states (§1) that their members "strive for the perfection of charity through the observance of the constitutions" and notes (§2) that in some of these societies "members assume the evangelical counsels by some bond defined in the constitutions." However, although Oratorions do not assume the counsels by any bond defined in their constitutions, those who pursue charity by observing their Constitutions in the spirit of St. Philip also follow the counsels as authentically as members of secular institutes of consecrated life who explicitly undertake to do so by vows or other sacred bonds (see *CIC,* c. 712).

to visit them, as Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth. As in the Ursuline communities for which Charles Borromeo had obtained approval, the vows could be simple, not solemn.

With this plan, the two friends established the Congregation of the Visitation of Holy Mary (Visitandines) at Annecy, France, on 6 June 1610. Jeanne and a few companions simultaneously made their profession and began their novitiate, directed by Francis. In 1613, he provided the Visitation with written constitutions. On 2 February 1615, a second house was founded in Lyon. The diocese of Geneva belonged to the ecclesiastical province headed by the Archbishop of Lyon, and the Archbishop, a good man but less wise than Francis, soon began arguing that the Visitandines should take solemn vows and be cloistered. Francis made a strong case for the original plan and obtained a supporting opinion from Cardinal Robert Bellarmine. However, the Archbishop insisted, Francis yielded, and Paul V approved the Visitation in 1618 as an order with the Rule of St. Augustine. That Rule is quite flexible, and Francis and Jeanne were able to preserve all the features of their original plan they considered essential. The order grew rapidly, and Jeanne's remaining life was spent on overseeing its growth. Her experience as a natural mother helped her nurture her spiritual daughters. She also was a good organizer, and by the time of her death in 1641 there were seventy-two houses. Although teaching was not part of the original plan, even before Jeanne died, Visitandines were conducting academies to combat heresy.[292]

St. Peter Fourier (1565-1640) and Blessed Alix le Clerc (1576-1622) similarly founded a women's institute in Lorraine to educate poor young girls, with the intention that it would observe limited cloister. But when Urban VIII approved the Canonesses Regular of St. Augustine of the Congregation of Notre Dame in 1628, its members were required to accept strict cloister, and the same factors that transformed the Ursulines soon profoundly affected the Notre Dame sisters. Still, because Urban allowed them to accept students who entered and left their cloistered monasteries each day, Peter was gratified that they still educated some poor girls without charge.[293]

Mary Ward (1586-1646) was born in England when Catholics were being oppressed, but her recusant parents provided her with a sheltered childhood. They sent her at fifteen to serve as companion to the very devout mistress of a household where Jesuits lived, daily Mass was celebrated, confession and Communion were frequent, prayer was regular, and life was disciplined. Mary adopted ascetic practices, meditated, and read about monastic life.

After the repercussions of the Gunpowder Plot spoiled her father's plan to marry her to an earl, Mary went in 1606 to Saint-Omer in Flanders. She hoped to become a nun, but extraordinary spiritual experiences convinced her that her vocation lay elsewhere and ended her novitiates in two Poor Clare convents, the second of which she had founded for herself and other Englishwomen. While regretfully leaving it in

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292. See Elisabeth Stopp, *Madame de Chantal: Portrait of a Saint* (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1963), 105-126, 145-50; Cain, op. cit., 438-48; Rapley, op. cit., 34-40; M. L. Lynn, "Visitation Nuns," in *NCE*, 14:719-20.

293. See Rapley, op. cit., 63-72.

1609, she remained confident of a calling to consecrated life. She vowed obedience to her spiritual director and made a vow of chastity before him. Returning to England, she joined other celibate young women in the dangerous work of assisting priests. She then gathered nine or so of her companions, and together they opened a school for English girls in Saint-Omer. At first they adapted the Rule of St. Clare for their uncloistered community, but in 1611 Mary received a locution telling her to accept the Society of Jesus' rule and inclusive apostolate, changing only what could not apply to women. Paradoxically, the locution also told her both that the Father General would not permit it and that she should go to him. Still, Mary and her companions began following Ignatius's *Formula of the Institute*.[294]

What happened during the next few years is not entirely clear, but the community grew. Apparently, Bishop Blaes of Saint-Omer and most of the Jesuits concerned with the matter more or less supported the English Ladies, as they came to be called, in respect to their school but strongly resisted their desire to become the nucleus of an institute similar to the Society of Jesus. Had Mary and her companions compromised, they could have continued teaching girls in Saint-Omer but could not have become what they believed they were called to be. By 1613, Mary had opened a house in England. In 1615, she sent Paul V a petition for approval of the institute. But those who represented her and her companions apparently took liberties, for what the Pope and the Roman curia considered in 1616 seems to have been nothing more than the community supported by Bishop Blaes. Rather than approving even that, the response simply left the English Ladies to the Bishop's care while conditionally promising eventual approval. Still, the Bishop read the Holy See's response as extending approval not only to the community's teaching in Saint-Omer but to its pastoral work in England. In 1616, she opened another house, mainly for novices, in Liège, and Bishop Blaes, who was to die in 1618, commended her work to the Prince-Bishop of Liège. But the Jesuit General ordered the Jesuits to have nothing more to do with her institute. Although it received some support from others, many, including the leaders of England's secular clergy, complained to the Holy See that Mary and her companions were exceeding what the Church allowed women. But even though the institute's finances were very inadequate, by 1621 there were houses in Cologne and Trier.[295]

On 28 December of that year, Mary and several companions had an audience in Rome with Gregory XV under the sponsorship of the ruler of the Spanish Netherlands, whose ambassador made the case for approval of the English Ladies—not the Jesuit-like institute they wanted, but the alternative others had wanted. Mary, however, gave the Pope a petition for approval of the Jesuit-like institute. Gregory referred the matter to his curia. Shortly after, the Jesuit general rejected Mary's institute, as long before she had been told he would; but he was impressed by her and from then on personally friendly and in some ways helpful. After some months, the English Ladies got permission to open

294. See Henriette Peters, *Mary Ward: A World in Contemplation*, trans. Helen Butterworth (Leominster, England: Gracewing, 1994), 1-119.

295. See ibid., 120-295.

a school in Rome, but they were subjected to more attacks. Years passed. More houses were opened, including one in Naples that did well and received some Jesuit help. Gregory XV died in 1623, and Urban VIII was elected Pope. He turned the case of the English Ladies over to the Congregation for Propagating the Faith, and adversaries in Rome thoroughly misinformed that Congregation about them and the institute they wanted. But even if Propaganda had been well informed, the issue of cloister alone clearly would have been enough to block approval of the Jesuit-like institute. Another year passed, and in October 1624 Mary got to see the Pope privately. Desperate by then, she put her case very clearly, even bluntly. In April 1625, the Holy See ordered the suppression of the English Ladies' houses in Italy.[296]

Mary left Italy in 1626. She and her companions won support for a new start from governmental and/or Church authorities in several places in central Europe, including Munich and Vienna. As always, though, the English Ladies had powerful opponents, not least the Bishop of Vienna. In 1628, the Propaganda Congregation, including the Pope, decided that their institute was inconsistent with canon law and had to be suppressed. But the Holy See did not communicate its decision to Mary and her companions, and instead set about suppressing the various houses. Unaware of the real situation, Mary, who had long suffered from gall stone attacks and was very ill, returned to Rome. In early 1629, she met again with Urban VIII, who named a committee of cardinals to give her a hearing. They did; their judgment again was negative, and the Holy See continued trying to suppress houses. In late November 1630, Mary, who probably had heard that the institute itself was to be suppressed, wrote Urban VIII, saying that she had been trying to do God's will but, rather than cling to her own conviction, would desist if the Pope so ordered.

On 13 January 1631, he responded with a bull declaring the initiation and operation of the institute of the Jesuitesses to have been incompatible with canon law, and the institute now suppressed. The vows the women had taken were nonbinding; superiors were deprived of their offices and removed from their duties; and all their houses were suppressed. They were ordered under pain of excommunication to stop inducing young women to join, abandon their habit, leave their houses, and never again gather. Any who wished to marry might do so, but they were urged to enter some order of nuns. The bull was to be promulgated in Rome and wherever the Jesuitesses had houses.[297]

On 7 February, clerics in Munich, acting on orders from Rome, arrested Mary. She was accused of heresy, schism, and rebellion against the Church; her papers were seized and she was locked up in a Poor Clare convent. On 12 April, she was released but ordered to go to Rome at her own expense for judgment by the Holy Office. Despite difficulties, she reached Rome early in 1632 and again saw Urban VIII, who at once told her she was acquitted. The Pope also allowed her and some companions, who had nowhere else to go, to live together in Rome, gave them help, and brushed aside their

296. See ibid., 296-429.

297. See ibid., 429-567.

enemies. During the next few years, she and her dispersed companions kept in touch by carefully worded letters, and the group in Rome lived peacefully.

Finally, in 1637, Mary was allowed to leave Rome. In 1638, she was in Liège, but nothing remained of that community. With the support of the Holy See, she returned in 1639 to England, now ruled by Charles I and friendlier to Catholics. Quietly active in London, Mary kept in touch with the Holy See, which apparently also was tolerating, if not encouraging, work in Munich and Rome itself by her associates, who were living as laywomen. In 1642, civil war broke out in England; Mary returned to Yorkshire, where she died in 1645.[298]

Events after 1632-33 suggest that Urban VIII had given Mary permission to continue the institute under limiting conditions that she accepted.[299] Although outwardly laywomen, many of the English Ladies maintained unbroken community, lived according to the evangelical counsels, and continued working without interruption. Mary had named one of her close associates to lead the institute after her death.[300] New members were added, and the institute did not die out. In 1703, the Munich house sought papal approval as an entirely new institute so as to avoid asking for the reversal of Urban VIII's decree suppressing the "Jesuitesses." Although Clement XI did not approve the institute as such, he did approve the rule submitted, and Mary Ward's institute then began calling itself the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In 1749, Benedict XIV made it clear that bishops could not reverse what Clement XI had done, that the Institute was not approved but tolerated, and that its members' simple vows did not make them religious; he also approved the office of Mother General, but asserted that the Institute was not identical with the suppressed Jesuitesses, and therefore he did not reverse Urban VIII's action or recognize Mary Ward as foundress.

In 1821, Mother Teresa Ball, who had entered the Institute in York, England, established a house in Dublin. She called it "Loreto." It became the motherhouse of a distinct institute, whose members became known as the Loreto Sisters. They flourished and spread to many nations in the English-speaking world, including India in 1841, thus finally fulfilling Mary Ward's hope that her sisters would be missionaries as Francis Xavier had been.

In 1877, Pius IX approved the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary as a pontifical congregation. In 1909, Pius X recognized Mary Ward as its foundress. The Holy See approved adoption of the Constitutions of St. Ignatius by the Roman branch of the Institute in 1977 and by the Loreto Sisters in 1985. In 2003, the Holy See approved for

298. See ibid., 567-612.

299. Besides other indications, Pope Urban wrote in 1635: "For We do esteem her, not only as a woman of great prudence and extraordinary courage and powers of mind, but what is more, We consider her a great and holy servant of God" (quoted by Cain, op. cit., 668).

300. See Margaret Mary Littlehales, I.B.V.M., *Mary Ward: Pilgrim and Mystic* (Turnbridge Wells, Kent, England: Burns and Oates, 1998), 241.

the Institute the Ignatian fourth vow of obedience to the pope, and in 2004 it approved the Institute's change of name: Congregation of Jesus.[301]

Thus, Mary Ward pioneered the form of women's consecrated life most widespread in the present day: life in community with the three vows, and perhaps a fourth, committed to active apostolate, and not limited to a single apostolate.

John Paul II points out: "In every age and in every country we find many 'perfect' women (see Prov 31.10) who, despite persecution, difficulties and discrimination, have shared in the Church's mission."[302] He then mentions twelve such women. The first eleven are recognized by the Church as saints. The twelfth is the woman whose grave was covered with a limestone slab bearing the epitaph: "To love the poor,/ persever in the same,/ live dy and rise with/ them was all the ayme/ of/ Mary Ward who/ Having lived 60 years/ and 8 days dyed the/ 20 of Jan 1645".[303]

Mary surely is pleased with that daughter of hers, a young Albanian woman, who, hoping to be a missionary in India, traveled to Dublin in 1928 and was accepted as a postulant by the Loreto Sisters. They gave her *Teresa* for her name in religion. Sent to India for novitiate, she made her final profession in 1937. Subsequently, as was the Sisters' custom, they called her "Mother Teresa." She happily taught girls whose parents could afford to pay tuition in the Sisters' school in Calcutta until she received a further call in 1946: to serve the poorest of the poor. Responding required thought, preparation, and the approval of superiors. But in 1950, Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity were established as a new congregation of the Calcutta Archdiocese and in 1965 as a pontifical congregation.[304] By three and one-half centuries' experience, the Church's pastors had finally learned how to deal with "perfect" women who share in her mission.

8) St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac to St. John Baptist de La Salle

St. Vincent de Paul (1580 or 1581-1660) founded the Congregation of the Mission, and he and St. Louise de Marillac (1591-1660) together founded the Daughters of Charity.

Vincent was the third of six children of a poor, peasant family. At age nineteen or twenty he got a bishop to ordain him a priest, for he hoped to help his family with income from a good benefice—a wrong but unselfish motive. Probably to improve his prospects, he then studied theology. But he failed to get a benefice and went to Paris in 1608. There he found a good director and progressed spiritually. In 1612, he became pastor of a poor parish outside Paris, where he did well, loved his people, and found

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301. See Cain, op. cit., 668-69; http://www.mws-ab.de/wir/mwvita1.htm; http://www.mws-ab.de/wir/mwvita2.htm; http://shop.libroslibres.info/catalog/prensa.php?prensa=2&pagina=0; http://www.loreto.ie/history.html; http://www.jesuit.org/sections. Cain, op. cit., 670, also reports tributes to Mary Ward by Pius XI and Pius XII; the latter spoke of "Mary Ward, that incomparable woman whom during the most somber and bloody hours, England gave to the Church."

302. John Paul II, *Mulieris dignitatem*, 27, *AAS* 80 (1988) 1720, *OR*, 3 Oct. 1988, 12.

303. Littlehales, op. cit., 243. The date, 1645, is according to the Julian calendar; by the Gregorian calendar, Mary died in 1646.

304. See "Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997)," at http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20031019_madre-teresa_en.html

joy. In 1613, he became chaplain and tutor for the wealthy and powerful Gondi family. For several years, he struggled with temptations against faith. In 1617, while visiting peasants on the Gondi lands, he heard the confession of a dying man, who then told Madame de Gondi he would have been damned had his confession not been heard. Moved by the experience, Vincent preached in the local parish about confession and was overwhelmed by the people's response.

Thinking he ought to serve more people who greatly needed pastoral care, Vincent moved to a neglected parish in southeastern France. When he called a family's desperate poverty to his people's attention and they responded generously, he encouraged them to provide more regular help. Matrons of the parish organized a "Confraternity of Charity," whose members were called "Ladies of Charity." When Madame de Gondi sought his return to her household. Vincent returned, but no longer as tutor; instead, he went about preaching "missions" that prepared and encouraged people to make good confessions and establishing Confraternities of Charity in many places. In 1619, he accepted pastoral responsibility for the galley convicts of France. Around that time, he became friends with Francis de Sales and Jeanne Frances de Chantal, who persuaded him to serve as superior of the Visitation convents in Paris. Seeing a far greater need for the mission work than he could meet alone, Vincent began enlisting other priests. In 1625-26, with the Gondi family's support, he and three of his companions formed the Congregation of the Mission to carry on the work. Soon other priests joined. The Archbishop of Paris and King of France approved the new institute, as did Urban VIII in 1633.[305]

Like Oratorians, Vincentians remained secular priests, dressed accordingly, and did not commit themselves to monastic practices. But unlike Oratorians, they formed a unified institute of many houses under a Father General. Being permanently committed to their common apostolate, moreover, they agreed to vow poverty, chastity, obedience, and stability in the Congregation. These vows, made after a two-year probation called "internal seminary" rather than "novitiate," were simple and not received by anyone; but they were made aloud in the presence of superiors and were recorded, and could be dissolved only by the pope or the Vincentian General. In 1655, Alexander VII confirmed both the Vincentians' practice of taking such vows and their claim that the Congregation of the Mission nevertheless was not a *religious* institute.[306] Though somewhat similar to Philip Neri's Oratorians, therefore, Vincent's Congregation is another, distinctive form of consecrated life.

Louise was the illegitimate daughter of a nobleman, Louis de Marillac, who had her raised in a convent. There she received sound Christian formation and a better education than most girls of her day. At about twelve, she was placed in a boarding house for girls operated by a devout spinster. Louis died in July 1604, but he had provided for Louise. She sought to become a nun, but was not admitted to the convent. A few years later, she

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305. See Hugh F. O'Donnell, C.M., "Vincent de Paul: His Life and Way," in Frances Ryan, D.C., and John E. Rybolt, C.M., eds., *Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac: Rules, Conferences, and Writings* (New York: Paulist, 1995), 13-23; M. A. Roche, "Vincent de Paul, St.," in *NCE,* 14:682-83.

306. See Pierre Coste, C.M., *The Life and Works of Saint Vincent de Paul,* trans. Joseph Leonard, C.M., vol. 1 (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1952), 469-510, esp. 494-95.

was living with an uncle and aunt who were well-connected at court and probably introduced her to Antoine Le Gras, secretary to the Queen Mother. Married in 1613, the couple quickly had a son, Michel, and soon after assumed responsibility for the seven children of relatives who died. Although happily married, Louise was heavily burdened, especially as Antoine's health declined from 1621 until his death in 1625.[307]

During his decline, Antoine became irritable and less supportive. Not surprisingly, Louise was psychologically fragile—anxious and scrupulous—and her spiritual director and others gave her unhelpful advice. She had met Francis de Sales in 1619 and might have sought his help, but he died in 1622. In May of the following year, she vowed to remain a widow should Antoine die, but, starting on Ascension Thursday, she was depressed and tormented by doubts. While praying in church on Pentecost, she experienced a grace she credited to Francis, an "illumination" that resolved her doubts and reassured her. It included the thought that she would eventually belong to a community of consecrated women who went about helping others. Around the end of that year, her spiritual director, unable to continue caring for her, got Vincent to take over her direction. Although he was only ten years Louise's senior, he became not only her spiritual father but the father figure she badly needed.[308]

After Antoine died, Louise devoted herself to Michel's education and works of charity, in which she cooperated with Vincent. In May 1629, she began visiting Confraternities of Charity to evaluate their operation and to encourage, exhort, and instruct the Ladies. With experience, she was able to offer better rules for the Confraternities. She also began reviving Confraternities that had died out and establishing new ones. Earlier, in July 1628, she had told Vincent she wished to devote her life to serving the poor. On her wedding anniversary in 1530, she experienced what she took to be a spiritual marriage to Jesus; it strengthened her for the work she was then beginning. Though maturing psychologically, she suffered from migraine headaches, and was worried about serious troubles her relatives were having and about her son's dissatisfaction with his school. Still, she persevered with her work and traveled a great deal. Girls began helping the Ladies of Charity with their work, and Vincent, in his messages to Louise, increasingly spoke of these young women. She began thinking about how to form and organize them.[309]

On occasion, Louise taught catechism in the villages, but it was clear to her that such teaching needed to be ongoing. Besides helping care for the sick poor, some of the girls began teaching catechism and reading. Newcomers made a four-day retreat and were given a plan of life, but Louise realized they needed more formation and supervision. The organization and governance of the early Ursulines might have served as a model, but Vincent and Louise seem not to have known about them. Aware that the Visitandines had been compelled to give up charitable activity, Vincent and Louise concluded that

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307. Kathryn B. LaFleur, S.P., *Louise de Marillac: A Light in the Darkness* (Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City, 1996), 29-36.

308. See ibid., 36-40.

309. See ibid., 40-54.

members of their new confraternity must carefully avoid being, or even seeming to be, religious: no habit, no veil, no vows, no grill, no superior called "Mother," no house called "convent," no formation called "novitiate," and no chaplain or chapel of their own. As much as possible, they would dress, live, act, and worship like other young, unmarried laywomen. On 29 November 1633, Louise took a few young women into her home and began forming them.[310] The Confraternity of the Daughters of Charity had begun.

Still, that date's significance is greater in retrospect than it seemed at the time. The first Daughter of Charity, Marguerite Naseau, had been buried more than six months earlier. An extraordinarily able and generous country girl who had learned to read with little help, she had taught others and skimped on necessities to help young men prepare to become priests. When she heard about the work of the Confraternity of Charity in Paris—caring for the sick poor—she came to Vincent and volunteered. She learned quickly, threw herself into the work, and enlisted other girls. She became infected while caring for plague victims and died early in 1633.[311] The Ladies of Charity were eager to have such dedicated helpers. As Louise prepared the Daughters and their numbers grew, they not only nursed the sick in their homes and in hospitals but engaged in other charitable works, including teaching poor children, nurturing foundlings, and caring for war refugees, galley convicts, and the aged.[312]

Although the Daughters of Charity initially were meant to be no more than a pious association of laywomen, the formation provided by Father Vincent and Mother Louise, together with the eagerness of many unmarried girls and widows to commit themselves unreservedly, gradually transformed the Confraternity into an institute—but *not* a religious institute—of consecrated life.

By 1640, many Daughters wished to make vows, at least private ones; Vincent advised them not to do so without their superiors' approval, and provided a prayer that enabled them to express their commitment without even promising anything. In seeking approbation of the Daughters from the Archbishop of Paris in 1645, he limited himself to having them recognized as a Confraternity, *Servants of the Poor of Charity,* distinct from the Ladies of Charity.[313] He did this, he told the sisters, "lest if the title of Congregation were given to you, there might be some persons in future who would wish to have the house enclosed and you to become religious."[314] Still, he was not entirely consistent. On 15 March 1642, Louise and three other Sisters made perpetual vows during Mass, and some others later were allowed to do so after four or five years as Daughters.[315]

The year before he died, however, Vincent strongly urged the sisters to resist the temptation to become religious:

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310. See Coste, op. cit., 222-31.

311. See ibid., 223-25.

312. On the expansion of the Daughters' work, see Louise Sullivan, D.C., "Louise de Marillac: A Spiritual Portrait," in Ryan and Rybolt, eds., op. cit., 49-57.

313. See Coste, op. cit., 336-64.

314. Vincent de Paul, *The Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul to the Sisters of Charity,* trans. Joseph Leonard, C.M. (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1952), vol. 3, 89 (8 Aug. 1655).

315. See Coste, op. cit., 348-49.

> Now, my dear Sisters, you are not religious in name but you are religious in deed, and you are more obliged to become perfect than they are. And if any mischief-maker, or idolater, were to appear among you and say: "We ought to be religious; it would be much nicer," ah! Sisters, the Company would be ready for Extreme Unction. Fear that, Sisters, and if you are still alive, prevent it; weep, groan, tell the Superior about it. For whoever says *religious* says *cloistered*, and Daughters of Charity should go everywhere.[316]

And after he and Louise died in 1660, the Daughters did not make permanent vows. Rather, those who persevered in service for five years after their initial training made annual vows of chastity, poverty, obedience, and service to the poor.[317]

Today, the Daughters of Charity, like the Oratorians, are classified canonically as a society of apostolic life. The fact that their members do not take religious vows distinguishes such societies from institutes of consecrated life (see *CIC*, c. 731, §1). Yet Daughters making their annual vows typically intend lifelong commitment as do nuns who make solemn vows.[318] Then too, simply by adding a paragraph about lifelong profession, the Daughters' Rule, approved by Clement IX in 1668, would provide ample guidance for a religious institute of women of active life with similar apostolates. Indeed, a fundamental principle of the Daughters' Rule is:

> They should consider that although they do not belong to a religious order, that state not being compatible with the duties of their vocation, yet as they are much more exposed to the world than nuns—their monastery being generally no other than the abode of the sick; their cell, a hired room; their chapel, the parish church; their cloister, the public streets or the wards of hospitals; their enclosure, obedience; their grate, the fear of God; and their veil, holy modesty—they are obliged on this account to lead as virtuous a life as if they were professed in a religious order; to conduct themselves wherever they mingle with the world with as much recollection, purity of heart and body, detachment from creatures; and to give as much edification as nuns in the seclusion of their monasteries.[319]

Moreover, in asking Pope Clement to approve their Rule, the Daughters stated that they had "consecrated and dedicated themselves to the service of the poor sick in the hospitals of the city and in other places, and to all other humble works of charity."[320]

Thus, Vincent and Louise saw to it that the Daughters of Charity could not be regarded canonically as an institute of consecrated life precisely so that members might be free to live the form of consecrated life to which they are committed. Furthermore, the founders and their immediate successors succeeded in preventing the Daughters' transformation into a different form of consecrated life by providing that the General of

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316. Vincent de Paul, op. cit., vol. 4, 261 (24 Aug. 1659).

317. See Coste, op. cit., 349.

318. Daughters of Charity and Vincentian priests experienced in dealing with them verified this statement.

319. "Rules of the Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Sick Poor," I, 2, in Ryan and Ryboldt, eds., op. cit., 169.

320. Quoted in Miguel Perez Flores, "The Company of the Daughters of Charity, Society of Apostolic Life: I," *Echo of the Company*, June-July 1997: 320.

the Congregation of the Mission, rather than diverse bishops, would be the Daughters' superior and by obtaining Clement IX's approval of the institute.

Later, Clement XI's approval of the rule of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1703 began a development of Church policy that made it unnecessary for women's institutes of consecrated life founded after 1800 to adopt the ingenious solution of Vincent and Louise. To be sure, neither Clement XI then nor Benedict XIV in 1749 approved Mary Ward's Institute itself or acknowledged her as its founder. They only tolerated the Institute while making it clear that its members were not religious. But their decisions opened the way for many congregations of women who would live in community, take simple vows, go about in the world with some restrictions, and devote themselves to active apostolates: nursing, teaching, and so on. With the support of almost all canonists, most bishops considered themselves free to approve such institutes; and in 1816, Peter Joseph Triest, a Belgian priest who had founded the Daughters of Charity of Jesus and Mary, obtained the Holy See's approbation of both the institute and its constitutions, even though these provided for sisters with perpetual vows—whose lives and work were, however, otherwise virtually the same as those of the Daughters of Charity. Still, the members of such women's congregations were not officially recognized as religious until Leo XIII finally did so in 1900, while maintaining their canonical distinction from the orders of nuns with solemn vows.[321]

St. John Baptist de La Salle (1651-1719), the eldest son of a very wealthy family, became a diocesan priest and canon of Rheims. He and twelve laymen serving as schoolmasters under his direction founded a congregation of men on Trinity Sunday, 1684, taking one-year vows of obedience, adopting a habit, and calling their community "Brothers of the Christian Schools." During the following year, De La Salle gave away what he owned to the poor. Although a priest, he prepared the brothers to function as a nonclerical congregation. In 1688, he moved to Paris and turned over the institute's direction to a lay superior elected by the brothers, but Church authorities intervened to overrule that step. In 1694 he and twelve brothers took perpetual vows, and he began working on a rule and trying to obtain governmental and ecclesiastical recognition. In the rule, he provided that the institute should not admit anyone in major orders and its members should not aspire to ordination. In 1717, he again turned over the institute's direction to a lay superior and, with the brothers' advice and mandate, revised the rule. He died six years before Benedict XIII approved the institute and confirmed its rule in 1725.[322]

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321. See Cain, op. cit., 919-22. The *CIC* (1917), cc. 487-88, codified the development. Leo XIII's document—*Conditae a Christo*, *ASS* 33 (1900-1901) 341-47—only incidentally clarified the status as religious of men's and women's congregations of simple vows; it mainly distinguished between congregations approved only by bishops and those approved by the Holy See, and regulated the relations between the superiors of congregations of each kind and the bishops.

322. See Carl Koch, Jeffrey Calligan, F.S.C., and Jeffrey Gros, F.S.C. eds., *John Baptist de La Salle: The Spirituality of Christian Education* (New York: Paulist, 2004), 5-20; W. J. Battersby, *John Baptist de La Salle* (New York: Macmillan, 1958), 329-33 and passages scattered throughout the work.

What De La Salle and his associates founded was not a new form of consecrated life. Like the Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem in its early days, the Alexian Brothers, and Mary Ward's institute, the Brothers of the Christian Schools was to be a society of lay faithful consecrated by vows to an apostolate of charitable service which they themselves organize and carry out. However, the brothers obtained papal approval, flourished, and persevered as a strictly lay institute. Two things deserve notice in De La Salle's work.

First, while Peter Nolasco, Angela Merici, Mary Ward, and others were well aware that the solitude essential for a consecrated life devoted to asceticism and prayer is not essential for the pursuit of holiness by those whose vocations include self-sacrificing service to their neighbors, no one before John Baptist de La Salle articulated a spirituality for the consecrated life of laymen and laywomen with an active apostolate so richly as he did.[323] At the heart of it is the insight that the common way to respond to the universal call to holiness is not monastic life—which, of course, is suitable for those called to it—but the faithful fulfillment of one's personal vocation, whatever it may be. In two writings, "Rules I Have Imposed on Myself" and "Reflections on Their State and Employment That the Brothers Should Make from Time to Time, Especially During Retreat," De La Salle includes a paragraph neatly formulating that insight:

> It is a good rule of life to make no distinction at all between the work of our vocation in life and the work of our salvation and perfection. We can be sure that we cannot work out our salvation better or achieve perfection more surely than by discharging our responsibilities, provided that we accomplish them in view of the will of God.[324]

He also makes the central point in the Rule itself:

> The spirit of this Institute is, first, a spirit of faith, which ought to induce those who compose it not to look upon anything but with the eyes of faith, not to do anything but in view of God, and to attribute everything to God, always entering into these sentiments of Job: "The Lord gave me everything, and the Lord has taken everything away from me; nothing has happened to me except what pleases him . . ..
> . . .
> They [the Brothers] will make it their study to exercise continual watchfulness over themselves so as not to perform, if possible, a single action from natural impulse, through custom, or from any human motive, but they will act so as to perform them all by the guidance of God, through the movement of his Spirit, and with the intention of pleasing him.[325]

He left a large body of writings that have helped form the members of many subsequent religious institutes of active life, especially congregations of sisters and brothers whose chief apostolate is teaching children.

Second, although the cloister imposed on women was not a problem for De La Salle, he encountered much opposition. Some were provoked by the competition his free

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323. See Koch, Calligan, and Gros, eds., op. cit., 21-30.

324. John Baptist de La Salle, *Rule and Foundational Documents*, trans. Augustine Loes, F.S.C. and Ronald Isetti (Landover, Maryland: Lasallian Publications, 2002), 199, and fn. 3.

325. Ibid., 16-18; the paragraphs quoted are the same in the Rule of 1705 and 1718, and are from ch. 2, paragraphs 2 and 6.

schools gave their fee-for-service instruction. Many were upset because his schools abandoned traditional instruction in Latin and the liberal arts, which others already were providing the sons of wealthy parents, and focused instead on what nobody was offering the sons of poor parents: the Christian formation, basic education, and practical training lower-class men needed to survive and fulfill their personal vocations. Although many realistic pastors appreciated the value of that plan of instruction, quite a few pastors and many influential lay people looked askance at a religious institute consisting entirely of laymen—brothers who were not second-class members of a monastery or adjutants to clerics but were carrying on their lay apostolate under the direction of their own lay superiors.[326] Such opposition to the Christian Brothers in their early days shows that not all the opposition the English Ladies encountered was due to their being women.

9) Secular institutes and Opus Dei

At various times, more or less well-organized groups of devout Christians committed themselves, by vows or other sacred bonds, to celibate chastity and other evangelical counsels, yet lived dispersed among the faithful rather than in community, spending most of their time not on religious and/or charitable activities but on secular occupations, such as farming or homemaking. The Irish order of penitents was an early example; some third-order chapters were later ones; and the first Ursulines came close to being another.

In the France of 1791, clerical and consecrated life was under severe constraints. A priest who had become a Jesuit before the Society was suppressed, Pierre-Joseph Picot de Clorivière, S.J. (1735-1820), founded associations of priests and of laywomen who professed the evangelical counsels yet outwardly lived like other devout Catholics. While serving insofar as possible as diocesans, the Priests of the Heart of Jesus wished to live, or were determined to continue living, a consecrated life. The Daughters of the Heart of Mary was co-founded by a young noblewoman, Marie-Adelaide de Cicé (1749-1818), who was educated by Visitation nuns and took a vow of chastity in 1771. She and her companions were determined to live a consecrated life and serve Jesus and his Church despite the hardships and risks doing so involved. Five of the two communities' members were guillotined in 1793-94, and later both De Clorivière and De Cicé spent time in prison.[327]

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326. See Koch, Calligan, and Gros, eds., op. cit., 17-19; Battersby, op. cit., 169-75, 258-60, 289. The Rule absolutely proscribes teaching Latin: see De La Salle, op. cit., 96.

327. Both the Priests and the Daughters received initial, oral approval from Pius VII in 1801. The Daughters received final approval, but as a religious institute, from Leo XIII in 1890. Their Society, only some of whose members live in community, still exists and is active in about thirty nations (see Anonymous, *Adelaide De Cicé: Foundress of the Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary,* trans. John Joyce, S.J. [New York: Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary, 1962], especially De Cicé's spiritual testament [208-9]). After De Clorivière's death, the institute of priests slowly died out, but in 1918 it was revived by a French priest, became a secular institute in 1952, and received definitive approval of its constitutions in 1960, and of its revised constitutions in 1999. In 1972, it began forming the Cor Unum spiritual family in which it is associated with a feminine secular institute, a pious association of men meant to become a masculine secular institute, and a pious association of married lay people (see *Constitutions of the Institute of Priests of the Heart of Jesus* [no place or publisher, 1999], 4).

During the early nineteenth century, even where consecrated life remained an option, some Catholics began to form institutes more or less similar to those established by De Clorivière.[328] When Polish religious orders and congregations were suppressed by tsarist rulers during the latter part of the nineteenth century, Blessed Honoratus Kozminski, O.F.M.Cap., promoted consecrated life in Poland by founding twenty-six communities with vows and rules but no outward sign of their consecration.[329] This development took more definite shape with the work of Agostino Gemelli, O.F.M. (1878-1959) and Armida Barelli (1882-1952) who, in 1919 together established what later was called the "Secular Institute of the Missionaries of the Kingship of Christ."

Gemelli was born into a superficially Catholic family in Milan and educated as a physician. As a young man, he entirely rejected revelation and thought science alone could solve all human problems, but experience and the influence of various devout people led him to return to Catholic faith in 1903. He studied philosophy, began lifelong work in psychology, became a Franciscan, and in 1908 was ordained a priest. In Barelli's case, her family was not devout, but her parents sent her to convent schools that nurtured her faith. When her father died in 1907, she took over the management of his business. Worried about her brothers' lack of faith, she sought Gemelli's help in 1910, and he befriended her and her family. She was drawn to consecrated life but, enmeshed in family responsibilities, was receptive to Franciscan lay spirituality.

Gemelli hoped to establish a new Catholic university and founded a journal to promote participation by faithful Catholics in intellectual life. Barelli helped with that project, and, at the urging of the Archbishop of Milan, began working at organizing Catholic Action. By the end of World War I, she was President of Women's Italian Catholic Youth. In her work she encountered other devout women who wanted to embrace consecrated life while remaining in the world. Gemelli, on his first retreat after military service, discussed with a Franciscan confrere the idea of a new organization for people consecrated to God but doing apostolic work in the world. An elderly woman who had contributed to Gemelli's journal had written him a letter claiming that Leo XIII long before had entrusted such a project to her and had told her that when the time was right, she would find the man of God for it. On visiting her, Gemelli became convinced that her claim was truthful and the time was right. In August 1919, he and Barelli formulated the rule for the new institute, and on 19 November she and eleven companions made their profession at San Damiano in Assisi.[330]

Gemelli and Barelli intended the Missionaries of the Kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ to be a form of consecrated life different from both the religious life and the lay

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328. See Jean Beyer, S.J., *Les Instituts Séculiers* (Brussels: Desclée de Brouwer, 1954), 51-63.

329. See "Blessed Honoratus Kosminski, O.F.M.Cap.," *L'Osservatore Romano,* 17 October 1988, 12.

330. See Maria Sticco, *Father Gemelli: Note for the Biography of a Great Man,* trans. Beatrice Wilczynski (Chicago: Franciscan Herald, 1980), 1-100; Sharon Holland, I.H.M., *The Concept of Consecration in Secular Institutes* (Rome: CMIS, 1981), 5-6. During the next few years, Barelli and her companions helped Gemelli establish the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan, of which she became the treasurer (see Sticco, 100-118).

life of tertiaries who privately vowed celibate chastity and, while remaining at home, strove to live as much like religious as possible. As early as February 1913, he had written to her:

> May the Lord assist you and make you a lay saint, in the true sense of the word; not like a nun living at home, but like those first Christian virgin martyrs who raised to gigantic proportions the mission of women in the world. One cannot estimate the contribution they made to the diffusion of Christianity. You must be like them: a laywoman, but a saintly one![331]

On 31 May 1913, she had become a consecrated virgin. She then continued living a genuinely lay life and carrying on her whole secular occupation as her contribution to transforming the fallen world into Jesus' kingdom. In founding the new institute in 1919, they together provided a framework in which other women who shared her charism might undertake and support one another in a life consecrated to lay apostolate. Gemelli founded a similar institute for lay men in 1928, and in 1953 founded another for priests.[332]

In her "notes for a biography," Maria Sticco describes the thinking that motivated Gemelli in 1919. He

> . . . understood that the big monastic and conventual families established in the Middle Ages, were withdrawing to the rear guard; the vanguard needed to be filled by more flexible groups, without the habits and lifestyles that had, indeed, exposed religious to the persecution of their enemies, but also suggested a superiority which secular society could not easily tolerate. Fr. Gemelli found the source for the idea of a consecrated laity in the early days of his own order, and especially in the thought of his St. Francis: a laity that was to bring a new vigor to the apostolate by injecting a religious value into the twentieth century myth of action.[333]

Barelli's perspective probably was more concrete. Focused on launching the institute, her main motivation seems to have been her and her companions' discernment of their vocation to consecrated life devoted to lay apostolic work.

Although institutes more or less similar to the one Gemelli and Barelli founded in 1919 had existed before 1917, the Code of Canon Law provided no ecclesial space for them. Benedict XV (pontificate 1914-22) supported Barelli's promotion of Italian women's Catholic Action and did not want women dedicated to the lay apostolate to become nuns. But his advice for them was to forgo vows and regard belonging to a third order as their consecration to the Lord. Pius XI (pontificate 1922-39) was open to recognizing groups like Gemelli's as a distinctive sort of consecrated life. But the matter required study.

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331. Sticco, op. cit., 66.

332. See http://www.cmis.it/scheda_istituto.asp?ID=113; John Paul II, "Address to the Priest Missionaries of Our Lord Jesus Christ" (8 July 2003), *Inseg.*, ???, *OR*, 16 July 2003, 7. The married layman, Ludovico Necchi, who had been a channel of grace to Gemelli before his conversion and remained his very dear friend, was a Franciscan tertiary; had Necchi been single, the institutes for women and men very likely would have been founded together—in 1913 or even sooner.

333. Sticco, op. cit, 96.

By 1934, the Congregation of the Council was approving groups like Gemelli's, but it regarded them as religious institutes. In 1938, Pius XI directed that Congregation to study the matter and allowed Gemelli to organize a meeting of interested parties in Switzerland. Twenty-five directors of institutes participated. All wanted the Church to clarify the status of institutes of lay people consecrated to God for apostolate in the world. In 1939, Gemelli prepared a substantial theological study, generally referred to as the "Memoria," which he sent to the Pope, the Congregation of the Council, and several other prelates. He explained that the new institutes were unlike other associations of the laity and like religious institutes inasmuch as their members permanently belonged to them and were consecrated in a way requiring unqualified observance of the evangelical counsels; yet the new institutes also are unlike religious institutes in that their members carry on their secular, professional activities in the world, but now with the supernatural finality of restoring the world in Christ.[334]

After World War II, Pius XII in 1947 finally gave official status to *secular institutes:* associations of laymen, of laywomen, or of clerics, whose members, though living dispersed in the world, are united in their effort to pursue holiness and carry on appropriate apostolates. All secular institutes are primarily associations of men or women called to celibate chastity. But the constitutions of some provide for membership in a wider sense by married individuals and/or couples, who share, in accord with their state of life, in the institute's way of pursuing holiness and its apostolic focus. While even those committed to celibate chastity need not live together, all secular institutes must have one or more community houses as residences for superiors, those in formation, and members requiring care, as well as for periodic meetings, retreats, and the like. All secular institutes also assume certain responsibilities toward their members, who are incorporated into them. None of the members makes his or her profession, whether temporary or permanent, by public vows. Rather, in accord with the secular institutes' diverse constitutions, members either take private vows or no vows. Members who undertake to live in celibate chastity must do so with some form of consecration binding in conscience, and all members must make promises of obedience to superiors and of poverty as these are understood in the institute.[335]

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334. See Holland, op. cit., 6-35. Gemelli's analysis was not well received; the Holy Office told him to withdraw it and destroy all copies; Gemelli obeyed (see Sticco, op. cit., 276) but Barelli saved her copy by using it as packing material and produced it some years later when the Holy See wanted it (see fn. 7 in Mary Lou Carr, "The Principle of Reserve and Its Effect on the Promotion of New Vocations to Secular Institutes," http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/1114/carr.html

335. Pius XII, *Provida mater ecclesia* (2 February 1947), *AAS* 39 (1947) 114-24; in Gaston Courts, ed., *The States of Perfection according to the Teaching of the Church: Papal Documents from Leo XIII to Pius XII,* trans. John A. Flynn, L.S.S. (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1961), 95-109. On public and private vows, see Holland, op. cit., 80-105. Making *public* vows pertains to the definition of profession as a religious (1917 *CIC,* c. 488, 1°); and vows are public if they are accepted in the name of the Church by a legitimate ecclesiastical superior; otherwise, even if made in a ceremony anyone could attend and at which many people are present, vows are private (1917 *CIC,* c. 1308, §1). Still, the vows or other sacred bonds of members of secular institutes have properties, including consequences under canon law, incompatible with their being merely private—e.g., they cannot be dispensed as private vows can be, but rather as (though not exactly as) the public vows of religious profession can be (see 1983 *CIC,* cc. 691, 727, 1196).

This teaching on secular institutes makes it clear that *vows are not essential to consecration.*[336] God invites some to enjoy a special relationship of love with himself and offers them the grace to accept it. Consecration essentially is the bond God's love forms: his gift and their acceptance of it by their total self-gift, which involves following Jesus closely and requires them to live as he did and share in his service.[337] The life of members in the stricter sense of secular institutes is truly consecrated:

> It is consecrated life in the world, as world, and that world is consecrated to God from within. The secular character is therefore the character of the consecration, which consecration pervades the whole apostolate of their institutes.[338]

But although the consecration of members of secular institutes is specifically different from that of members of religious institutes, that secular consecration, no less than that of the Benedictine or Ignatian *Suscipe,* involves a complete gift of oneself. Thus, at least the members in the stricter sense of secular institutes undertake an *evangelical* life in the sense defined in **A-9,** above—always to choose and act in accord with God's will and always to accept whatever happens as from his hand.

Pius XII asked Armida Barelli if she was happy with his document on secular institutes and was surprised that she considered it not relevant to her institute. That led him to reflect and, in 1948, issue a further document clarifying the character of secular institutes.[339] Pius there decrees that groups meeting the previous document's requirements for secular institutes are not to be anything else. Since secular institutes of either clerics or lay people profess Christian perfection in the world, they have a status superior to that of ordinary associations of the faithful, such as third orders and confraternities. But the members are not religious; they remain laymen, laywomen, or secular priests.[340] All members in the stricter sense of secular institutes undertake a true form of consecrated life, but it is a life truly secular, not quasi-religious. Their

> practice and profession of perfection is to be *in the world;* it is a perfection, therefore, which must be adapted to life in the world in everything which is lawful and which is compatible with the duties and activities of this perfection.
>
> The entire life of members of Secular Institutes, since it has been consecrated to God by the profession of perfection, should be made an apostolate; this apostolate should be

336. The 1983 *CIC,* c. 573, reflects the teaching by dealing with the essentials of secular institutes in §1, and with "vows or other sacred bonds" by which the counsels are professed in §2.

337. See Holland, op. cit., 124-41, 144-45, for a report of the extensive work of Jean Beyer, S.J., on consecration; Beyer himself summarizes his analysis in *Le Droit de la Vie Consacrée: Commentaire des Canons 573-606: Normes Communes* (Paris: Tardy, 1988), 23-29.

338. Jean Beyer, S.J., *De Vita per Consilia Evangelica Consecrata* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Universitá Gregoriana, 1969), 87; quoted and translated in Holland, op. cit., 165.

339. See Holland, op. cit., 52-56.

340. As Holland, op. cit., 330-31, points out, Pius XII's documents on secular institutes focus on the laity and lay apostolate. Like members of lay secular institutes, members of clerical secular institutes must be distinguished from religious. However, a cleric's secular apostolate cannot be lay apostolate; it must be pastoral service. Thus, the difference between clerical members of secular and of religious institutes is less than that between lay members of secular and of religious institutes—see Jean Beyer, S.J., *Religious Life or Secular Institute* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1970), 119-23.

> performed steadfastly and piously, with such purity of intention, intimate union with God, generous selflessness and courageous self-denial, and love of souls, as not only to reveal the interior spirit which animates it, but also to nourish and renew that spirit ceaselessly. . . . This apostolate of Secular Institutes must be faithfully carried on, not merely *in the world*, but also, so to speak, *from the world*, and, consequently, through the professions, activities, forms, places and conditions corresponding to this secular condition.[341]

Pope Pius also dealt with Church law bearing on secular institutes, but his provisions have been superseded by the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* or incorporated in it. Still, in dealing with law Pius makes an important, theological statement: "Secular institutes, even though their members live in the world, by reason nevertheless of that full consecration to God and to souls which, with the approval of the Church, they profess, . . . are rightly and deservedly classed among the states of perfection juridically organized and recognized by the Church herself."[342]

Fittingly, when Armida Barelli and her sisters celebrated their institute's thirtieth anniversary in August 1949, Pius XII found in it the essential features of every secular institute's special form of consecrated life: being in no way *of* the world while fully being *in* the world; belonging entirely to God by true and total consecration while engaging in the truly secular apostolate of a complete life spent in salting, enlightening, and leavening the world.[343] The new insight into the nature of lay apostolate that Pius XII achieved in his work with secular institutes reappears in what Vatican II teaches not only about them (see PC 11) but about the apostolic role of all the lay faithful (see LG 31, AA 2, GE 8, AG 15).[344]

St. Josemaría Escrivá (1902-75) was the second of six children in a devoutly Catholic, Spanish, middle-class family. His three younger sisters died between 1910 and 1913, and in 1915 his father's business failed. But his parents dealt well with their suffering, for they were well-balanced, happily married, and sustained by trust in God. The boy benefited not only from the example and guidance of his father, a gentle and dedicated family man, but from the sound formation and good instruction of his Catholic-school teachers.

As a child, he felt sure he would not be a priest. Around the end of 1917, however, Escrivá saw in the snow the footprints of a discalced Carmelite. Thinking about how much that man had sacrificed for God, the youth asked himself what God wanted of him. While not discerning precisely what that was, he nevertheless became convinced it would

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341. Pius XII, *Primo feliciter* (12 Mar. 1948), *AAS* 40 (1948) 284-85; Courts, ed., op. cit., 120.

342. Ibid., *AAS* 285-86; Courtois, ed., op. cit., 121.

343. See Pius XII, "Discourse to the Missionary Sisters of the Kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ," *Discorsi e Radiomessagi di Sua Santità Pio XII*, 11 (1949-50), 167-69; Courtois, ed., op. cit., 137-40.

344. *CIC*, cc. 710-30, articulate general Church law specifically concerning secular institutes; see Sharon L. Holland, I.H.M., "Title III: Secular Institutes," in John P. Beal, James A Coriden, and Thomas J. Green, eds., *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law* (New York: Paulist, 2000), 878-891. On its website (http://www.secularinstitutes.org), the United States Conference of Secular Institutes provides some general information about secular institutes together with brief information about its members, including, in most cases, how to contact them.

require him to be a priest, and in the fall of 1918 he became a day student in a seminary. In 1920, he left home and entered the seminary at Saragossa, where he did well, attracted the favor of the Cardinal-Archbishop, and was ordained a presbyter in 1925. Meanwhile, even as he was completing his preparation for the priesthood and undertaking pastoral duties, the young man studied civil law with his Archbishop's approval. In 1927, Escrivá completed his licentiate in law and began work on a doctorate in Madrid, while also engaging in pastoral work.[345]

On 2 October 1928, making a retreat at a Vincentian house, the young priest had an extraordinary spiritual experience. As he prayed in his room, he heard the bells of a nearby church. The vocation that a decade before he had dimly perceived and that had motivated him to become a priest suddenly became clear: he "saw" the institute that would be called *Opus Dei*. While others would credit him, Escrivá, considering himself a mere instrument of a divine initiative, later said: That "day the Lord founded his Work."[346]

Many founders of institutes of consecrated life took a similar view of their role. But Escrivá did not envision another such institute. Instead he had in mind an association of lay faithful and clerics who, though not called to religious life, would live their faith to the full and give themselves entirely to God by responding unconditionally to his call to holiness. Not compartmentalizing their faith, as too many Christians do, they would cooperate with God in fulfilling all their duties and carrying out all their commitments. Their lives would become seamless and lucid. The light of the Gospel would permeate all their activities, not least their work. In this way, members of Opus Dei would bear witness in every part of society to the divine truth and love revealed in Jesus, contribute to his ongoing redemptive and sanctifying work, and help establish his kingdom. Jesus' kingdom is not of this world, but promoting his reign mitigates the world's evils. Opus Dei's members therefore would not neglect people's suffering and social problems; while aiming at higher than this-worldly ends, their apostolic lives would contribute substantially to authentic freedom, peace, justice, and social solidarity.

Such ideas are far less striking now than they were in 1928-1939, when Escrivá rather fully articulated them. That is because they anticipated and no doubt also influenced Vatican II's teachings regarding the universal call to holiness, the acceptance and faithful fulfillment of personal vocation as the way to answer that call, and the nature and characteristics of specifically lay apostolate.

Still, his vision was not of a general ecclesial development but of a specific institute. At first, he supposed Opus Dei would be limited to men, but soon he realized it should have a section for women, too. Besides married people and single people open to marriage, it should include not only some clerics but other celibate men and women, who would be available to devote themselves to formation and direction. However, those exercising leadership were not to direct the nonreligious activities of other members; and

345. See Salvador Vernal, *A Profile of Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer, Founder of Opus Dei* (New York: Scepter Press, 1977), 13-119.

346. See ibid., 120-29.

the priests of Opus Dei would be spiritual directors, not superiors, of its lay members, who would remain free in their professional and political activities.

Although anyone engaged in an upright occupation could be a member, Escrivá was especially anxious to attract those who dealt in ideas and their communication—work highly relevant to evangelizing the modern, largely secularized world. His vision of Opus Dei's role in the Church was not conditioned by anything peculiar to Spain or to the time between the two World Wars. From the institute's beginning, he expected it to have its headquarters in Rome, to spread around the world, and to survive his own life and times.[347]

In the early 1930s, Escrivá decided to concentrate on university students; he hoped to find some who would commit themselves to celibacy so that they could bring many others, both married and celibate, into Opus Dei. In 1933, he set up a small academy and during the following years he added a student residence and oratory. Over the years, the bishop of Madrid, whom he kept informed, approved and encouraged his initiatives. The bishop formally approved Opus Dei as a pious union in March 1941. Escrivá did not consider the canonical status of pious union adequate for the institute, whose members' commitment embraced their entire lives, but at the time canon law afforded nothing more suitable; membership in a religious institute presupposed a comparable commitment, but religious profession required a vow of celibate chastity.[348]

The development of Opus Dei required a band of priests committed to serving its members and appropriately trained to do so. Some of the institute's celibate members were suitable and willing, and in 1943 Escrivá, with the full cooperation of the bishop of Madrid, obtained the Holy See's approval to establish a diocesan society of apostolic life, the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, whose members were Opus Dei's own priests and its members preparing for the priesthood.[349] The institute's growth in numbers and its spread throughout the world required pontifical status, which Pius XII made possible in 1947. Just three weeks after he issued his primary document regarding secular institutes, the first to be approved by the Holy See was The Priestly Society of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei. The decree accepted Escrivá's entire, complex organization, with its constitutions, as a single, unified institute under one President General; recognized the institute's peculiar character and made it clear that none of its members is a religious; and designated Opus Dei as juridically equivalent to the clerical institutes inasmuch as the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross "completely informs it."[350]

That arrangement gave Opus Dei the status it needed to function in the universal Church and to retain its inner unity and autonomy while relating to many bishops. However, it transformed the bulk of its members into associates who were no longer incorporated into it juridically and required those who were members in the strict sense to

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347. See A. de Fuenmayor, V. Gómez-Iglesias, and J. L. Illanes, *The Canonical Path of Opus Dei: The History and Defense of a Charism*, trans. William H. Stetson (Princeton, N.J.: Scepter, 1994), 34-41.

348. See ibid., 77-93.

349. See ibid., 107-27.

350. See ibid., 166-76; the quoted phrase is on 176.

undertake consecrated life. Escrivá at once began working for modifications, and soon obtained the Holy See's authorization to incorporate married members who fully committed themselves; still, he continued working for a more adequate and definitive approval of the institute and its fully developed constitutions, which the Holy See gave in 1950. But even then, members in the strict sense were required to undertake consecrated life by private but recognized vows. The documents of 1950 in most respects reflected Escrivá's original vision for Opus Dei, yet the contours of secular institutes of consecrated life prevented that ready-made suit from fitting the institute comfortably even after skillful alterations.[351] As Escrivá wrote in 1958: "In fact we are not a secular institute, nor in the future should this name be applied to us."[352]

Canon law provided another ready-made suit that could be altered to fit Opus Dei more or less: the prelature (see 1917 *CIC*, cc. 319-27). Prelatures were not dioceses, and a prelate could be a presbyter rather than a bishop. But prelatures were like dioceses inasmuch as they were directly under the pope and had their own clerics. Under the direction of their prelate, who had most of the powers and responsibilities of a bishop in charge of a diocese, those clerics served a stable community of the faithful. Until Vatican II, furthermore, prelatures also were like dioceses in being territorial, so that their members did not live within the jurisdiction of any diocesan bishop. Opus Dei, by contrast, though not a religious institute, was like a pontifically approved religious institute in not being tied to any particular territory; it had its own clerics, but they were like clerics regular in being subject to the jurisdiction of diocesan bishops in the exercise of their ministry, and the nonordained members of Opus Dei belonged to the particular churches where they resided. Escrivá explored the possibility of transforming Opus Dei into a prelature with a single parish as its token territory, but the Holy See rejected that idea in 1962.[353]

However, among the new things Vatican II proposed was the *personal prelature*, providing pastoral care for a group of people defined not by place of residence but by their special needs; the clergy of a personal prelature would meet those needs while respecting the authority of diocesan bishops (see PO 10). In 1967, Paul VI accepted that proposal and authorized the Congregation of Bishops to create personal prelatures after consultation with relevant episcopal conferences. Now Escrivá set about transforming Opus Dei into a personal prelature. Because Vatican II and Paul VI specified few characteristics of personal prelatures and there were no precedents, this new kind of suit was so elastic that without alterations it offered Opus Dei a perfect fit. Only after Escrivá's death, however, did John Paul II in 1982 declare that being a personal prelature suited the charism and specific characteristics of Opus Dei, give the institute that form, and give its own, already existing, statutes the force of Church law.[354]

351. See ibid., 183-90, 221-80.

352. Ibid., 305 (his emphasis removed).

353. See ibid., 306-20.

354. See ibid., 395-429.

With this transformation, Opus Dei no longer was an institute of consecrated life, responsible to the Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes; it was a pastoral and apostolic organ of the Church responsible to the Congregation for Bishops. Its lay members remain subject to their diocesan bishops as other lay people are, but they subject themselves to the prelate of Opus Dei in some respects in which the laity in general are free. Diocesan priests who become members remain subject to their bishops, but they also subject themselves to the prelate of Opus Dei much as members of a clerical secular institute do to its superiors. Opus Dei's own clergy and its prelate are related to diocesan bishops much as a religious institute's clerics and general superiors are. But Opus Dei's members need no vows at all; they commit themselves only to fulfill their own clerical or lay, secular vocations. Lay members are incorporated into the prelature solely by a bilateral agreement, a contract.

Some lay members permanently commit themselves to celibate chastity. A few of these live alone or with their families of origin. But most of them live in Opus Dei centers, coordinate activities, and provide direction, especially spiritual direction. Ordinarily, before being admitted, they have or are in a position to obtain academic degrees or their professional equivalent. After admission, those able to do so complete a six-year program of philosophical and theological studies. But some of the women, who devote themselves to housekeeping in Opus Dei centers, receive a simpler course of instruction. Among men committed to celibacy, some by mutual agreement receive priestly formation and are ordained to serve as clergy of the prelature. All Opus Dei members undertake to practice detachment from material goods, to sustain the prelature's apostolate insofar as possible, and to subordinate themselves to the prelate and other authorities of Opus Dei in everything that pertains to its end—that is, spiritual formation and apostolate. Those commitments have a special meaning for the institute's clergy and other celibate members, who do not have spouses and children to support and are fully occupied with the prelature's affairs: Their undertakings of detachment, support of the prelature's apostolate, and self-subordination bind them in conscience to a life of poverty and obedience, defined by the prelature's statutes.[355]

Inasmuch as they undertake to respond to the universal call to holiness, especially but not only by the sanctification of their work, and to live their lives wholly as Christian witness, all members of Opus Dei undertake to live an evangelical life (see **A-9,** above). And, although a personal prelature is not canonically an institute of consecrated life, members who in accord with the prelature's statutes make commitments binding in conscience to celibate chastity, poverty, and obedience plainly undertake a no-less-authentic form of consecrated life than that undertaken by celibate members when Opus Dei was a secular institute (1947-82).

10) Other recent developments in consecrated life

After monastic life developed for both men and women during the Middle Ages, the consecration of virgins living in the world fell into disuse, although the rite sometimes

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355. See ibid., 429-74 and "Codex Iuris Particularis Operis Dei" (in ibid., 610-45), esp. nn. 8; 9; 13; 24, §2; 27, §3; 36-37; 44-45; 94; and 101.

was used for nuns living in monasteries. In modern times, devout unmarried women sometimes expressed an interest in this form of consecrated life, but the Holy See was not receptive.[356] However, in its document dealing with the liturgy, Vatican II, after prescribing the revision of the rites of the sacraments and sacramentals, went on: "The rite of the Consecration of Virgins which is included in the Roman Pontifical [the liturgical book of prayers and ceremonies reserved to bishops] is to be revised" (SC 80). In 1970, the Holy See published the new rite.

The decree presenting it recalls: "In its maternal care the Church from the earliest ages, as the Fathers attest, has kept the practice of putting its seal through a consecratory prayer upon the devout and exacting resolve of virgins." It provides rites for the consecration not only of nuns but of women living in the world.[357] The introduction to the rite first articulates what it does:

> [It constitutes] the candidate a sacred person, a surpassing sign of the Church's love for Christ, and an eschatological image of the world to come and the glory of the heavenly Bride of Christ. In the rite of consecration the Church reveals its love of virginity, begs God's grace on those who are consecrated, and prays with fervor for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The introduction then goes on to list the responsibilities of consecrated virgins:

> Those who consecrate their chastity under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit do so for the sake of more fervent love of Christ and of greater freedom in the service of their brothers and sisters.
>
> They are to spend their time in works of penance and of mercy, in apostolic activity and in prayer, according to their state of life and spiritual gifts.
>
> To fulfill their duty of prayer they are strongly advised to celebrate the liturgy of the hours each day, especially morning prayer and evening prayer.[358]

Thus, the Church has made available once again what probably was the earliest form of consecrated life.

The decree and the introduction to the rite imply several things, most of them more fully articulated in the rite itself.

The consecration inducts the candidate into the order of virgins (makes her "a sacred person"), but it does not change her state of life, which remains either that of a religious or a laywoman ("according to their state of life").[359]

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356. See Rose M. McDermott, S.S.J., commentary on *CIC,* c. 604, in Beal, Coriden, and Green, eds., op. cit., 768, fn. 259.

357. Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, *Consecrationis virginum* (31 May 1970), *AAS* 62 (1970) 650; *Documents on the Liturgy: 1963-1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts,* #3252, p. 1024.

358. "Consecration to a Life of Virginity," in *The Rites of the Catholic Church,* vol. 2, trans. International Commission on English in the Liturgy (New York: Pueblo, 1980), 132.

359. As explained above, **in 1,** *CIC,* c. 603, recognizes the eremitic or anchoritic life, for both men and women, as a legitimate form of consecrated life in addition to those available through membership in an institute. Then, c. 604, §1, begins: "Similar to these forms of consecrated life is the order of virgins . . ," thus making explicit the membership of consecrated virgins in an ecclesial "order." The similarity of consecrated virginity to eremitical life is that both are undertaken and lived by individuals without membership in an institute. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata,* 7, *AAS* 88 (1996) 382, *OR,* 3 Apr. 1996, II, also

By means of the officiating bishop, who says the consecratory prayer in the person of Christ, the Lord Jesus consecrates the virgin for himself and she, empowered by the Holy Spirit, cooperates in his doing so. This cooperation becomes explicit when the bishop invites the candidate(s) in these or similar words: "Come, daughter(s), that through me, his servant, the Lord may consecrate the resolution you have formed in your heart(s)."[360]

By her cooperation with Christ, the virgin becomes his bride, as is made clear after the consecration by the presentation of a ring (and perhaps also of a veil) as a sign of consecration with the injunction: "Keep unstained your fidelity to your Bridegroom."[361] The sense in which the consecrated virgin is Christ's bride also is clarified before the prayer of consecration by the bishop's homily, when he explains in these or similar words:

> The Church is the bride of Christ. This title of the Church was given by the fathers and doctors of the Church to those like you who speak to us of the world to come, where there is not marrying or giving in marriage. You are a sign of the great mystery of salvation, proclaimed at the beginning of human history and fulfilled in the marriage covenant between Christ and his Church.[362]

Thus, while only the Church can be *the* bride of Christ, the consecrated virgin is *a* bride of Christ in the sense that she becomes an image of the Church in glory, his unique and heavenly bride.

Before the consecration, the bishop questions candidates about their commitment. The questions make clear precisely what a consecrated virgin has undertaken:

> Are you resolved to persevere to the end of your days in the holy state of virginity and in the service of God and his Church?
>
> Are you so resolved to follow Christ in the spirit of the Gospel that your whole life may be a faithful witness to God's love and a convincing sign of the kingdom of heaven?
>
> Are you resolved to accept solemn consecration as a bride of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God?[363]

When candidates answer "I am," they are affirming an existing commitment.

It is worth noticing what consecrated virgins need neither have done nor do in being consecrated.

Although the rite of consecration presupposes that candidates have made a firm commitment of permanent celibate chastity, they may but need not have done that by

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speaks of a new flowering of the ancient "order of virgins," and mentions consecrated virgins before men and women hermits, and widows.

360. "Consecration to a Life of Virginity," 137.

361. Ibid., 145. Even if the veil is given, the consecrated virgin is not clothed with it as a habit to be worn. But she is to wear the ring.

362. Ibid., 139.

363. Ibid., 141.

making a private vow of virginity.[364] True, the official English translation of the bishop's prayer of consecration includes a statement that implies candidates have taken or are taking a vow: "Lord, look with favor an your handmaids. They place in your hands their resolve to live in chastity. You inspire them to take this vow; now they give you their hearts."[365] However, the Latin text is: "Respice, Domine, super has famulas tuas, quae, in manu tua continentiae suae propositum collocantes, ei devotionem suam offerunt, a quo ipsa vota sumpserunt."[366] Here *vota* does appear, but that word can mean not only "vows" but "things solemnly promised," "votive offerings," "desires," "prayers," and so on. The sentence's syntax makes it clear that *vota* refers not to the candidates' vow or other form of firm commitment but to what they have received from God and are thus able to offer back to him, namely, both their continence and their devotion.[367]

Moreover, nothing in the official documents suggests that consecrated virgins commit themselves to poverty or obedience. Although their bishops no doubt should provide them with appropriate pastoral care, and they, like every Catholic, should cooperate with it, their bishops acquire no other authority over them. Of course, having undertaken not only to "follow Christ in the spirit of the Gospel" but to be his bride, a consecrated virgin surely ought to obey Jesus in everything and to respond to the call to holiness by living an evangelical life (see **A-9,** above). Still, it remains up to each to judge and discern for herself which exercises of personal autonomy and instances of ownership and use of goods pertain to her personal vocation and which are to be renounced in accord with her commitment to cleave to her obedient and poor Lord and follow him wherever he leads.[368]

Many holy women—including St. Jeanne Frances de Chantal and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton—were widows who made vows precluding a second marriage but did not at the same time undertake religious life. Although Vatican II did not mention consecrating

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364. After publishing the rite of consecration of virgins, the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship received and answered several questions. The third question was: "Is a vow required for consecration or does any commitment, like a promise, accepted by the Church suffice?" The Congregation replied: "Strictly speaking, for consecration a vow is not necessary, in the technical sense that 'vow' has taken on in the last centuries. Rather the essential requirements are the person's intention of self-offering to God in a total and perpetual way and the Church's acceptance of that intention. That seems to be the criterion behind the OCV [*Rite of Consecration to a Life of Virginity*], Introduction, no. 5 c" (*Documents on the Liturgy,* fn. R3, p. 1027). The cited passage reads: "c) that they be admitted to this consecration by the bishop who is the Ordinary of the place" (*The Rites,* vol. 2, 133).

365. Ibid., 143.

366. *Pontificale Romanum: Ordo Consecrationis Virginum,* editio typica (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1978), 27.

367. Literally translated, the sentence might read: "Look, Lord, upon your servants who, placing in your hand the *propositum* [firm commitment] of their continence, offer their devotion to him from whom they themselves have received *vota* [the things they promise, what they offer, their holy desires]." Plainly, the English translators simply assumed that the Latin meant that God inspires the candidates to vow virginity, so they translated *vota* (which is plural) as "vow" (singular), and made it refer to the candidates' *propositum*—that is, their firm resolution, which need not be a vow.

368. For those interested in consecrated virginity, the website of the United States Association of Consecrated Virgins provides much useful information: http://www.consecratedvirgins.org

widows and the Holy See has not yet provided a rite for it, John Paul II's teaching and various Church documents recognize consecrated widowhood as an authentic form of consecrated life.[369] The Catholic Church seems likely eventually to provide a rite, more or less similar to that for the consecration of virgins living in the world.[370]

After the session of the Synod of Bishops on Consecrated Life called attention to various developments, John Paul II observed that new forms of evangelical life were emerging—new communities whose originality "often consists in the fact that they are composed of mixed groups of men and women, of clerics and lay persons, of married couples and celibates, all of whom pursue a particular style of life."[371] While prudently calling for discernment regarding such charisms, John Paul's openness to them was manifested in the following instance.

Born in 1910, Julia Verhaeghe was one of many children in a devout Belgian family, which, as a teenager, she worked to help support. Meditating on St. Paul's epistles shaped her in the way of holiness, while revealing to her that many Catholics' faith was weak. She desired the Church's renewal and understood that, while Jesus had accomplished the work of redemption, he founded the Church to carry it on by building up the faith of those who believe and making redemption available to everyone everywhere. In order to share Jesus' thirst for souls, she offered herself to him in a holy covenant. Her spiritual director, Cyrill Hillewaere, a diocesan priest of Bruges, joined her in that offering, and the two in 1938 thus began to form what became a new institute, The Spiritual Family The Work (*Familia Spiritualis Opus*).

Julia's joy in the Lord and zeal for souls attracted others, at first young women, for whom she became Mother Julia. In the 1960s she read Newman and discovered a soulmate. Members of The Work have engaged in several different apostolates, but many of them have become involved in spreading knowledge of Cardinal Newman and his writings.

Beginning in the 1960s, the community spread beyond Belgium, and besides consecrated women began incorporating consecrated men—priests, deacons, and brothers. Those consecrated members were joined by some bishops, diocesan priests and deacons, families, married individuals and couples, single persons, widows, and

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369. See John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 7, *AAS* 88 (1996) 382, *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, II; *CCC* 922. *CCEO*, c. 570, allows for norms of particular law in the various Eastern Churches to provide for "consecrated virgins and widows who live on their own in the world, having publicly professed chastity." The Pope refers to Paul (1 Tm 5-5, 9-10; 1 Cor 7.8) for the point that the consecration of widows dates from apostolic times.

370. Meanwhile, it seems to me that bishops asked by suitable candidates for consecration as widows living in the world may formulate a simple rite and perform the consecration. *CIC*, c. 1167, §1, reserves the establishment of new sacramentals to the Apostolic See, but arguably the sacramental of the consecration of widows either existed unused since the early Church or already has been established by the documents cited in the previous note, and a bishop, who surely has the power to consecrate widows as well as virgins, need only supply an interim rite to meet an immediate pastoral need.

371. *Vita consecrata*, 62, *AAS* 88 (1996) 435; *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, XI. On emerging new forms, see Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA, "Emerging forms of U.S. Religious Life," *Review for Religious*, 55 (1996): 396-413; Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, *Emerging Religious Communities in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: CARA, 1999).

widowers—all of whom became members in a wider sense, sharing the institute's charism in diverse ways and cooperating in its apostolates. Every member offers himself or herself to the heart of Jesus in a holy covenant, in accord with his or her state of life. In doing so, members in the strict sense profess the three evangelical counsels. While those consecrated men and women of course live in separate communities, they cooperate closely in apostolic works.

For many years, The Work existed simply as a Pious Union of the faithful. Mother Julia died on 29 August 1997. In 2001, on the anniversary of her death, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life issued a decree implementing John Paul II's approval of The Spiritual Family the Work as a *Family of Consecrated Life*. It thus became the first instance of this new category of institute.[372]

Finally, Pius XII also recognized an authentic form of consecrated life distinct from those undertaken publicly and regulated by canon law. One finds it in all those who undertake to live an evangelical life and bind themselves by private vows to practice the evangelical counsels—those

> who, through love of God and in order to serve him in their neighbor, consecrate to him their person and all their activity. They bind themselves to the practice of the evangelical counsels by private and secret vows, known to God alone, and allow themselves to be guided, in all that concerns the submission of obedience and poverty, by those whom the Church has judged suitable to give such guidance, and to whom she has confided the responsibility of directing others in the pursuit of perfection.[373]

John Paul II seems to be developing the same line of thought when he urges the whole Church to thank God not only "for the religious orders and institutes devoted to contemplation or the works of the apostolate, for societies of apostolic life, for secular institutes and for other groups of consecrated persons" but also "for all those individuals who, in their inmost hearts, dedicate themselves to God by a special consecration."[374]

D: The Essence and True Excellence of Consecrated Life

The diverse forms of consecrated life have common features that define it. Compared with other sorts of evangelical life, such as that of married couples who undertake to respond wholeheartedly to the call to holiness, consecrated life enjoys a certain superiority. However, some features and properties of consecrated life supposedly essential to it are not in fact characteristic of it as such but of certain forms of it or of evangelical life in general. Moreover, some ways of characterizing consecrated life or some forms of it are mistaken, and some purported reasons for its excellence are unsound.

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372. See the website of this institute: http://www.thework-fso.org/English/indexen.html

373. Pius XII, "Address to the Second World Congress of the States of Perfection" (11 Dec. 1957), *AAS* 50 (1958) 36, *The Pope Speaks*, 4 (1957-58): 266.

374. *Vita consecrata*, 2, *AAS* 88 (1996) 378; *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, I.

1) Consecrated life is evangelical life that includes forgoing marriage.

In dealing with the development of the diverse forms of consecrated life, I considered only those Catholic ways of life, apart from that of diocesan clerics, that include permanent celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake. Only in recent years has the expression, *consecrated life,* been used with that specific meaning, but vocations that include permanently forgoing marriage always have had a special status in the Church, because of the teaching and example of Jesus and Paul (see Mt 19.10-15; 1 Cor 7.32-36).

Some Christian families mirror many aspects of Jesus' lifestyle in a splendid way. Consider a young man and woman who, discerning and responding to their vocations, regularly make their choices in accord with God's will. On that basis, they marry for the kingdom's sake. Neither of these devoted spouses thinks about his or her own rights as they strive to please each other and support each other's better impulses. Since they are patient and gentle, their cooperation is motivated by mutual love. The husband makes an honest and adequate living at truck gardening, and the wife devotes herself to homemaking and caring for the children. Though surrounded by affluence and consumerism, the family lives simply and readily shares what it has with the needy. The parents' main concern is the Christian education of their children, especially their formation to live holy lives, and the children, closely attached to Jesus, are eager to learn how to help him build up his heavenly kingdom. At odds with the surrounding secularized culture in many ways, the family is never at home in the world through which it travels on. In a manner recalling the primitive Christian community described in Acts, it follows Christ in a way that witnesses powerfully to God's love and is an extraordinary sign both of the Church's unbreakable communion with Christ and of the heavenly kingdom in which that communion will be consummated.

Still, because that holy couple did not forgo marriage for the kingdom's sake, their evangelical life cannot be called "consecrated life" in the sense the Church gives that expression. In *Vita consecrata,* dealing with new forms of evangelical life, John Paul II mentions certain communities that include married couples who intend to pursue the perfection of charity. He says:

> Worthy of praise are those forms of commitment which some Christian married couples assume in certain associations and movements. They confirm by means of a vow the obligation of chastity proper to the married state and, without neglecting their duties toward their children, profess poverty and obedience [note omitted]. They do so with the intention of bringing to the perfection of charity their love, already "consecrated" in the sacrament of matrimony (see *Gaudium et spes,* 48). However, by reason of the above-mentioned principle of discernment, these forms of commitment cannot be included in the specific category of the consecrated life. This necessary clarification regarding the nature of such experiences in no way intends to underestimate this particular path of holiness, from which the action of the Holy Spirit, infinitely rich in gifts and inspirations, is certainly not absent.[375]

375. *Vita consecrata,* 62, *AAS* 88 (1996) 436, *OR,* 3 Apr. 1996, XI. The expression translated "consecrated" is "uti consecrata" in the Latin of *Vita consecrata* and in that of GS 48 "veluti consecrata"—"as it were consecrated." Because a vow must promise God a "possible and better good" (see *CIC,* 1191,

The "above-mentioned principle of discernment" is the theological description of consecrated life introducing that topic in both the Latin and Eastern Churches' canon law codes (see *CIC*, c. 573, §1; *CCEO*, c. 410). The context of John Paul's statement makes it clear that only the absence of a commitment to *celibate* chastity excludes forms of commitment "in certain associations and movements" on the part of spouses intent on bringing their love "to the perfection of charity" from "the specific category of the consecrated life."[376]

The nature of consecrated life can be further clarified by distinguishing other ways in which a Catholic can be celibately chaste.

People naturally are single when they are young and after spouses die. Some remain single because they consider marriage undesirable and reject it—for example, they fear intimacy or shrink from the risks, burdens, and responsibilities of family life. Some experience the natural inclination to marry but prefer self-centered activities incompatible with marriage or think nobody could be good enough to be their spouse. Renouncing marriage, which is good in itself, with such unreasonable motives cannot pertain to a person's vocation. Yet such people can be chaste.

Many Catholics who strive to discern and follow God's plan for their lives are called to marry and do so. Some, however, lack the capacity to marry, and some think they are called to marry but have found no suitable partner. In either case, they remain unmarried by default, not due to any commitment and being unmarried pertains to their vocations only as a condition to be accepted in faith from the hand of God. Other Catholics think they eventually might be called to marry but avoid romantic relationships while addressing other responsibilities pertaining to their vocations. Some expect to marry—for example, after they save some money, deal with health problems, or complete their professional training; but some indefinitely postpone marrying—for example, while caring for an elderly or disabled family member. In either case, being single is due to their commitment to carry out an element of their vocation that, at least for now, precludes marriage; they are unmarried due to an upright commitment, but the commitment does not permanently preclude marriage.

Catholics who in those ways or others accept or choose being unmarried as part of their vocations will receive the grace necessary to live chastely, even though they may be aflame with passion—that is, troubled by temptations, so that they must regularly struggle to remain pure.[377] Even if such a Catholic is peacefully chaste, however, his or

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§1), some argue that spouses cannot really vow marital chastity. But insofar as married couples undertake a possible and better service to the kingdom by their profession in an association or movement (or by undertaking to accept and carry out their entire personal vocation, whatever it might be), and insofar as that undertaking specifies the responsibilities pertaining to marital chastity, requiring certain choices and precluding others that otherwise would not have been morally required or excluded, they do promise a possible and better good, and that promise really is a vow.

376. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 32, *AAS* 88 (1996) 406; *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, VI, teaches that the Church "rightly considers" living out the counsel of chastity to be "the 'door' of the whole consecrated life." Thus, the whole consecrated life is closed to married couples, no matter how holy.

377. The Council of Trent definitively teaches that it is possible to observe God's commandments, so that Christians in grace can altogether avoid mortal sin (and, of course, a Christian not in the state of grace

her celibately chaste life does not constitute consecrated life, since it does not fulfill a vocational commitment that precludes eventual marriage.

In other cases, though, peacefully chaste Catholics who have never married or whose spouses have died discern that, although capable of marrying or marrying again, they have received a gift that they can use in some worthwhile way that will permanently preclude marriage. In so discerning, they identify an element of their vocation incompatible with their ever, or ever again, fulfilling the responsibilities of a spouse. If they commit themselves to accept God's plan for their lives in its entirety and faithfully fulfill that commitment, they forgo marriage for the kingdom's sake.

Even before Christians are peacefully chaste, however, many who thus forgo marriage are attracted by the prospect of collaborating closely with Jesus or by other aspects of what may be a vocation that precludes marriage. They pray for the charism they lack, cultivate their intimacy with Jesus and their interest in serving others in a way to which they think they are called, and receive the grace they seek.

But no matter how the process preceding commitment unfolds, when someone discerns that God's plan for his or her life entirely precludes marrying and makes a firm commitment to live out that plan throughout the course of his or her life, that person undertakes not only an *evangelical life* in the sense defined in **A-9,** above, but *consecrated life* in the sense used by John Paul II in *Vita consecrata.*

As was already explained (see **C-10,** above), Pius XII teaches that lay people can be truly consecrated by responding to God's call by private and secret vows to live according to the evangelical counsels. Since consecrated virgins need not make an explicit commitment with respect to obedience and poverty, and their commitment need not be a vow, those elements cannot be essential to the consecrated lives of those who privately and secretly undertake an evangelical life, including permanent celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake. Therefore, any evangelical life that permanently precludes marriage is a consecrated life.

According to his providential plan, God has set such people apart by choosing and preparing them for the role he offers them; by accepting God's offer, they also set themselves apart from devout people whose vocations do not permanently exclude marriage. Calling such people's lives "consecrated" signifies that twofold *setting apart.* The Church also cooperates in the consecration of many such individuals either by receiving the sacred bonds by which they undertake their vocations or by solemnizing their commitment by a rite, such as the consecration of virgins. When the Church participates, she does several things: publicly recognizes the charism such individuals have received from the Holy Spirit, welcomes their readiness and undertaking to serve, and prays that God will grant them the graces faithfully to fulfill their commitment.[378]

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can repent and be reconciled): "If anyone says, 'Observing God's precepts is impossible for a human being, even one justified and in the state of grace,' anathema sit" (DS 1568/828); for the explanation of the grounds for the definition, see DS 1536-37/804.

378. Holland, *The Concept of Consecration in Secular Institutes,* 210-16, shows how the need to explain consecration *in a secular institute* separated off what was proper to religious institutes, with the good result that the essence of consecration by profession of the counsels became clear. Similarly, the need

Two closely related considerations show that all who embrace any form of consecrated life must undertake it as a form of evangelical life in the sense defined above (in **A-9**).

First, as John Paul II teaches, every authentic form of consecrated life involves the pursuit of perfect charity. Despite their great diversity, he explains, all forms of consecrated life respond to "the one call to follow Jesus—chaste, poor and obedient—in the pursuit of perfect charity. This call, which is found in all the existing forms of consecrated life, must also mark those which present themselves as new."[379] Again, most forms of consecrated life are undertaken by profession of the evangelical counsels, and about these John Paul II teaches: "The Church has always seen in the profession of the evangelical counsels a special path to holiness. The very expressions used to describe it—the school of the Lord's service, the school of love and holiness, the way or state of perfection—indicate the effectiveness and the wealth of means which are proper to this form of evangelical life, and the particular commitment made by those who embrace it."[380] Now, those who perfectly love God fully conform their wills to his plan and will. Therefore, the commitment made by those who embrace any form of consecrated life must be an undertaking to live an evangelical life as defined above (in **A-9**).

Again, the paradigm of consecrated life is the Father's consecrating his Son by sending him to save fallen humankind, and Jesus' consecrating himself by his total self-oblation—his perfect and lifelong obedience, which culminates in his freely accepting death in Gethsemane: "not my will, but thine, be done" (Lk 22.42; cf. Mt 26.39, Mk 14.36). Those undertaking many of the forms of consecrated life considered in **C,** above, explicitly offer themselves totally to God. The "Receive me, Lord" of Benedictine profession is but one expression of a common intention. Vatican II affirms that intention by teaching that one who professes the evangelical counsels "is completely handed over [totaliter mancipatur] to God supremely loved, so that he or she is dedicated to the service and honor of God on a new and distinctive ground" (LG 44). Having no rights, slaves own no property and have no spouses or children.[381] Like slaves, whose entire lives are at their master's disposal, those who rightly profess the counsels put themselves entirely at God's disposal. In doing so, they undertake to do his will in all things and to accept from his hand whatever befalls them.

2) Among forms of evangelical life, consecrated life has a certain superiority.

While every kind of evangelical life is a divine gift by which some Christians respond to the universal call to holiness, consecrated life is in important respects superior

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to explain consecration *of virgins* separates off what was proper to profession of the counsels, with the good result that the essence of consecration by God's gift and a Christian's undertaking of any vocation that permanently precludes marriage becomes clear.

379. *Vita consecrata,* 12, *AAS* 88 (1996) 385; *OR,* 3 Apr. 1996, II.

380. Ibid., 35, *AAS* 409; *OR,* VII; to this statement is appended fn. 76, which refers to St. Thomas, *S.t.,* 2-2, q. 184, a. 5, ad 2; q. 186, a. 2, ad 1.

381. Spicq, op. cit., 1:382, fn. 10: "The slave has no family, having been deprived of the right to marriage (*conubium*); his conjugal union is only a de facto union (*contubernium* . . .); even his children 'born to the household' belong to his owner. The slave has no country . . .."

to kinds of evangelical life that do not involve a commitment to lifelong celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake.

With the gospels and Vatican II, John Paul II teaches that consecrated life originated with Jesus:

> The consecrated life, through the prompting of the Holy Spirit, "constitutes a closer imitation and an abiding re-enactment in the Church" (LG 44) of the way of life which Jesus, the supreme Consecrated One and missionary of the Father for the sake of his Kingdom, embraced and proposed to his disciples (see Mt 4.18-22, Mk 1.16-20, Lk 5.10-11, Jn 15.16).

Hence, consecrated life is "a living tradition of the Savior's life and message."[382]

Of course, those who undertake consecrated life usually have reasons over and above Jesus' for committing themselves to celibate chastity and, more or less, to the rest of his lifestyle: their affection for him moves them to imitate him, while contrition for past sins and recognition of their moral vulnerability motivate them, for the sake of their own salvation, to nurture their relationship with Jesus, serve others, and deny themselves (see Phil 2.12-13, 3.12-21). At the same time, to the extent they imitate not only Jesus' outward behavior but his human motivations, in adopting his lifestyle they will share most of his reasons (see **B-2,** above). Undertaken and faithfully fulfilled for those reasons, consecrated life will participate in a special way in the unique nobility of Jesus' human life. He saves and restores in the kingdom all human goods promoted on earth in all human lives; by their collaboration with him, they help him do this in respect to the goods promoted by those to whose salvation their service contributes. Jesus' personal lifestyle is unique in its excellence, but the lifestyle of his *holy* close collaborators, which more or less completely mirrors his way of life, is superior to lifestyles of holy Christians that do not mirror his.

This superiority has three aspects: greater intimacy with Jesus, more important benefits for those served, and more perspicuous witness. Each is worth considering.

All Christians are devoted to Jesus' humanity. Motivated by admiration and gratitude, we rejoice in his human goodness and the glory he attained by it; we trust him and wish to imitate and please him. Love for Jesus, like our love for other human beings, has both volitional and emotional elements. The volitional component leads to sharing his love for other people, not as other, but as actual or potential members of his body. Its emotional component focuses upon Jesus' individual humanity and can be more or less intense.

Those whose emotional love for Jesus is very intense can let themselves be moved by it, along with the reasons underlying their volitional love, to forgo, set aside, and subordinate other legitimate human relationships so as to respond to Jesus' invitation to enjoy greater intimacy with him. John Paul II speaks of this motivation for undertaking consecrated life:

> In the countenance of Jesus, the "image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15) and the reflection of the Father's glory (see Heb 1.3), we glimpse the depths of an eternal and

382. *Vita consecrata,* 22, *AAS* 88 (1996) 395, *OR,* 3 Apr. 1996, IV.

> infinite love which is at the very root of our being [note omitted]. Those who let themselves be seized by this love cannot help abandoning everything to follow him (see Mk 1.16-20, 2.14; 10.21, 28). Like Saint Paul, they consider all else as loss "because of the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ," by comparison with which they do not hesitate to count all things as "refuse," in order that they "may gain Christ" (Phil 3.8). They strive to become one with him, taking on his mind [Latin: *affectus* = feelings, disposition] and his way of life. This leaving of everything and following the Lord (see Lk 18.28) is a worthy program of life for all whom he calls, in every age.[383]

Again, John Paul speaks to religious about their experience of Christ's love, "directed towards" each of them as a "particular person." He calls it a "love of choice" with a "spousal character" and explains that it "embraces the whole person, soul and body, whether man or woman, in that person's unique and unrepeatable personal 'I.'" Having become aware of the "loving look" of Jesus, he tells religious: "You replied to that look by choosing him who first chose each one of you, calling you with the measurelessness of his redeeming love."[384]

Leaving father and mother without cleaving to husband or wife, those who undertake consecrated life need not abide in self-absorption; rather, as "brides of Christ" (see **C-1,** above), they can cleave to Jesus as their significant other.[385] Friendship is good in itself, and Jesus is the most perfect of all possible friends. Thus, their relationship with him will be better than other Christian relationships that, though carried on with similar devotion and fidelity, are with imperfect spouses, relatives, and friends. So, the intimate and lasting friendship with Jesus available to those who receive his call to consecrated life is reason enough for them to forgo marriage.

I turn now to the second aspect: more important benefits to those served.

Every Christian is called to keep the faith and to spread it by bearing witness to its truth by deeds and words. But not all are called to collaborate so closely with Jesus that their apostolic responsibilities preclude marriage and parenthood. As St. Paul points out, every charism is for building up Christ's body (see 1 Cor 12.4-7), and celibate chastity frees those who receive it to collaborate more closely with Jesus.

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383. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 18, *AAS* 88 (1996) 391; *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, III; note that other Vatican translations of *affectus* are: Italian, *sentimenti;* French, *sentiments;* Spanish, *sentimientos;* German, *Gefühle.*

384. John Paul II, *Redemptionis donum*, 3, *AAS* 76 (1984) 515-17, *OR*, 2 Apr. 1984, 1-2.

385. In popular use, the expression "significant other" usually connotes sexual intimacy. But I use it as some psychologists and sociologists do to refer to the person or persons with whom an individual's close relationship constitutes an essential part of his or her self-identity—e.g., an infant's mother, a young child's parents, a married person's spouse, but also in some cases a best friend or even an employer or employee to whom an individual is devoted but with whom he or she has no romantic relationship. Peoples' self-respect and normative judgments are greatly affected by significant others' evaluations, and these can enable them to resist powerful social pressures. Harry Stack Sullivan, the psychiatrist some credit with having originated "significant other," used it in a still narrower sense to describe a property of psychologically mature adults, who are able "to establish relationships of love for some other person, in which relationship the other person is as significant, or nearly as significant, as one's self" (*The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry* [New York: W. W. Norton, 1953], 34).

In his apostolic exhortation, *Vita consecrata*, John Paul II repeatedly stresses the duty to provide apostolic service. The first article, "Consecrated for mission," of chapter three, *"Servitium Caritatis:* Consecrated Life: Manifestation of God's Love in the World," begins:

> In the image of Jesus, the beloved Son "whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world" (Jn 10.36), those whom God calls to follow him are also consecrated and sent into the world to imitate his example and to continue his mission. Fundamentally, this is true of every disciple. In a special way, however, it is true of those who, in the manner that characterizes the consecrated life, are called to follow Christ "more closely," and to make him the "all" of their lives [their significant other]. The task of *devoting themselves wholly to "mission"* is therefore included in their call; indeed, by the action of the Holy Spirit who is at the origin of every vocation and charism, consecrated life itself is a mission, as was the whole of Jesus' life. The profession of the evangelical counsels, which makes a person totally free for the service of the Gospel, is important also from this point of view. It can therefore be said that *a sense of mission is essential to every institute,* not only those dedicated to the active apostolic life, but also those dedicated to the contemplative life.[386]

In another passage, John Paul explains that the basis in the gospel for consecrated life is Jesus' calling of some "not only to welcome the Kingdom of God into their own lives, but also to put their lives at its service, leaving everything behind and closely imitating his own *way of life."*[387] Recalling St. Paul's teaching, and speaking of those who belong to institutes of consecrated life, the Pope also asserts "that the manifold charisms of their respective institutes are granted by the Holy Spirit for the good of the entire Mystical Body, whose upbuilding they must serve (see 1 Cor 12.4-11)."[388]

All Christians are called to use their gifts in service to others. While the basic human goods as principles of practical reason are not commensurable with one another and so do not fall into a hierarchy, people rightly organize their lives by an overarching religious commitment, and Christians know by faith that nothing is more important than sharing in God's kingdom and no service more important than helping others share in it.[389] Therefore, the various apostolic services facilitated by forgoing marriage for the kingdom's sake promote more important benefits than other good services; thus, in respect to the potential benefits to those served, the gift for a life devoted to such sorts of apostolic service and the calling to that kind of life are objectively superior.

The greater intimacy with Jesus available in consecrated life and its capacity for benefiting others more significantly are inextricably linked. Those who undertake consecrated life either will realize both aspects of its potential superiority or they will realize neither.

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386. *Vita consecrata,* 72, *AAS* 88 (1996) 447-48; *OR,* 3 Apr. 1996, XIV.

387. *Vita consecrata,* 14, *AAS* 387; *OR,* III.

388. Ibid., 47, *AAS* 420, *OR,* VIII.

389. See Germain Grisez, "Natural Law, God, Religion, and Human Fulfillment," *American Journal of Jurisprudence,* 46 (2001): 3-36.

Some who undertake consecrated life are motivated from the start by intense love for Jesus and the appeal of some kind of apostolic service requiring a commitment to celibate chastity, but the main motive of others is either one or the other, not both. In the passages from *Vita consecrata* quoted above, John Paul II addresses those whose primary motivation is love for Jesus and explains why they are called to apostolic service as well. In practice, of course, genuine love for Jesus leads a person to share his thirst for souls and work to build up his body.[390]

Speaking of those who have undertaken consecrated life "for the sake of carrying out different forms of apostolic service to the People of God," John Paul says they must bring "anew to their own times the living presence of Jesus" and "continue to be images of Christ the Lord, fostering through prayer a profound communion of mind with him (see Phil 2.5-11), so that their whole lives may be penetrated by an apostolic spirit and their apostolic work with contemplation."[391] Only those who love Jesus intensely can make him a living presence and share his outlook and attitude. In definitively commissioning Peter to feed his lambs and sheep, therefore, Jesus three times required that "Rock" to reaffirm his love and implicitly commit himself to loving Jesus "more than these."[392] Those who undertake celibate chastity primarily for apostolic service must similarly cultivate their own intense love for Jesus. Such love, together with freedom from the responsibilities of marriage and parenthood, will enable them to share Jesus' salvific love for human persons of every kind and condition.

The superiority of consecrated life to other forms of evangelical life lies not only in potential intimacy with Jesus and benefits of service but effectiveness of witness.

Everyone living an evangelical life bears witness to the gospel's truth and the hoped-for kingdom's consummate goodness. But the lifestyle of those who faithfully live consecrated lives makes their witness especially perspicuous. Their outward behavior, like that of martyrs, differs very markedly not only from that of people without faith and hope but even from that of most good and holy Christians (see LG 42). Moreover, the consecration that constitutes this specific kind of life is of itself a special and powerful sign of the reality and importance of the kingdom, simply because it includes forgoing, for the kingdom, a basic good of human persons in which most people seek an important aspect of their self-realization: marriage and family—*my* husband or wife and *our* children.

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390. Brian Kolodiejchuck, M.C. (postulator of the cause of Mother Teresa), "The Soul of Mother Teresa, Part 1, Hidden Aspects of Her Interior Life," http://zenit.org/English, Archive, 28-29 November 2002, quotes from Mother Teresa's letters her own account of how Jesus used her love for him as a motive to bring her to accept his call to found the Missionaries of Charity. What about members of institutes focused entirely on contemplation? John Paul holds that "they offer the ecclesial community a singular testimony of the Church's love for her Lord, and they contribute, with hidden apostolic fruitfulness, to the growth of the People of God (see PC 7, AG 40)" (*Vita consecrata*, 8, *AAS* 88 [1996] 383, *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, II).

391. *Vita consecrata*, 9, *AAS* 88 (1996) 383, *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, II.

392. See Jn 21.15-17. Jesus then (18-19) intimates the death by which Peter will glorify God and says "Follow me," in other words: Devote yourself to serving others and lay down your life for them.

John Paul II affirms that celibate chastity's perspicuous witness to the definitive value of the kingdom and to the Church's holiness grounds the teaching regarding the superiority of that charism to the grace of marriage:

> [Celibate chastity] bears witness that the Kingdom of God and his justice is that pearl of great price which is preferred to every other value no matter how great, and hence must be sought as the only definitive value. It is for this reason that the Church, throughout her history, has always defended the superiority of this charism to that of marriage, by reason of the wholly singular link which it has with the Kingdom of God.[393]

Again, he teaches: "As a way of showing forth the Church's holiness, *it is to be recognized that the consecrated life*, which mirrors Christ's own way of life, *has an objective superiority*."[394]

Because the cogency of this witness is undermined by infidelities on the part of those who undertake consecrated life, John Paul also teaches:

> The first duty of the consecrated life is *to make visible* the marvels wrought by God in the frail humanity of those who are called. They bear witness to these marvels not so much in words as by the eloquent language of a transfigured life, capable of amazing the world. To people's astonishment they respond by proclaiming the wonders of grace accomplished by the Lord in those whom he loves.[395]

Truly holy consecrated lives are, as it were an ongoing miracle, which, joined with appropriate verbal testimony, is very like martyrs' blood in being the seed of faith.

The perspicuous witness of consecrated persons who faithfully fulfill their commitments serves others by exemplifying hope for the kingdom and detachment from everything short of it, love for Jesus and his Church, and the practice of discerning God's call and responding to it.[396] Even those like Antony, who wanted nothing but solitude with God, served the Church by such witness. They became mothers or fathers of spiritual children, who were inspired by their example, nurtured by their teaching, and, in many cases, assisted by their friendship, advice, and prayer.

Some magisterial documents adopt the view of several Church Fathers that the superiority of a lifestyle including permanent, celibate chastity is a truth affirmed by the human author of Revelation and therefore by the Holy Spirit.[397]

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393. *Familiaris consortio,* 16, *AAS* 74 (1982) 98-99, *OR,* 21-28 Dec. 1981, 4. The point that this has been constant Church teaching is supported by a footnote referring to Pius XII, *Sacra Virginitas,* II, *AAS* 46 (1954) 174ff.; *PE,* 248:32ff.

394. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata,* 32, *AAS* 88 (1996) 406, *OR,* 3 Apr. 1996, VI. But note that superiority in respect to witness does not entail unqualified superiority. Dennis J. Billy, C.Ss.R., "'Objective Superiority' in *Vita Consecrata,*" *Review for Religious,* 55 (1996): 640-45, concludes (645): "A contextual reading of the document shows that the phrase 'objective superiority' is used to delineate the consecrated life's specific task of offering radical, eschatological testimony of the coming of the kingdom."

395. *Vita consecrata,* 20, *AAS* 88 (1996) 393, *OR,* 3 Apr. 1996, IV.

396. For a fuller articulation of this point, see ibid., 103, *AAS* 479, *OR,* XX.

397. Ibid., 23, *AAS* 396-97, *OR,* IV, cites this passage, assuming the view of the theological tradition. For an interpretation of it in accord with that view, see E.-B. Allo, O.P., *Saint Jean L'Apocalypse,* 2nd ed. (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1921), 196-97; he cites, among others, Tertullian, Augustine, and Jerome.

> Then I looked, and lo, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; the voice I heard was like the sound of harpers playing on their harps, and they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who had been redeemed from the earth. It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are chaste [Greek: *parthenoi* = virgins]; it is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes; these have been redeemed from mankind as first fruits for God and the Lamb, and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are spotless. (Rev 14.1-5)[398]

If the Church Fathers' view is sound, the 144,000 men would be that whole set of Christians, of both sexes and however numerous, who not only undertake celibate chastity but remain lifelong virgins, entirely avoiding actions that would defile them *just as they defile other unmarried people who engage in them.*[399]

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398. While this enigmatic passage can be interpreted plausibly in various ways, most modern commentators proceed on the highly questionable assumption that only one interpretation can be sound. Most recent Catholic commentators dismiss the Church Fathers' view; see, for example: J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation,* Anchor Bible, 38 (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1975), 232-35; Séan P. Kealy, C.S.Sp., *The Apocalypse of John* (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1987), 181-84; Alfred McBride, O.Praem, *The Second Coming of Jesus: Meditation and Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, 1993), 113-16. Some Protestant commentators consider but reject the Church Fathers' view but most entirely ignore it, as does the note to 14.4 in Donald Senior et al., eds., *The Catholic Study Bible: The New American Bible* (New York: Oxford, 1990), *New Testament,* 414: **"Virgins:** metaphorically, because they never indulged in any idolatrous practices, which are considered in the Old Testament to be adultery and fornication (2, 14-15.20-22; 17, 1-6; cf Ez 16, 1-58; 23, 1-49). The parallel passages (7, 3; 22, 4) indicate that the 144,000 whose foreheads are sealed represent all Christian people." The first reading in Year II on Monday of the 34th week of the year is Rev 14.1-5 except that the following words are omitted: *These are they who were not defiled with women; they are virgins and . . ..*

399. Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Apocalypse* (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1979), 98-100, does not mention the Church Fathers' view, but partly shares it. That the new song is not quoted and that only the 144,000 could learn it give and reinforce the "impression" that this "is an exclusive group," and "the following verses imply that the 144,000 are indeed a special group, probably limited to those who die for their faith" (99). It is possible to interpret metaphorically the statement, *these have not defiled themselves with women for they are virgins,* "but the very concrete language used here makes it more likely that actual sexual practice is meant," and "celibacy may have been encouraged by John as a symbolic expression of worthiness to participate in Christian life" defined as an ongoing holy war and exercise of priesthood (100). The vision presents a "model of ideal Christianity, involving not only celibacy but voluntary, violent death. The wording of the vision implies that it is not an ideal which all Christians are expected to fulfill" (100). Kealy, op. cit., 182, does not name but disagrees with Collins regarding v. 4a: "Because of the concrete language involved here, some scholars conclude that John means literal celibacy from conversion till death. Both Jesus and Paul clearly praised the virgin lifestyle (1 Cor 7:25ff; Mt 19:12), an option stressed also at Qumram. However, the reference to 'defiling' is never used in the New Testament of marriage, which is quite clearly exalted in the New Testament (Heb 13:4; Eph 5:21ff)." But even if John did not mean literal celibacy, 'defiling' remains. If John is not referring to marital intercourse, he must be referring to infidelity outside marriage. The referent could be the nonsexual infidelity of worshipping the beast. But even so, it might well *also* be the infidelity of those who fornicate or commit adultery despite having made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom's sake.

Assuming the soundness of the Church Fathers' view, the ways in which a holy life that includes celibate chastity is superior to other sorts of holy evangelical life can be discerned in the passage. Those who undertake and faithfully fulfill a commitment to celibate chastity are a special group. Jesus' and the Father's names are inscribed on their foreheads because they belong to God in a special way, thanks to their fidelity despite adversity and temptation.[400] For them to follow the Lamb wherever he goes expresses their especially intimate relationship with Jesus and their readiness to follow him even to death. Their loud singing of a new song that only they can learn is the perspicuous and distinctive witness of their lives, which will forever glorify God and proclaim his grace. Their redemption *as first fruits* is God's saving them not for their own sake alone but in order to use them to save others. Finally, since the 144,000 faithfully fulfilled their commitments for the kingdom's sake, their lives were truly evangelical: they not only remained virgins but were purified in every respect, so that they conformed entirely to the truth of Christ.

Consecrated life is superior in ways that distinguish its excellence from the excellence of other kinds of evangelical life. Devout and prudent unmarried Christians who reflect clearly upon that distinctive excellence and measure themselves by it are likely to judge themselves unfit to undertake consecrated life and to conclude that they could not be called to undertake it or to regret having *already* done so. But even though their self-appraisal may well be sound, the conclusion need not follow, and the regret of those who have already undertaken consecrated life should be considered a temptation.

True, celibate chastity is a grace God gives only some. But even those given it are not fully prepared to undertake their vocations, as Mary was, before they begin to hear God's call. Even though they are conscious of their defects and weakness, they must begin to hear God's call and discern it. To discern it; and to do that they must clarify the conditions under which they could rightly undertake a form of evangelical life involving celibate chastity and must ask God to show them what he wants them to do. Rather than testing God or demanding a charism to which nobody has a right, their prayer must

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400. The 144,000 in Rev 14.1 probably belong to Jesus as comrades in arms and to God as pillars in his temple due to their special fidelity despite temptation. Many commentators on 14.1 refer to Rev 7.2-3, where the 144,000 from the twelve tribes are sealed by angels with God's seal while the winds are restrained. They suggest that the names inscribed on the foreheads of the 144,000 in Rev 14.1 are that seal. But in the letter to the church in Philadelphia (Rev 3.7-13), the glorified Jesus promises to save from the coming trial those who "have kept my word of patient endurance" (10), exhorts them to hold fast and keep their crown (11), and promises those who conquer: "I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God; never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name" (12). There are three similarities between 3.12 and 7.2-3: (i) 144,000 (ii) who will be kept from the coming trial (iii) are marked; but there also are three differences: the one writing or sealing (Jesus vs. angels), the point of the writing or sealing (to mark them as pillars of the temple in recognition of their victory after perseverance vs. to mark those saved before the angels who have the power to harm proceed), and what is written or sealed (names, including God's name and Jesus' new name, vs. God's seal). But in common with those in 3.12, the 144,000 in 14.1 have the Lamb's and his Father's names written on their foreheads. Probably, therefore, the Lamb himself has marked the 144,000 in 14.1 for their fidelity despite temptation, much as a leader decorates heroic followers after a battle.

remain conditional, along the following lines: *Jesus said that only those to whom it is given can accept his saying about making oneself a eunuch for the kingdom's sake. Please, Father, either give me that gift and make me morally certain I have received it or show me what other gifts you have given me and how you want me to use them.*

Those who have undertaken celibate chastity, even with mixed motives and/or imprudently, are bound by their commitment. The Council of Trent makes that clear in condemning the proposition that "all those who think they lack the gift of chastity, although they vowed it, can marry" (DS 1809/979). Feelings of regret should be regarded as the beginning of temptations to infidelity—for example, by a hypocritical compromise that maintains the outward appearance of celibate chastity while rationalizing discreet sins against it. Instead of yielding, they should bear in mind that God calls even the worst sinners to holiness and never asks anything of anyone without making it possible. For that reason, Trent also teaches that those who have undertaken celibate chastity can fulfill their commitment: "For God does not refuse the gift [of celibate chastity] to those who rightly ask, 'nor allow us to be tempted beyond our strength' (1 Cor 10.13)" (ibid.).[401]

3) Some good characteristics of consecrated life are not peculiar to it.

The preceding section shows that other kinds of evangelical life are inferior in important respects to consecrated life, but it is important to be aware that consecrated life often has been extolled for properties it shares with other kinds of evangelical life. Although these characteristics make consecrated life superior to the lifestyles of Christians who do not respond consistently to their personal vocations, *this* superiority is one it has in common with the lifestyles of Christians living out personal vocations that do not include a permanent commitment to celibate chastity.

According to Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite (see **A-7,** above), clerics form all other Christians: deacons, those who still need purification; priests, the laity who have been cleansed of impurity but still need illumination; and bishops, monks who have been illuminated and are ready to live a unified life and reach perfection in divine love. In the ecclesiastical hierarchy assumed by this writer, monks stand below the clergy and above the nonconsecrated laity: though not ordained, they are consecrated. Because they should be united with the One, they are forbidden many things permissible for the laity. Unlike even the laity who have been cleansed of impurity, monks renounce everything that detracts in thought and affection, as well as deed, from their single focus. The priest who consecrates a monk cautions him that he must rise above mediocrity and replaces his common clothing with the monastic habit to signify the change from a life of common mediocrity to a more perfect life.[402]

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401. The grace to resist temptation need not include peaceful chastity, which is the charism that warrants undertaking permanent, celibate chastity. Therefore, those who wrongly but validly commit themselves to celibate chastity may well be called to a lifelong struggle against severe temptation. Although aflame with passion, they are not free to marry; they must take extraordinary measures to avoid occasions of sin and strengthen themselves; often they will experience distractions that impede their apostolic effectiveness. Nevertheless, faithfully carrying on such a struggle can be their way of holiness.

402. See Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, trans. Thomas L. Campbell (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1981), 73-76 (ch. 6). The status below clerics and

The Pseudo-Areopagite considers the gift for consecrated life to be a grace given the few; it enables them to reach perfect holiness by rising *almost to the clerical order.* He was right in holding that consecrated life responds to God's call to the perfection of holiness, but wrong in consigning the nonconsecrated laity, even those cleansed of impurity, to mediocrity. Yet his view of consecrated life colored almost all theological reflection on the subject until recently, because most Catholic theologians took his claim to be St. Paul's disciple at face value until the late nineteenth century.

Vatican II's first treatment of consecrated life is in its document on the Church. Having introduced the evangelical counsels toward the end of its discussion of the universal call to holiness, the Council begins its consideration of religious life by treating the counsels as God's gift—to the Church, primarily, rather than to individuals—and dealing with the state of the counsels. Then, before taking up profession, the Council rejects the Pseudo-Areopagite's view without mentioning him:

> Considered in reference to the divine and hierarchical constitution of the Church, the religious state is not intermediate between the clerical and lay. From both, some of the Christian faithful are called by God so that they may enjoy a distinctive gift in the Church's life and contribute, each in his or her own way, to the Church's salvific mission. (LG 43)

At last, consecrated life is removed from the Pseudo-Areopagite's ecclesiastical hierarchy. His view that the gift proper to consecrated life is specifically necessary for an individual to attain the perfection of holiness is finally replaced with the authentically Pauline teaching: The grace proper to consecrated life is one among many kinds of charism that the Spirit gives the Church to build up the one Body.

Other elements of the Pseudo-Areopagite's view and many of its underlying assumptions also are contradicted by Vatican II's teaching on the universal call to holiness. While the Church's holiness is manifested in a special way in the practice of the evangelical counsels, the Council teaches it also "is expressed in many different ways in individuals who by their plan of life tend toward the perfection of charity and thus edify others" (LG 39). No one has to be mediocre: "It is obvious that all Christians of every state and order are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity" (LG 40). Christians follow different ways to holiness, but the holiness to which they are called is one: "In the various kinds and duties of life, one holiness is cultivated by all, who are led by the Spirit of God" (LG 41). The Council concludes that the program for growth in holiness is common to all, not proper to a particular condition or state of life:

> Therefore, all the Christian faithful in—and through—the conditions, duties, and circumstances of their lives will be more sanctified day by day if they accept everything with faith from the heavenly Father's hand and cooperate with the divine will by manifesting to everyone in their temporal service itself the love by which God has loved the world. (LG 41)

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above the nonconsecrated laity is made very clear (76): Monks are to be "fashioned to the priestly life as far as permitted. Since they have an affinity to it on many counts, they are closer to it than the rest of the orders of the initiated."

After briefly treating various Christian states of life—including ordained ministry, marriage and parenthood, and consecrated life—the Council sums up: "All the Christian faithful, therefore, are called and held to pursue holiness and the perfection of their own state" (LG 42).

The Pseudo-Areopagite also believed that everyone is in a sense called to the one holiness of union with God; yet he thought there is only one way of perfection, which implied that marriage and parenthood could not be a vocation and way of holiness. Vatican II clearly taught that there are as many ways of perfection as there are personal vocations. Developing the Council's teaching, John Paul II made it absolutely clear that each and every one of the faithful can respond to the universal call to holiness by giving up whatever he or she must, rather than turning away as the young man did, and following Jesus by accepting his or her unique vocation and faithfully persevering in it (see **A-2 and A-3,** above).

Yet more than ten years after Vatican II, Hans Urs von Balthasar reaffirmed the preconciliar view:

> No sound and balanced Christian will ever say of himself that he chose marriage by virtue of a divine election, an election comparable to the election and vocation experienced or even only perceived by those called to the priesthood or to the personal following of Christ in religious life. One who chooses marriage simply has *not* experienced that special election in his soul; he does so, therefore, with the best conscience in the world and without imputing to himself any imperfection, but he does not, for that reason, claim that he is following a way specially chosen for him by God. He is but obeying God's general will for his creatures.[403]

Experience falsifies von Balthasar's claim. When sound, balanced Christian young people learn about personal vocation and commit themselves to discerning the way specially chosen for them by God, some for the first time consider the possibility that the life of good deeds God prepared for them includes clerical or consecrated life and service, and discern that it does; others begin thinking about marriage in an entirely new way, and discern that they are called to it as part of their lay apostolate and way toward holiness.

The Pseudo-Areopagite regarded monasticism as *the* state of perfection, the condition of one who makes a permanent commitment to rise above mediocre Christian life and ascend to union with God. His view crystallized the interpretation of Jesus' exchange with the rich man that Origen already had proposed: Keeping the commandments is good but imperfect; and Christians go beyond the minimum not by loving God so wholeheartedly that, whatever God's plan for their lives might be, they undertake to follow it, but only by following the counsels.[404] Recent Scripture scholarship and John Paul II both have rejected that interpretation.[405]

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403. *The Christian State of Life,* trans. Mary Frances McCarthy, from the 1977 German edition (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983), 421.

404. See Lozano, op. cit., 53-56, 70-72.

405. See S. Légasse, O.F.M.Cap., *L'Appel du Riche (Marc 10.17-31 et parellèles)* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1966), 257-60 (conclusions). John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor,* 18, *AAS* 85 (1993) 1148, *OR,* 6

During the Middle Ages, however, only prelates and religious were thought to be in the state of perfection. St. Thomas shared that view but clarified it. Christian perfection, he explained, essentially consists in charity; moreover, not all those in the state of perfection are perfect and some not in that state may be. But he also held that practicing the evangelical counsels enabled religious to devote themselves more freely to God so as to attain the perfection of charity possible in this life.[406]

In modern times, *state of perfection* had become virtually synonymous with religious life until Pius XII approved secular institutes and declared their members also to be in a "state of perfection." Teaching later on the states of perfection, Pius distinguished between *perfection* and *state of perfection,* explained that heroic Christian perfection can exist outside any state of perfection, and taught that striving for Christian perfection, in general, is to be understood "as a habitual disposition of the Christian soul, by which, not content merely to fulfill the duties which bind under pain of sin, the soul gives itself entirely to God to love him, to serve him, and consecrates itself to the service of the neighbor for the same purpose." He then said: "The perfection of every free human activity, as that of every reasonable creature, consists in the adherence of the will to God."[407] Those statements point to conditions fulfilled not only by those who faithfully live a consecrated life but by everyone who faithfully live any sort of evangelical life. Yet, Pius held to the traditional significance of the expression *state of perfection* by limiting its reference to those somehow committed to following the counsels in what we now call "institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life."

Vatican II, when legislating about the celebration of the divine office, speaks of "instituted states of perfection" (SC 98, 101). But *state of perfection* no longer appears in other Vatican II documents.[408] Nor is the expression used in other important postconciliar documents such as the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church.* John Paul II occasionally uses *"state of perfection"* to underline that consecrated life really is a way of pursuing Christian holiness.[409] But he puts it in quotation marks or explicitly indicates that he is talking about the expression itself.

Oct. 1993, IV, teaches: "This vocation to perfect love is not restricted to a small group of individuals. *The invitation,* 'go, sell your possessions and give the money to the poor,' and the promise 'you will have treasure in heaven,' *are meant for everyone,* because they bring out the full meaning of the commandment of love for neighbor, just as the invitation which follows, 'Come, follow me,' is the new, specific form of the commandment of love of God. Both the commandments and Jesus' invitation to the rich young man stand at the service of a single and indivisible charity, which spontaneously tends towards that perfection whose measure is God alone."

406. See *S.t.,* 2-2, qu. 184, aa. 4-5; and also qu. 44, a. 4, ad 2-3, where Thomas holds that the perfection of charity to which the counsels are directed is in between the perfect love of the saints in heaven, who always love God actually, and the perfection of Christians living in this world *who avoid mortal sin,* and thus always love God habitually but often not actually.

407. Pius XII, *Discourse to the Members of the Second General Congress of the States of Perfection* (9 Dec. 1957), I, *AAS* 50 (1958) 35; Courtois, ed., op. cit., 306.

408. But in LG 45, "institutes of perfection" is used in the same way as "instituted states of perfection" in SC 98 and 101.

409. See *Redemptionis donum,* 4 and 13, *AAS* 76 (1984) 519 and 537, *OR,* 2 Apr. 1985, 2 and 4; *Vita consecrata,* 35, *AAS* 88 (1996) 409, *OR,* 3 Apr. 1996, VII.

As we have seen, Vatican II holds that Christians of *every* state are called to the perfection of charity and all Christians are called and bound to seek the perfection of their own state. This implies that every Christian who responds to the call to holiness by striving perseveringly to find and fulfill God's entire plan for his or her life is habitually pursuing holiness and that evangelical life in general might fittingly be regarded as *the* state of perfection.

Suppose that devout, thirteen-year-old Maria, fascinated with the Gospel according to Luke, reads it through over and over. Filled with wonder and joy at God's love for humankind, and especially for herself, she feels she must love him in return. Having been catechized soundly regarding holiness and personal vocation, she accepts in faith the given conditions of her present life as being from her heavenly Father's hand. And, wondering what sort of life of good deeds he has prepared for her and discussing the matter with her parents, she asks the Holy Spirit for light and strength, and, entrusting herself to him, promises Jesus, and firmly commits herself, to go on accepting all things from the Father's hand and to discern and faithfully walk in the life of good deeds prepared for her, whatever it may be and may require her to give up and suffer.

Having made this commitment, Maria not only practices liturgical piety, personal devotion, and self-denial but seriously tries to obtain and follow sound advice that will help her keep her commitment. This young woman is habitually pursuing holiness; and just as truly as her aunt—a Carmelite nun professed with solemn vows—she has permanently bound herself to the only plan of life that leads to perfection in holiness. For that reason, Maria, her aunt, and anyone else whose life is truly evangelical are reasonably regarded as being in the same state of perfection.[410]

Maria may never undertake permanent celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake, for she might well discern that she is called to marry. Nevertheless, there also are good reasons for holding that she and all Christians who firmly commit themselves to living an evangelical life are as truly *consecrated* by their vocations and commitment as her aunt is by her calling to be a Carmelite and her solemn vows. Yet John Paul II explicitly teaches the contrary:

> Everyone in the Church is consecrated in baptism and confirmation, but the ordained ministry and the consecrated life each presupposes a distinct vocation and a specific form of consecration, with a view to a particular mission.
>
> For the mission of the *lay faithful,* whose proper task is to "seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God" (LG 31) the consecration of baptism and confirmation common to all members of the People of God is a sufficient foundation.[411]

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410. St. Thomas, *S.t.*, 2-2, q. 184, a. 4, sets two requirements for being in a state of perfection: (1) that one obliges oneself permanently to the things that pertain to perfection, in which Thomas includes poverty, celibate chastity, and obedience (see q. 186, a. 6); and (2) that the obligation is established with a certain solemnity. Pius XII implicitly but definitely sets aside the second requirement by including in the states of perfection members of secular institutes who need not bind themselves by vows, much less solemn vows. Vatican II, by its teaching on the universal call to holiness, sets aside the exclusive specification by the evangelical counsels of the way toward perfection.

411. *Vita consecrata,* 31, *AAS* 88 (1996) 405, *OR,* 3 Apr. 1996, VI.

No doubt the sacraments of initiation are a sufficient foundation for the general mission of the lay faithful, and, without undertaking an evangelical life, lay people can understand and carry out that mission in some, even many, of their choices and actions. For instance, a man may strive sincerely to shape his marriage and family life according to God's plan while regarding spending time in paid employment as a necessary evil, and working only as much as he must to keep his job and maximize his income. But the consecration of baptism and confirmation are an insufficient foundation for the comprehensive, personal mission every lay person receives as his or her unique vocation—a mission fully undertaken only by a firm commitment, like Maria's, to evangelical life.

Baptism and confirmation do imply the responsibility to find, accept, and fulfill one's personal vocation, whatever it might be. But they do not specify the personal vocations of other Christians any more than of those called to the consecrated life or ordained ministry. Moreover, since catechesis for baptism and confirmation typically, and unfortunately, omits mention of personal vocation, as do the rites of those sacraments, and since nobody can commit himself or herself to something without knowing it, those receiving baptism and confirmation make only a general commitment to live a Christian life and participate in the apostolate.

God's gift of the calling common to all Christians is one consecration. His gift of a particular vocation offers a second consecration to at least some. But why not all?

Of course, many of the faithful, like Maria, undertake evangelical life without any official act of Church ministry. If such an act were necessary for *consecration* in general, as it is for consecration by profession of the evangelical counsels and the consecration of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and holy orders, their lives would not be consecrated. But near the beginning of his exhortation on the consecrated life, John Paul II thanks God not only for those in its various forms recognized by the Church but also "for all those individuals who, in their inmost hearts, dedicate themselves to God by a special consecration."[412] No doubt he has in mind those who privately undertake permanent, celibate chastity along with poverty and obedience according to their particular condition of life. But the remark entails that consecration can occur without any act of Church ministry.

That which is consecrated is transformed and placed in a special relationship with God. Always it is principally God who consecrates. In the first place, God consecrates everyone he calls by the gospel to be Jesus' disciples. When they are baptized and confirmed, the Holy Spirit transforms them into children of God and living, functioning members of Jesus' body, the Church. In the second place, God calls and consecrates those he sets apart for a particular dedication to himself. A document of the Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes, which John Paul II approved, explains:

> Consecration is the basis of religious life. By insisting on this, the Church places the first emphasis on the initiative of God and on the transforming relation to him which religious life involves. Consecration is a divine action. God calls a person whom he sets

412. *Vita consecrata*, 2, *AAS* 88 (1996) 378, *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, I.

> apart for a particular dedication to himself. At the same time, he offers the grace to respond so that consecration is expressed on the human side by a profound and free self-surrender. The resulting relationship is pure gift. It is a covenant of mutual love and fidelity, of communion and mission, established for God's glory, the joy of the person consecrated, and the salvation of the world.[413]

In this consecration distinct from that of baptism and confirmation God calls someone he has set apart and that person responds, by God's grace, with free self-surrender, thus forming a covenantal relationship.

Of course, the Congregation intended to deal only with religious life. But its teaching plainly is true of the consecration of members of secular institutes, consecrated virgins, and those sacramentally ordained for clerical ministry. Moreover, nothing in its account of the essentials of consecration requires that it be limited to those who undertake celibate chastity.

The Father calls *every* single one of his children to live the unique life of good deeds for which the Spirit has re-created him or her in Christ Jesus. In *every* case, God calls someone he has set apart for a particular dedication to himself, namely, the dedication of the commitment or set of commitments to undertake that life. In offering *every* person his or her personal vocation, the Holy Spirit also provides the charism or set of charisms required to undertake it. Thus, God's action in *every* personal vocation satisfies the criteria for consecration. He challenges *every* Christian who begins to discern his or her personal vocation in the same way he challenged Jeremiah: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you . . ." (Jer 1.5) to fulfill *this* unique role in my salvific plan.

All Christians who accept their personal vocations do so by an act separate and distinct from the acts by which they receive baptism and confirmation. Undertaking one's personal vocation always is a profound and free self-surrender; it is giving oneself completely to God, undertaking to do his will in everything and to accept everything in faith from his hand. Thus, it satisfies the criteria for expressing on the human side the divine gift of consecration. The resulting relationship is pure gift, the gift of consciously cooperating with the Holy Spirit in fulfilling one's role in God's plan and becoming the saint he desires one to be forever. And there is a covenant: established by the person who undertakes his or her personal vocation for God's glory, established by God for that person's joy, and established by both parties for the salvific fruit of the life of good deeds, namely, its contribution to building up the one body of the Lord Jesus.

Suppose that in due course Maria discerns God's calling to be a Carmelite, joins her aunt, and takes solemn vows. That vocation and profession will specify and reaffirm the calling she heard and the commitment she made at thirteen. Still, in making her profession, Maria will not give herself to the Father any more fully or enter upon a new, covenantal relationship with him. She already has given herself to God as completely as

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413. Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes, *Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching on Religious Life as Applied to Institutes Dedicated to Works of the Apostolate,* 5, *EV* 9:184-85, *OR,* 18 July 1983, 4.

possible in promising Jesus to walk in the life of good deeds prepared for her, whatever it might be and demand of her.

John Paul II teaches that the vocation to consecrated life is a loving initiative from the Father, requiring a wholehearted response on the part of the one chosen:

> The experience of this gracious love of God is so deep and so powerful that the person called senses the need to respond by unconditionally dedicating his or her life to God, consecrating to him all things present and future, and placing them in his hands. This is why, with St. Thomas, we come to understand the identity of the consecrated person, beginning with his or her complete self-offering, as being comparable to a genuine holocaust.[414]

In fact, by her promise at thirteen Maria unconditionally dedicated her life to God, consecrated everything present and future to him, and placed it all in his hands. Her consecrated life began with her complete self-offering at thirteen, when the holocaust was made—a holocaust that would have been no less genuine if she had discerned that God meant her to marry and become a homemaker and mother.

Therefore, I hold that all Christians who firmly commit themselves to fulfill their entire personal vocations are consecrated with a consecration distinct from that of baptism and confirmation. Still, consecration that includes responding to the evangelical counsel of celibate chastity and its profession is specifically different from consecration, like Maria's at thirteen, open to whatever God's plan might require. Besides, as was made clear in **1,** above, those who undertake an evangelical life that does not include forgoing marriage for the kingdom's sake follow a path of holiness not pertaining to "the specific category of the consecrated life" recognized by the Church's law and teaching. Thus, the expression *consecrated life* must be reserved as a general name for the forms of evangelical life that include a permanent commitment to celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake. Furthermore, in the respects treated in **2,** above, those forms of life really are superior to other forms of evangelical life.

4) Features of certain forms of consecrated life are mistakenly attributed to it as such.

Vatican II's teachings relevant to consecrated life are focused almost entirely on the forms it has taken in religious institutes. Chapter six of the document on the Church is entitled *Concerning Religious* (see LG 43-47), while the only Council document devoted entirely to consecrated life is designated *Decree on the Suitable Renewal of Religious Life.* (It includes a single article about secular institutes, which begins: "Although secular institutes are not religious institutes, they bring into the world a true and complete profession of the evangelical counsels, recognized by the Church," by which men and women living in the world are consecrated [PC 11].[415]) The revised Code of Canon Law

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414. *Vita consecrata,* 17, *AAS* 88 (1996) 391, *OR,* 3 Apr. 1996, III; the passage ends with fn. 29: "Cf. *Summa theologiae,* 2-2, q. 186, a. 1."

415. Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes, *Essential Elements,* 9, *EV* 186-89, *OR,* 18 July 1983, 4-5, develops Vatican II's summary statement: "Union with Christ by consecration through profession of the counsels can be lived in the midst of the world, translated in the work of the world and expressed by means of the world. This is the special vocation of the secular institutes, defined by Pius XII as 'consecrated to God and to others' in the world and 'by means of the world' (*Primo feliciter,* V and II).

for the Western Church, published in 1983, contains a section devoted to institutes of consecrated life, religious and secular (*CIC,* cc. 573-730), and societies of apostolic life (*CIC,* cc. 731-46). Toward the end of the canons common to both religious and secular institutes are two dealing with individuals consecrated without membership in any institute or society: hermits, who must profess the evangelical counsels (c. 603), and virgins, who need only undertake permanent, celibate chastity (c. 604).

John Paul II recognizes the diverse forms of consecrated life in his apostolic exhortation. He mentions monastic life; the order of virgins, men and women hermits, and widows; religious institutes devoted to contemplation; canons regular, mendicant orders, and clerics regular; congregations of men and women devoted to apostolic activity, missionary activity, and other works of charity; secular institutes and societies of apostolic life; and newly emerging forms of consecrated life.[416] Even so, the document focuses mainly on forms of consecrated life involving explicit profession of all three evangelical counsels.[417] And although John Paul explicitly deals with secular institutes in several places, occasionally he conflates the religious state or religious profession with consecrated life and consecration.[418] The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* carries those tendencies still further. Its section headed *The Consecrated Life* begins (914) by quoting a statement about religious life made by Vatican II, without indicating exactly what it refers to: “The state of life which is constituted by the profession of the evangelical counsels, while not entering into the hierarchical structure of the Church, belongs undeniably to her life and holiness” (LG 44). Then the *Catechism* adds: “It is the *profession* of these [three] counsels, within a permanent state of life recognized by the Church, that characterizes the life consecrated by God” (915; note omitted).

But even though they were permanently committed to celibate chastity and many lived in great austerity, the virgins and ascetics who pioneered consecrated life, including the desert fathers, did not profess the three counsels (see **C-1,** above). Early monasticism and Benedict’s rule certainly involved the *practice* of permanent celibate chastity, community of goods, and obedience to the rule and to superiors’ directives in accord with it. Yet monastic profession was not profession of the three counsels (see **C-2,** above). That form of profession emerged and began to be officially required only in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (see **C-3,** above). In modern times, St. Philip Neri and St. Vincent de Paul established groups now classified as societies of apostolic

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Of themselves, the counsels do not necessarily separate people from the world. In fact, it is a gift of God to the Church that consecration through profession of the counsels can take the form of a life to be lived as a hidden leaven. Christians so consecrated continue the work of salvation by communicating the love of Christ through their presence in the world and through its sanctification from within. Their style of life and presence are not distinguished externally from those of their fellow Christians. Their witness is given in their ordinary environment of life. This discreet form of witness flows from the very nature of their secular vocation and is part of the way that their consecration is meant to be lived (cf. PC 11).”

416. See *Vita consecrata,* 6-12, *AAS* 88 (1996) 381-85, *OR,* 3 Apr. 1996, I-II.

417. See *Vita consecrata,* 1, 5, 14, 15, 16, 18, 21, 29, 31, 35, 48, 55, 60, 72, 75, 87-91 (on the three counsels), 93, 95, and 107.

418. Secular institutes are dealt with in *Vita consecrata,* 32, 42. 53, 54. 78, 97, and 99; the conflation is in 20 and 30, *AAS* 88 (1996) 393 and 403, *OR,* 3 Apr. 1996, IV and V.

life, but tried to exclude vows, at least permanent ones (see **C-7** and **C-8,** above). Still, John Paul II addresses his apostolic exhortation on consecrated life to, among others, societies of apostolic life and says of them: "In many of them an explicit commitment to the evangelical counsels is made through sacred bonds officially recognized by the Church. Even in this case, however, the specific nature of their consecration distinguishes them from religious institutes and secular institutes."[419] Finally, contemporary consecrated virgins, like their ancient counterparts, undertake permanent, celibate chastity but do not explicitly profess the three counsels; and, living on their own in the world, consecrated virgins need not practice poverty or obedience more than required by common Christian norms and by their commitment to all of the elements of their vocations (see **C-10,** above).

Of course, the vast majority of those who have undertaken consecrated life in modern times and are living it made their commitment by professing the three counsels. In the future, however, the majority might well be consecrated virgins and widows, along with male counterparts for whom the Church's ritual and law have not yet provided. Such a development would make it clearer that an evangelical life including permanent celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake is sufficient for consecrated life as such and that not all forms of consecrated life include profession of the three counsels.

The Church's law, revised after Vatican II, deals with the profession of the counsels in a section of norms common to both religious and secular institutes. To allow for secular institutes without vows, the manner of profession is left to the laws of each institute: "Through vows or other sacred bonds according to the proper laws of the institutes, [members] profess the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience" (*CIC,* 573, §2). The substance of celibate chastity is the same for all: "The evangelical counsel of chastity . . . entails the obligation of perfect continence in celibacy" (*CIC,* c. 599). Poverty and obedience also are the same for all insofar as they are gospel ideals, but how they are practiced depends on the law of each institute: "The evangelical counsel of poverty . . . entails, besides a life which is poor in fact and in spirit and is to be led productively in moderation and foreign to earthly riches, a dependence and limitation in the use and disposition of goods according to the norm of the proper law of each institute" (*CIC,* c. 600). "The evangelical counsel of obedience . . . requires the submission of the will to legitimate superiors, who stand in the place of God, when they command according to the proper constitutions" (*CIC,* c. 601).

Although they are meant to express common requirements of poverty and obedience, "dependence and limitation in the use and disposition of goods" and "submission of the will to legitimate superiors" hardly mean the same thing when applied to religious and secular institutes. The practice of poverty and obedience is in part radically different in the latter, as the following representative statements illustrate:

> —How is poverty lived in secular institutes?
>
> Poverty calls the consecrated secular member to have a positive relationship with material things while not becoming attached to them. It recommends the application of

419. *Vita consecrata,* 11, *AAS* 88 (1996) 384-85, *OR,* 3 Apr. 1996, II.

> social practices for the poor, the homeless and the disadvantaged. Poverty implies discerning what [is] necessary and practical in daily living and what to do with the superfluous. Members are self-supporting and provide for all of their expenses in daily living and retirement.
>
> —How is obedience lived out?
>
> Obedience concerns discerning and implementing the will of God amid daily activities and in a lifestyle within the secular environs. It has to do with being faithful to the institute's spirituality, prayer life, and constitution. The member is expected to be faithful to Church laws and to the Magisterium.[420]

Like consecrated virgins, members of secular institutes live on their own in the world. What poverty and obedience in practice entail for them is almost entirely determined by common Christian norms and the other elements of their own evangelical lives: their commitments with respect to work, friendships, and so on.

The Secular Institute of the Missionaries of the Kingship of Christ—the institute for women founded by Agostino Gemelli and Armida Barelli—explains what poverty and obedience mean for its members:

> In SIM, the promises of poverty and obedience function differently than in religious orders. As lay women, we continue to own our own property and be responsible for our own finances; we draw up an annual budget as an expression of our commitment to allocate our resources according to Gospel priorities. Since we do not share community life or a common ministry, our obedience lies in our obligation to be faithful to our SIM way of life and to obey our Institute leaders in the Institute in those matters which pertain to it in a spirit of dialogue.[421]

Poverty and obedience as they developed and were traditionally understood become impossible without life in a community practicing withdrawal from the world, which began with monasticism and, in varying degrees, characterized religious life at least until Vatican II. Members of secular institutes and consecrated virgins, living on their own in the world, cannot replace private ownership with family-like community of goods nor can they give up personal autonomy about careers and schedules in favor of obedient cooperation in a community of brothers or sisters directed by a spiritual father or mother. Responsibility and restraint in using and disposing of goods are expressed in the drawing up of an annual budget to allocate resources according to gospel priorities, as any faithful Christian should do. Submission to the will of superiors is reduced to obeying leaders in matters that pertain to the institute *in a spirit of dialogue.*

My point is *not* that the consecration of members of secular institutes is unauthentic or defective. Like consecrated virgins, they commit themselves to permanent, celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake. Faithfully fulfilled as part of an evangelical life, that commitment allows them to participate in the superiority of consecrated life (see **2,** above). If they regularly carry out God's plan for their lives, their obedience mirrors

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420. The United States Conference of Secular Institute, under "Articles," then under "Questions and Answers About Secular Institutes and the Lifestyle of Secular Institute Members": http://www.secularinstitutes.org\Questions%20and%20Answers.htm

421. The Institute's English-language website, under "Life": http://www.simkc.org/life.cfm#con

Jesus' complete submission to his Father's will; and their submission, like Jesus', includes obeying human authorities when, but only when, that is the will of the Father. If they regulate the possession and use of material goods and money by their responsibilities to carry out their apostolic service effectively and meet their own genuine needs in a modest way, their poverty will be like Jesus' in putting the kingdom first. While they will not imitate the severe austerity Jesus practiced and taught his apostles when sending them out to evangelize, that form of poverty has not even been practiced in many religious institutes.[422]

The authenticity of the consecration of members of secular institutes further confirms what already is clear from the consecration of virgins: Values inhering in and flowing from specifically religious life in its various forms during the second millennium should not be attributed to consecrated life as such.

Even freedom from anxiety about the "things of the world" in order to concentrate on "the things of the Lord," invoked by St. Paul in arguing for celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake (see **B-4,** above), is not characteristic of consecrated life as such. The celibate chastity of consecrated virgins and members of secular institutes does, of course, free them to focus on the things of the Lord in ways that marital and parental responsibilities would preclude. Yet, remaining immersed in the world, they carry out essentially lay apostolate, so that their concern with the things of the Lord, like that of spouses who live evangelical lives, includes anxiety about things of the world—secular occupations, political and cultural affairs, and so on—with which Jesus and St. Paul never concerned themselves.[423]

Clerical secular institutes benefit the Church by fostering authentic evangelical life among diocesan clerics and benefit their members by supporting and encouraging their commitment to pursue holiness through their ministry. Belonging to a network of likeminded priests and maintaining more or less close contact with at least some of them helps many members of such institutes maintain their self-confidence and persevere despite loneliness and setbacks. Lay secular institutes and the forms of consecrated life available to individuals benefit the Church by fostering authentic evangelical life on the part of those with charisms for both consecrated life and lay apostolate. These

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422. The first section of the first canon (*CIC,* c. 607, §1) on "Religious Institutes" appropriates to religious what is true of all but only those who faithfully fulfill a commitment to any form of consecrated life: "As a consecration of the whole person, religious life manifests in the Church a wonderful marriage brought about by God, a sign of the future age. Thus the [holy] religious brings to perfection a total self-giving as a sacrifice offered to God, through which his or her whole existence becomes a continuous worship of God in charity."

423. Someone might argue that St. Paul meant that spouses must concern themselves with the things of the world for nonreligious ends, while consecrated virgins and members of secular institutes concern themselves with the things of the world for religious ends. The answer is twofold: first, any Christian who responds to the call to holiness by living an evangelical life always acts for the sake of the kingdom, which is a religious end that includes every other human good; and second, in dealing with things of the world, members of secular institutes and consecrated virgins often rightly act for proximate, nonreligious ends—just as holy spouses and parents more often do. In fact, Paul meant that those having the charism for celibate chastity and embracing it thereby gain freedom to concentrate on religious activities, as Jesus and Paul himself did.

consecrated persons are especially suited to provide models of holiness for other lay people and to lead organized lay apostolates. Lay members of secular institutes benefit from the formation they receive and, like clerics, from belonging to a network of likeminded people striving after an authentically evangelical life in the world. Recognition, teaching, and prayer on the part of the Church also benefit those who undertake one of the individual forms of consecrated life in the world as well as all the members of secular institutes, clerical and lay.

5) Distinctive features of religious life benefit the Church and those called to it.

I shall first describe the distinctive features of religious life, then treat their advantages for the Church and for individual religious.

"The first and foremost duty of all religious is to be the contemplation of divine things and assiduous union with God in prayer" (*CIC,* c. 663, §1). This duty of *all* religious is not the same as the duty of members of certain institutes to strive to become contemplatives of the sort that, according to St. Teresa of Avila, not even all Carmelite nuns can be (see **A-7,** above). Here, contemplating divine things means listening to and meditating on God's word; participating in the Eucharist, if possible daily (see *CIC,* c. 663, §2); engaging regularly in liturgical and personal prayer (see ibid., §3); striving constantly to discern God's plan and will; giving oneself in conscious cooperation with Jesus' salvific work and thereby promoting others' entrance into the kingdom.

Members of religious institutes make public vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience—that is, vows the Church officially accepts through someone authorized to do so on her behalf—and they share a common life as brothers or sisters (see *CIC,* cc. 573, §2; 607, §2; 1192, §1), which normally entails living together under the direction of a superior (see *CIC,* c. 608). For religious, the profession of the evangelical counsels involves setting aside worldly affairs in favor of the affairs of the Lord, and common life involves greater or less separation from the world (see *CIC,* c. 607, §3). Thus, in the many and diverse forms of religious life, celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake frees those who undertake it from worldly affairs to form a spiritual family that concentrates on the specifically *religious* affairs of the Lord.

Central to that freedom from preoccupation with worldly affairs is poverty, but religious institutes differ significantly in what that vow requires (see *CIC,* c. 668).[424] But every "religious forgoes the free use and disposal of his or her property, depends through the lawful superior on the institute for the provision of material goods, puts gifts and all

424. In some, all members divest themselves of all possessions before final profession and afterward accept nothing except for the institute, while depending entirely on the community to meet their material needs. In other institutes, members need not divest themselves of everything when they enter and even after profession may accept for themselves what others give or leave them. But they must entrust responsibility for their property to another in order to avoid dealing with it themselves, and what they acquire as members of the institute or by their efforts after entering it belongs to the institute. Still other institutes adopt some combination or modified version of the two approaches.

salaries in common as belonging to the community, and accepts and contributes to a simple way of life."[425]

As an outward sign of their commitment and membership in their community or institute, monks, nuns, and religious always have worn distinctive garb: a habit specified by each group's own law, though clerics sometimes dressed like diocesan clergy. Vatican II said habits should be simple, modest, poor but seemly, and should satisfy the requirements of health, time and place, as well as the group's ministry (see PC 17). Church law still requires such a habit for religious—and clerical dress for clerical religious with no other habit—as a sign of consecration and witness to poverty (see *CIC,* c. 669). Distinctive garb thus remains another element separating religious from the world and marking them as men and women "of God."

All members of any institute of consecrated life must share together in its common apostolate of "the witness of their consecrated lives, which they are bound to foster by prayer and penance" (*CIC,* c. 673).

> Religious, by their particular form of consecration, are necessarily and deeply committed to the mission of Christ. Like him, they are called for others: wholly turned in love to the Father and, by that very fact, entirely given to Christ's saving service of their brothers and sisters. This is true of religious life in all its forms.[426]

Still, members of different sorts of institutes have diverse apostolates.

Members of purely contemplative institutes engage in an apostolate similar to St. Antony's by their prayer, example, and advice (see *CIC,* c. 674; **C-1,** above). Members of other religious institutes carry on Jesus' mission of announcing God's kingdom, healing the sick and injured, converting sinners, blessing children, and in all things obeying the Father's will (see LG 46). Inasmuch as institutes' fundamental documents specify their diverse apostolates and are approved by ecclesiastical authority, the apostolic activities of individual religious contribute to a communal effort mandated by the Church.[427] Consequently, when individuals faithfully carry out their institutes' approved missions, they act both in the name of their institutes and as agents of the Church.

For this reason, all apostolic activities of any religious are subject to the authority of the bishop of the place (see *CIC,* c. 678, §1). That also follows from the fact that all those activities are either manifest forms of evangelization or else works of charity—for example, education, nursing, social work—that, in expressing the realities signified by the gospel the Church proclaims, also are essentially works "of evangelization: striving in the Church and according to the mission of the institute to bring the Good News" to everyone. Consequently, "religious manifest one of the most important aspects of their lives" by obediently cooperating in "corporate and ecclesial works of evangelization." In doing that, they not only carry out an apostolate but "are living as the apostles lived:

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425. Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes, *Essential Elements,* 16, *EV* 9:194-95, *OR,* 18 July 1983, 5.

426. Ibid., 24, *EV* 9:204-5, *OR,* loc. cit.

427. Ibid.

following Christ in service and in communion according to the teaching of the gospel and the Church he founded."[428]

In describing the distinctive features of religious life, I have drawn on canon law and recent documents of the Holy See. Since Vatican II, some religious—and many or even all in some institutes and parts of the world—have challenged or in practice simply disregarded some or most of those features. Soon after the Council, Paul VI considered it urgent to try to support and strengthen religious life:

> We wish to respond to the anxiety, uncertainty and instability shown by some; at the same time We wish to encourage those who are seeking the true renewal of the religious life. The boldness of certain arbitrary transformations, an exaggerated distrust of the past—even when it witnesses to the wisdom and vigor of ecclesial traditions—and a mentality excessively preoccupied with hastily conforming to the profound changes which disturb our times have succeeded in leading some to consider as outmoded the specific forms of religious life. Has not appeal even unjustly been made to the Council to cast doubt on the very principle of religious life?[429]

Although John Paul II did not say as clearly what concerned him, he repeatedly addressed the state of affairs Paul VI's effort failed to halt. But despite all that, some will dismiss the provisions of canon law and the documents on which I have drawn as irrelevant abstractions. Rather than being abstractions, however, the distinctive features upon which the law and documents insist were important elements of all the diverse religious institutes founded during the past eight centuries (see **C-4 to C-8,** above). They became definitive around 1200, after developing through centuries of experience and the interplay between the ecclesiastical authorities and creative founders and foundresses, beginning with those who established the early monasteries, where consecrated life first was lived in well-organized, ongoing communities.[430]

As explained in **2,** above, all consecrated persons are duty bound to show God's mercy in lives truly transfigured by his grace. The lives of those who faithfully keep their commitments manifest the Church's holiness and bear especially perspicuous witness to the reality and importance of the kingdom. Partly due to this potential for communicating, consecrated life as such is objectively superior to forms of evangelical life that include marriage.

The distinctive features of religious life greatly enhance its communicative potential. The public vows, corporate action in the Church's name, distinctive habits, and other things characteristic of members of religious institutes cause them to be perceived as

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428. Ibid., *EV* 9:208-9, *OR,* 18 July 1983, 5-6.

429. *On the Renewal of the Religious Life according to the Teaching of the Second Vatican Council* (*Evangelica testificatio)* (29 June 1971), 2, *AAS* 63 (1971) 498, *OR,* 15 July 1971, 5.

430. Vatican II teaches: The evangelical counsels are "a divine gift, which the Church receives from her Lord and by his grace always retains. Led by the Holy Spirit, Church authority has taken on the responsibility of interpreting these counsels, of regulating the practice of them, and of establishing stable forms of living them out" (LG 43). While ecclesiastical authorities have sometimes erred in their subsequent regulation of consecrated life, the Holy Spirit surely guided the long development by which *religious life* evolved so that this general form of living the counsels could be creatively instantiated, with all its essential features, by holy founders and foundresses from Francis of Assisi to Teresa of Calcutta.

more closely associated with the Church than other consecrated persons. Similarly, although all faithful Christians are displaced persons in this fallen and largely nonbelieving world, even other consecrated persons are not perceived as so completely displaced as *holy* members of religious institutes show themselves to be: committed to celibate chastity, they live cheerfully in community as brothers or sisters; committed to poverty, they gladly live simply and share material goods; committed to obedience, they willingly forgo personal self-fulfillment and work together on the things of the Lord, submissively carrying out their superiors' decisions. Consequently, *holy* religious most perspicuously and powerfully manifest the Church's holiness and bear witness that the goodness of the kingdom is superior to every other good—that the kingdom deserves to be sought first, as Jesus commanded.

Religious life focuses on the kingdom as already realized rather than still to come, and *holy* religious communities therefore not only point to the kingdom and bear witness to its supremacy but are living icons of it. The group is gathered in familial fellowship around the Lord, the center of their life; the family is permanent yet does not require marrying and raising children; material goods are shared and needs met without members' possessing and saving; members live and work together harmoniously and responsibly without bargaining or domination. Even for those who only read or hear about it, the unworldliness of a holy, contemplative community makes it an especially lovely and challenging icon of heaven; but it is especially so for someone privileged to experience its life from within: a bishop who visits it, a girl who is educated in it, a man or woman who spends time in it as a postulant or novice.

Holy members of institutes entirely devoted to contemplation contribute to the Church's primary mission not only by being icons of the kingdom but by doing what they do. Their hidden lives sustain others' apostolic service. In its document on the Church's missionary activity, Vatican II teaches:

> Institutes of contemplative life, through their prayers, works of penance, and hardships, hold the greatest importance in the conversion of souls, since it is God who, asked [by such prayers], sends workers into his harvest (see Mt 9.38), opens the minds of non-Christians to hear the gospel, and makes the saving word bear fruit in their hearts. (AG 40)

These religious surely make a similar contribution to all clerical ministry, the active apostolates of other religious, and the laity's apostolate as well. They attract souls hungry for God, as Antony did, enrich the spiritual lives of people who come to their oratories to worship and pray, and sometimes advise people who seek their help.

Holy clerical religious play an important role in the Church's missionary efforts and complement diocesan clerics' care of the faithful, especially with respect to preaching, chaplaincy of pious associations, spiritual direction, and the promotion of devotions. Holy religious women and men—sisters and brothers—engage in their diverse apostolates. Using their gifts in loving service to Jesus present in others, especially in those in great and urgent need, their deeds regularly manifest and confirm the realities signified by the words of the clergy's preaching, often remotely or proximately prepare people to receive the sacraments fruitfully, and sometimes directly help nurture the

Church's unity and lead God's people toward their heavenly home. Holy religious engaged in teaching, health care, raising orphans, looking after the elderly, and other charitable works not only spiritually benefit the faithful they serve but meet many of their other most vital needs.

Spiritually healthy religious institutes with holy superiors also greatly benefit their faithful members themselves.

They do not accept and profess people who lack the gifts required to live its specific way of life and cooperate in exercising its specific charism. Faithful members find themselves part of the fellowship God called them to, where they can use their gifts and flourish. Having been helped to discern and accept their vocation, they live and work among like-minded companions, who support one another's identity, bear one another's burdens, nurture one another's wholesome self-esteem, and provide care and security for the sick and the elderly.

Living in sisterly or brotherly communities that practice modesty, faithful religious are neither lonesome nor exposed to many of the temptations against their celibate chastity that consecrated persons immersed in the world must confront. Using shared things according to a reasonable plan for satisfying genuine needs in adequate but simple ways, they can resist attachment to possessions and avoid gradually increasing consumption, and are spared having to make anxious decisions about how to allocate material resources. Obediently cooperating in serving others according to a reasonable plan based on the institute's particular law and shaped by the chapter's decisions and advice, they also are predisposed to avoid competing for status and power, spared the need to agonize over how to use their time and energies, and protected from exploitation by superiors pursuing their own, alien agendas. The constant interaction of such religious moderates their eccentricities and smoothes out their rough spots.

Because spiritually healthy religious institutes almost always attract generous support from lay people, their faithful members generally can devote themselves to apostolic and other religious activities rather than spend time and energy simply earning a living and the means of meeting other responsibilities. This also enables them to avoid even much of the arguably permissible material cooperation in evil sometimes required of other Christians by sinful socioeconomic structures and employers or clients engaged in objective wrongdoing.

Just as alcoholics cannot use alcohol moderately but can and must abstain from it entirely, others find moderation in other matters to be impossible and must practice total abstinence in regard to them. For someone with the charisms for peaceful celibate chastity and the other renunciations required by religious life who would not otherwise live virtuously, the only way to persevere in grace and enter the kingdom will be to find the institute that he or she is called to, make profession in it, and faithfully fulfill what he or she has undertaken. Religious life will be an immeasurable blessing for such a person.

Much that I have said about institutes of religious life and their members in this section also is true of societies of apostolic life and their members, especially those like the Daughters of Charity that would have been founded as religious institutes had that been possible at the time.

Despite the great benefits flowing from the distinctive features of religious life, not everyone who has received the charism of celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake is called to it. Many men are called to the diocesan priesthood, as their own gifts and the great need for diocesan clergy make clear. Other needs and the diverse gifts of other Christians make it clear that some are called to secular institutes or societies of apostolic life, some to consecrated virginity or widowhood or widowerhood, some to eremitic (or anchoritic) life, and some to forms of consecrated life not mentioned in canon law. Of the latter, some are called to join a third order or similar pious association, or Opus Dei. But the vocations of others may require them to avoid commitment to an established group, and to work with a variety of individuals and groups as their unfolding vocations indicate, while obtaining spiritual direction and support when needed and where they can.

Finally, for each one who receives the charism for celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake, to discern, undertake, and faithfully persevere in the form of consecrated life to which he or she is called will be his or her way to follow Jesus and share in his holiness.

6) Some accounts of the superiority of consecrated life are unsound.

In his encyclical on celibate chastity, Pius XII rightly insists that the Christian excellence of embracing it lies in embracing it for the kingdom's sake. In developing this point, he quotes St. Paul: "The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord . . .. And the unmarried woman or girl is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit . . ." (1 Cor 7.32, 34), and offers this comment: "This then is the primary purpose, this the central idea of Christian virginity: to aim only at the divine, to turn thereto the whole mind and soul; to want to please God in everything, to think of Him continually, to consecrate body and soul completely to Him."[431] Pius quotes many Church Fathers and argues that those who embrace celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake imitate Jesus in consecrating themselves, body and soul, to God.[432]

The account of the superiority of consecrated life provided in **2,** above, agrees with Pius XII that celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake originated in our Lord's own lifestyle. But it explains three aspects of its excellence—greater intimacy with Jesus, more important benefits for those served, and more perspicuous witness—that explain why many who undertake celibate chastity become preoccupied, as Paul says, with the Lord's affairs and with trying to please him. Instead of that threefold focus on intimacy with Jesus and collaboration in his service and witness to the kingdom, Pius XII concentrates exclusively on the Christian's personal religious relationship with God.

The implications become clear when he goes on to compare celibate chastity with marriage. Although acknowledging that St. Paul does not reprove spouses for their mutual concern, the Pope claims that, in writing about married Christians by divine inspiration, Paul "is asserting clearly [in 1 Cor 7.32-33] that their hearts are divided between love of God and love of their spouse, and beset by gnawing cares, and so by

431. Pius XII, *Sacra virginitas, AAS* 46 (1954) 165, *PE,* 248:14-15.

432. Ibid., *AAS* 165-68, *PE,* 16-19.

reason of the duties of their married state they can hardly be free to contemplate the divine."[433]

But only the second of these three points (the married are beset by cares) accurately reflects what Paul says. Rather than speaking of contemplation, Paul speaks of the "affairs of the Lord" as against "worldly affairs." More importantly, although he says married Christians are divided, he does not say their hearts are divided between love of God and love of their spouse (see **B-4,** above). For Paul to have said that would have implicitly contradicted Jesus' teaching about love of God and neighbor: not only, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart" (Mt 22.37, Mk 12.30, Lk 10.27) but also, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt 22.39, Mk 12.31; cf. Lk 10.27).

Since Jesus' two love commandments must be consistent, Christian love of neighbor must be consistent with loving God *with one's* whole *heart.* A Christian's upright love of another human person does not divide his or her heart between love of God and love of that person. But St. Paul also teaches: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her" (Eph 5.25). For husbands to love their wives in that way no more prevents them from loving God wholeheartedly than Jesus' love for the Church prevents him from loving the Father wholeheartedly.[434]

Some will object that it is wrong to dissent from Pius XII's teaching that married Christians' hearts are divided between love of God and love of their spouses. After all, in teaching that Paul was teaching with *with the Holy Spirit's inspiration,* Pius plainly meant to propose it as a truth divinely revealed, and therefore to be held definitively by faith. That, I concede, is precisely what Pope Pius meant to do. But although he proposed the proposition as a truth to be held by faith, he did not solemnly define it, nor was it ever proposed by the bishops dispersed around the world as a truth to be held definitively. Therefore, the teaching has only the authority of ordinary papal magisterium. Faithful Catholics cannot assent to such a teaching if they are morally certain that it is incompatible with a truth asserted in Scripture—as Jesus' teaching on love of neighbor certainly is (see *LCL,* 51-52).

In its document on the Church, Vatican II treats the evangelical counsels as one way of responding to the universal call to holiness and cites Paul in support of its assertion that celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake enables those who receive this precious gift of divine grace "to devote themselves more easily to God alone with undivided hearts (see 1 Cor 7.32-34)" (LG 42). By saying "more easily," Vatican II avoids repeating Pius XII's claim that married Christians' love for their spouses prevents them from loving God with undivided hearts.

However, the Council's argument is unsound. First, the affairs with which many of those celibately chaste for the kingdom's sake are preoccupied are those pertaining to the salvific mission that the Lord Jesus undertook and continues to carry out insofar as he is not only God but man. So, those anxious about the Lord's affairs devote themselves not to God alone but to his kingdom—to God and to the whole Christ, including his body, the

433. Ibid., *AAS* 168, *PE,* 248:20.

434. See *LCL,* 307-8, including the quotation from John Paul II in fn. 4.

Church. Second, the significant other of every spouse must be his wife or her husband, and every spouse must be concerned with worldly affairs, such as making a living and participating in neighborhood and civic affairs. The division Paul observed in married Christians is inevitable, not one they can with difficulty overcome.

Again, some will object that it is wrong to dissent from Vatican II's teaching that Christians committed to celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake can *more easily* love God with undivided hearts. However, Vatican II made it clear that it was not infallibly defining anything.[435] Moreover, it not only supported the teaching in question with an unsound argument but itself implicitly contradicted it by what it taught about the universal call to holiness, which was soundly derived from the New Testament.

If the Council avoided Pius XII's error of claiming that spouses' hearts are inevitably divided between love of God and love of each other, why did it fallaciously cite Paul's text to support the claim that celibate chastity makes it easier to love God wholeheartedly? Probably because that view was widespread in Catholic theology. St. Thomas, for example, embraces it in explaining that the New Law fittingly includes not only precepts but counsels. Since the New Law is the law of liberty, he says, it fittingly includes not only strict obligations but optional norms. He explains:

> Therefore, the precepts of the New Law must be understood as given regarding the things necessary for pursuing the end of eternal beatitude, to which the New Law immediately directs, while the counsels must be about things by which one can better and more expeditiously pursue that end.
>
> Now, human beings are placed between the things of this world and spiritual goods in which eternal beatitude consists, so that the more they attach themselves to either, the more they distance themselves from the other. Thus, if one completely attaches oneself to the things of this world, so that one puts one's end in them and treats them like reasons for and standards of one's actions, one entirely falls away from spiritual goods. That disorder is excluded by the precepts. But reaching the aforesaid end does not require people to totally reject the things of the world, because if one uses things of the world without putting one's end in them, one can reach eternal beatitude, though one can reach it more expeditiously by totally abandoning the things of the world, and therefore on this the gospel provides counsels.

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435. The Theological Commission of Vatican II declared on March 6, 1964: "In view of conciliar practice and the pastoral purpose of the present Council, this sacred Synod defines matters of faith and morals as binding on the Church only when the Synod itself openly declares so," and this declaration was quoted in: "From the Acts of the Most Holy Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Announcements Made by the Most Excellent Secretary General of the Most Holy Council at the 123rd General Congregation; November 16, 1964," *AAS* 57 (1965) 72; *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. William M. Abbott, S.J. (New York: America Press, 1966), 98. Vatican II never declared itself to be defining anything, as Paul VI noted: "Some people have asked what authority, what theological qualification the Council intended to attribute to its teaching, since it clearly avoided issuing solemn definitions that would involve the infallibility of the msgisterium. The answer is clear for anyone who recalls the Council declaration issued on March 6, 1964, and repeated on November 16, 1964. In view of the pastoral nature of the Council, it avoided any extraordinary statement of dogmas that would be endowed with the note of infallibility, but still provided its teaching with the authority of the supreme ordinary magisterium" (*General Audience* [12 Jan. 1966], *The Pope Speaks*, 11 [1966]: 154; *Inseg.*, ???).

> Now, the goods of this world relevant to human life are threefold: wealth in material goods, with which "lust of the eyes" is concerned; carnal delights, with which "lust of the flesh" is concerned; and honors, with which "pride of life" is concerned—as 1 John 2.16 makes clear. To forgo these totally, insofar as possible, belongs to the evangelical counsels. In these three, also, is the basis for every religious institute which professes the state of perfection; for wealth is given up by poverty, carnal delights by perpetual chastity, and pride of life by the servitude of obedience.[436]

Thomas argues elsewhere that life according to the counsels aims at a perfection of charity—that is, wholehearted love of God—midway between that of the blessed in heaven and Christians in this world. The blessed love God in act always, while, usually, Christians in this world at best love him only habitually, that is, neither thinking of him nor consenting to something contrary to love of him. But those who undertake the counsels renounce temporal things as much as possible so as to love God in act as much as possible.[437]

The truth is, though, that growth in charity is stimulated, not by that to which the Father calls certain Christians but by how any Christian responds to the Father's call. To grow in charity, one must listen to his call, consistently do his will, and gladly accept everything from his hand (see **A-3,** above). These are fruits of grace. But surely the Father never asks the impossible of anyone, and thus he offers everyone he calls the graces required to respond perfectly to his call. I impede my growth in charity by failing to welcome graces he offers me. The view that celibate chastity stimulates growth in holiness and that marriage impedes it thus implicitly contradicts the truth that everyone is called to grow in holiness by finding, accepting, and faithfully fulfilling his or her personal vocation.[438]

Thomas's way of contrasting spiritual goods and the things of the world owes more to residues of neo-Platonism in Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius (see **B-7,** above) than it does to the New Testament. Although Jesus emphatically teaches his disciples detachment from everything other than God's kingdom and his righteousness, he promises that the Father will satisfy the human needs of those who concentrate on that ultimate end (see Mt 6.25-33). He insists, too, that his disciples meet their neighbors' human needs (see Mt 25.31-46), which inevitably involves them in the things of the world. Paul also taught detachment from the goods of marriage and property that belong to the passing world (see 1 Cor 7.29-31), yet he teaches that both celibate chastity and

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436. *S.t.*,- 1-2, q. 108, a. 4, c. Although John Paul II does not cite this passage, he follows this line of argument in *Redemptionis donum*, 9, *AAS* 76 (1984) 527-30, *OR*, 2 Apr. 1984, 3.

437. See *S.t.*, 1-2, q. 44, a. 4, ad 2 and ad 3. This passage was cited by Vatican II (in LG 42, fn. 13) but not by Pius XII in *Sacra virginitas*. On Thomas's teaching on the counsels in general, this passage in particular, and Vatican II's use of it, see Friedrich Wulf, "Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of Religious Life," in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 2:306-14.

438. This line of argument is developed in greater detail by Lozano, op. cit., 56-72, with whom I agree in general, though not in every detail.

marriage are charisms (see 1 Cor 7.7), and that all charisms, including contributing liberally and doing works of mercy, are for building up the one body (see Rom 12.3-8).

Moreover, in approving secular institutes of consecrated life, Pius XII recognized that their members' apostolates are not only *in the world* but *from the world* (see **C-9,** above). Thus, he implicitly conceded that even consecrated life need not focus on "the affairs of the Lord" as Paul understood them, much less abandon the things of the world in order to attain the ultimate end more easily and expeditiously.

Those who undertake celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake can enjoy intimate friendship with Jesus as man—friendship that will motivate them to welcome the graces God offers and thus grow in holiness. Yet unlike the familial relationships that motivate devout married Christians to constant love of neighbor, that friendship does not come naturally. Those who undertake celibate chastity can neglect their relationship with Jesus and become self-absorbed. While avoiding consumerism and living austerely in consequence of forgoing personal ownership, they may nevertheless become profoundly attached to their community's material goods, both for individual use and enjoyment of them and as an aspect of communal life ("our monastery," "our habit") and service ("our hospitals," "our library"). Similarly, while obedience is an obstacle to the quest for honors of some sorts, Christians eager for recognition always can prefer it to meekly accepting God's plan for their lives.[439]

When dealing with celibate chastity in its decree on the ministry and life of presbyters, Vatican II taught more soundly than it did in its document on the Church:

> By virginity or celibacy observed for the heavenly kingdom's sake (see Mt 19.12), presbyters are consecrated to Christ in a new and outstanding way. They adhere to him more easily with an undivided heart (see 1 Cor 7.32-34). In him and through him, they dedicate themselves more freely to the service of God and human beings; they more effectively minister to his kingdom and the work of supernatural regeneration, and thus become suited to accept fatherhood, understood broadly, in Christ. In this way they profess themselves before others to will undividedly to devote themselves to the role entrusted to them—namely, to betroth the faithful to one husband and present them to Christ as a chaste bride (see 2 Cor 11.2), thus evoking the mysterious marriage founded by God that will be fully manifested in the age to come, when the Church will have Christ as her only Spouse [note omitted]. (PO 16)

Here the Council situates the undividedness made possible by celibate chastity where Paul did: in adherence to the Lord and commitment to ministry.[440]

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439. While St. Augustine, *On holy virginity,* argues at length for the superiority of virginity over marriage, he devotes a large part (32-56) of that work to humility, for he realizes that awareness of possessing the charism considered superior will be an occasion of the sin of pride. While the virgin should not hesitate to put her charism above marriage, he thinks, "the individual virgin who is obedient and fears God should not presume to raise herself above one laywoman or another who is obedient and fears God. Otherwise she will not be humble, and 'God resists the proud' (Jas 4.6)" (45), trans. from Augustine, *De bono coniugali; De sancta virginitate,* ed. and trans. P. G. Walsh (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001), 131.

440. Fortunately, this passage is the basis for present Church law regarding clerical celibacy: *CIC,* c. 277, §1.

Vatican II also taught on chastity in its decree on the renewal of religious life. The expression *undivided heart* does not appear; instead the Council simply affirms that celibate chastity "frees the human heart in a singular way (see 1 Cor 7:32-35) so that it may be more inflamed with love for God and for all human beings, and thus it is a very special sign of heavenly goods and a very suitable means by which religious dedicate themselves to divine service and apostolic works" (PC 12). This teaching would be entirely sound had the Council said that celibate chastity frees the heart for greater love for the Lord—that is, for Jesus—rather than for God.

In its decree on priestly formation, the Council does say that seminarians who accept the celibate state "forgo the companionship of marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven (see Mt 19.12), adhere to the Lord with undivided love [note omitted] that perfectly fits the new covenant, bear witness to the resurrection in the coming age (see Lk 20.36), and obtain the most suitable help in constantly exercising that perfect charity by which they can become in their priestly ministry all things to all people [note omitted]" (OT 10). This teaching is entirely sound.[441]

Paul VI avoided invidiously comparing marriage with celibate chastity in his 1967 encyclical on priestly celibacy. He made it clear that married Christians have their own way of holiness by affirming the true excellence of the holy celibate person's intimacy with Jesus and witness to the kingdom: "But Christ, 'Mediator of a superior covenant' (Heb 8.6), has also opened a new way, in which the human creature adheres wholly and directly to the Lord, and is concerned only with him and with his affairs (see 1 Cor 7.33-35); thus, he manifests in a clearer and more complete way the profoundly transforming reality of the New Testament."[442]

Restating and developing Vatican II's teachings, the teachings of John Paul II include both sound and unsound passages.

Speaking of celibacy in his exhortation regarding the formation of priests, he begins by quoting the unsound passage from Vatican II's document on the Church, but at once explains soundly that virginity makes clear the nuptial meaning of the body by its self-giving to Jesus and his Church. He goes on to endorse one of the Synod's propositions that speaks of the "undivided love of the priest for God and for God's People"—without citing the often-misinterpreted passage from St. Paul.[443] Later, in dealing with formation for celibacy, John Paul quotes the entirely sound teaching of Vatican II's decree on priestly formation.[444]

Toward the end of *Vita consecrata,* his apostolic exhortation on consecrated life, John Paul accurately speaks of the undivided love for Jesus that celibate chastity makes possible: "Those who have been given the priceless gift of following the Lord Jesus more

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441. Unfortunately, the first note omitted from the quotation refers to the passage in Pius XII's encyclical on celibate chastity that begins with the misinterpretation, which I criticized at the beginning of this section, of 1 Cor 7.32, 34.

442. Paul VI, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus,* 20, *AAS* 59 (1967) 665, *PE,* 276:20. *CIC,* cc. 277, §1, and 599, dealing with the celibacy of priests and the evangelical counsel of chastity, also are sound.

443. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis,* 29, *AAS* 84 (1992) 703-4, *OR,* 8 Apr. 1992, VII-VIII.

444. Ibid., 50, *AAS* 746, *OR,* XIII.

closely consider it obvious that he can and must be loved with an undivided heart, that one can devote to him one's whole life, and not merely certain actions or occasional moments or activities."[445] He also begins that document by regarding the special love that celibate chastity involves as focused on Jesus. Yet in that opening passage he mistakenly cites Paul (1 Cor 7.34) to support attributing "an 'undivided' heart" to those who devote themselves to Christ by undertaking consecrated life.[446] In another passage of *Vita consecrata*, John Paul II mistakenly appeals to Paul's authority to apply to the dedication of those committed to celibate chastity something true of every holy Christian's love: "The *chastity* of celibates and virgins, as a manifestation of dedication to God with *an undivided heart* (see 1 Cor 7.32-34), is a reflection of the *infinite love* which links the Divine Persons in the mysterious depths of the life of the Trinity."[447]

Affirming in *Vita consecrata* that the Church has always taught the superiority of celibate chastity over marriage, John Paul cites as support a canon of the Council of Trent and refers to a passage in Pius XII's encyclical on virginity appealing to that same canon.[448] Thus, Pius XII's appeal to that canon grounded not only his own teaching about celibate chastity but that of John Paul II. I shall now argue that Trent's canon does not in fact support those papal teachings.

As was shown at the beginning of this section, Pius mistakenly claims that the hearts of married persons are divided between love of their spouses and of God. Since holiness requires loving God with one's whole heart, the claim implies that marriage impedes holiness. So, rather than recognizing that celibate chastity is superior to marriage only in important respects, Pius asserts, in summarizing his arguments, that celibate chastity's absolute superiority is a truth of faith:

> This doctrine, establishing virginity or celibacy as altogether higher than and preferable to marriage [qua statuitur virginitatem et coelibatum omnino excellere ac matrimonio praestare], was, as we have said, already revealed by the divine Redeemer and by the Apostle to the Gentiles; it also was solemnly defined as a dogma of divine faith by the Council of Trent [note omitted], and always was affirmed by the holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church as their common position.[449]

As has been shown (in **B-3** and **B-4,** above), Jesus revealed the superiority of celibate chastity only for those called to it, and Paul revealed its superiority only in certain respects. However, the relevant canon of Trent must be examined, and something must

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445. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 104, *AAS* 88 (1996) 480, *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, XX.

446. Ibid., 1, *AAS* 377, *OR*, I.

447. Ibid., 21, *AAS* 394, *OR*, IV.

448. Ibid., 32, fn. 63, *AAS* 406, *OR*, XXII: "See Ecumenical Council of Trent, session XXIV, canon 10: DS 1810; Pius XII, Encyclical Letter *Sacra Virginitas* (March 25, 1954): *AAS* 46 (1954) 174f [*OR* mistakenly has 176]." John Paul has a similar reference to Pius XII's encyclical on virginity (but citing 174ff.) to support the passage in *Familiaris consortio*, 16, previously quoted (in **2,** above), in which he affirms the superiority of celibate chastity on the basis of the witness it provides.

449. Pius XII, *Sacra virginitas*, II, *AAS* 46 (1954) 174, *PE*, 248:32 (but the translation here is my own).

be said about the Fathers and Doctors. Rather than consider many of them, however, I shall focus on St. Thomas Aquinas, who best represents them all.

The Council of Trent defined the following complex statement: "If anyone says that the married state is to be preferred to the state of virginity or celibacy, and that it is not better and more blessed to remain in virginity or celibacy than to be joined in marriage, *anathema sit.*"[450] In interpreting this definition, it is important to notice that there are two alternatives to the rejected statement that the married state is to be preferred: (1) that, as Pius XII holds, the state of virginity or celibacy is to be preferred, and (2) that neither state is to be preferred to the other. So, Trent's solemn definition need not be interpreted as asserting that virginity or celibacy is altogether higher than marriage and preferable to it. Moreover, remaining in a state, to which Trent refers, must be distinguished from entering into that state, which Trent does not mention. So, Trent's solemn definition need not be interpreted as asserting that it is better and more blessed to *commit oneself* to virginity or celibacy than to *commit oneself* to marriage.

The preparatory work that led to Trent's canon supports my interpretation. On 4 February 1563, theologians who were helping prepare canons for the Council Fathers to consider were given eight propositions on the sacrament of matrimony to examine, including the following:

> 5. Matrimony is not to be put after but to be preferred to chastity, and God gives spouses more grace than others.
>
> 6. Priests in the West can licitly contract matrimony, their vow or Church law notwithstanding, and the opposite position is nothing but a condemnation of matrimony; and all who do not feel they have the gift of chastity can contract matrimony.[451]

From 11 February to 22 March, seventeen theologians assigned to consider those draft canons held sessions in which they articulated their views. Most reaffirmed the received view that celibate chastity is better than and preferable to marriage. However, their deliberations make it clear that their intention was to reject the extreme views of (or attributed to) the Reformers. Moreover, one theologian, Ioannes Gallo, a Spanish Dominican, pointed out that Augustine equated the matrimony of Abraham to the celibate chastity of John the Baptist, and held that "it is possible that there be greater charity in spouses than in virgins."[452]

The draft canons presented to the Council Fathers on 20 July omitted "God gives spouses more grace than others" from the opinions to be condemned and condensed the

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450. DS 1810/980: "Si quis dixerit, statum coniugalem anteponendum esse statui virginitatis vel caelibatus, et non esse melius ac beatius, manere in virginitate aut caelibatu, quam iungi matrimonio [see Mt 19.11f; 1 Cor 7.25f., 38, 40]: anathema sit."

451. *Concilium Tridentinum: Diariorum, Actorum, Epistularum, Tractatuum,* ed. Societas Goerresiana (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1965), vol. 9, 380: "5. Matrimonium non postponendum, sed anteferendum castitati, et Deum dare coniugibus maiorem gratiam quam aliis. 6. Licite contrahere posse matrimonium sacerdotes occidentales, non obstante voto vel lege ecclesiastica, et oppositum nihil aliud esse quam damnare matrimonium, posseque omnes contrahere matrimonium, qui non sentiunt se habere donum castitatis."

452. Ibid., 460: "Posset enim esse, ut maior caritas esset in coniugatis quam in virginibus."

other points into a single canon. That draft canon was similar to the canon finally adopted, except that it said "matrimony is to be preferred to virginity or celibacy."[453] In accord with the urgings of several Fathers, that was amended to "the married state is to be preferred to the state of virginity or celibacy" in the revised draft presented to the Council Fathers on 7 August. The revision remained unchanged in the formulation of the canon defined on 11 November 1563.[454]

Consequently, although Trent condemns the opinions that the state of marriage is to be preferred to the state of celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake, and that it is not better and more blessed to remain in celibate chastity than to be joined in marriage, it teaches definitively neither that the state of celibate chastity is to be preferred to the state of marriage, nor that it is better and more blessed to commit oneself to celibate chastity than to commit oneself to marriage. So, without contradicting Trent's definition, one can hold, as I do, that celibate chastity is superior to marriage in certain important respects but neither is unqualifiedly higher than and preferable to the other, that each state should be preferred by those called to it by God, and that it is better and more blessed for Christians who have undertaken either state to remain in it and fulfill their commitment than to leave it—except when both spouses discern the call to undertake celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake and mutually agree to do so.

In making his case for the view "that virginity or celibacy is altogether higher than marriage and preferable to it," Pius XII argues that, although chaste marital intercourse is sanctified by the sacrament of marriage, "as a consequence of the fall of Adam the lower faculties of human nature are no longer obedient to right reason, and may involve man in dishonorable actions." He then quotes St. Thomas: "As the Angelic Doctor has it, the use of marriage 'keeps the soul from full abandon to the service of God' (*S.t.*, 2-2, q. 186, a. 4)."[455]

Thomas is dealing in that article with the question of whether perpetual continence is required for *religious* perfection. He offers two arguments for his view that marital intercourse impedes one from "the service of God"—that is, from the service provided by those who undertake religious life. The second rightly invokes Paul's authority to make the point that marriage requires a man to care for his wife and so involves him in the things of the world while preventing him from concentrating on the things of the Lord (see 1 Cor 7.32-33). But the first argument, which Pius XII quotes, is that marital intercourse impedes serving God

> due to the intensity of the pleasure, the frequent experience of which increases concupiscence, as Aristotle says (*Nicomachean Ethics*, iii, 12 [1119b9]). That is why the pleasurable use of sex withdraws the mind from that perfect intention of tending to God. And this is what Augustine says (*Soliloquies*, i, 10): "I know nothing which brings the manly mind down from the heights more than a woman's caresses and that joining of bodies without which one cannot have a wife."

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453. Ibid., 640: "matrimonium anteponendum esse virginitati vel coelibatui."

454. Ibid., 662, 665, 670, 676, 680, 682, and 968.

455. *Sacra virginitas*, *AAS* 46 (1954) 169, *PE*, 248:21.

With the authority of Aristotle and Augustine, this argument seems powerfully to support Pius XII's view.

Aristotle's observation, however, is made, not in a treatment of chaste marital intercourse, but in a comparison between the sin of intemperance and other sins, as Thomas himself says in his commentary on the passage.[456] With chaste marital intercourse, however, concupiscence is remedied, not simply by being satisfied, but, as Thomas himself explains, by becoming submissive to reasonable judgments about engaging in and abstaining from intercourse according to the requirements of authentic conjugal love.[457]

Similarly, Augustine's statement, which appears in a work written shortly after his conversion, reflects his own experience with the effects of lust. Reflecting on whether to marry, he says: "I have decided that there is nothing I should avoid so much as marriage," continues at once with the statement Thomas quotes, and goes on to explain that he regards marriage as dangerous, so that "for the sake of the freedom of my soul, I have enjoined myself—with due justice and good reason, I think—not to covet, not to seek, not to marry a wife."[458] Like someone who can become sober only by entirely giving up alcohol, Augustine, as he himself later explained, had been a sex addict for whose concupiscence marriage could provide no remedy.[459]

Again, Pius XII explains that the superiority of celibate chastity, which he has asserted, is mainly due to its having a higher end than marriage. In support he cites two articles of St. Thomas (*S.t.*, 2-2, q. 152, aa. 3-4).[460] In article 3, Thomas is discussing whether virginity is a virtue, and his arguments that it is do not try to show it to be superior to marriage. But in article 4, the issue is whether virginity is more excellent than marriage.

Thomas summarizes the case for holding that it is:

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456. See *In libros Ethicorum*, iii, lect. 22.

457. To an argument that invokes Aristotle's teaching in *Nicomachean Ethics*, iii, 12 (1119b9), Thomas replies *(In 4 Sent.*, d. 26, q. 2, a. 3, ad 4 *[S.t.*, sup. q. 42, a. 3, ad 4]): "A remedy against concupiscence can be provided in two ways. In one way, on the side of concupiscence by repressing it at the root, and thus matrimony provides a remedy by the grace given in it. In another way, on the side of its act, and this in two ways: first, by causing the act to which concupiscence inclines to lack outward shamefulness, and this is done by the goods of marriage which rectify carnal concupiscence; secondly, by impeding shameful acts, which is done by the very nature of the conjugal act, because that kind of act does not, in satisfying concupiscence, thereby motivate one to other corrupt acts. For this reason the Apostle says (1 Cor. 7.9): 'It is better to marry than to burn.' For though the behaviors characteristic of concupiscence in themselves naturally tend to increase concupiscence, yet insofar as they are directed according to reason they repress it, because like acts result in like dispositions and habits." It also is worth noticing that Thomas does not suppose that reason's control of chaste marital sexual intimacy does not mean it is less pleasant: *S.t.*, 1, q. 98, a. 2, ad 3; *In 2 Sent.*, d. 20, q. 1, a. 2, ad 2; *In 4 Sent.*, d. 26, q. 1, (= sup. q. 41) a. 3 ad 6.

458. *The Soliloquies of Saint Augustine*, trans. Thomas F. Gillagan, O.S.A. (New York: Cosmopolitan Science and Art Service Co., 1943), 41.

459. See *Confessions*, vi, 12.

460. *Sacra virginitas*, *AAS* 46 (1954) 170, *PE*, 248:24.

> In Jerome's book *Against Jovinian,* it is clear that Jovinian's error was in holding that virginity is not preferable to marriage. This error is refuted above all by the example of Christ, who both chose a virgin mother and himself remained a virgin, and by the teaching of St. Paul, who (see 1 Cor 7) counsels virginity as the greater good. It is also refuted by reason: first, because a divine good is superior to a human good; second, because the good of the soul is preferable to the good of the body; and third, because the good of the contemplative life is preferable to that of the active life. Now virginity is directed to the good of the soul in respect of the contemplative life, which consists in thinking on the things of God, while marriage is directed to the good of the body, the bodily multiplying of the human race. That belongs to the active life, since the man and the woman living in matrimony must think about "the things of the world," as St. Paul says (1 Cor 7). Therefore, virginity undoubtedly should be preferred to conjugal continence.[461]

This case, however, is riddled with fallacies.

Jesus' commitment to his mission adequately accounts for his whole lifestyle (see **B-2,** above), including his becoming a "eunuch for the kingdom's sake." By choosing that description of remaining unmarried and childless, moreover, he made it clear that he regarded his celibate chastity much as he regarded his death: both were deprivations to be freely accepted in faithfully carrying out the Father's plan for his life. It should be noted, too, that Jesus did not, as man, choose his own mother; rather, God created Mary to be the incarnate Word's mother and, in doing so, provided the plan of her life, including her commitment to virginity. That virginity served an important purpose: "The Fathers see in the virginal conception the sign that it truly was the Son of God who came in a humanity like our own" (*CCC* 496). So, God's choice to reveal Jesus' divinity is sufficient to explain his choice to include virginity in Mary's personal vocation. It therefore begs the question to assume that Mary's virginity shows the state of celibate chastity to be more excellent than the married state. Thomas overlooked the fallacy because the mistakes of Greek philosophy, both those of Aristotle and those of the neo-Platonism purveyed by Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius, led him to focus on the state of life that supposedly was better suited for pursuing holiness and distracted him from the New Testament's

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461. In his *Against Jovinianus*—in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*,- 2nd ser., vol. 6: *St. Jerome: Letters and Select Works, trans. W. H. Fremantle* (New York: Christian Literature, 1890), 346-86—Jerome says (I, 3) that he honors marriage and affirms (I, 13): "The difference, then, between marriage and virginity is as great as that between not sinning and doing well; nay rather, to speak less harshly, as great as between good and better." But Jerome also, and at length, makes it clear (in I, 7) that he regards marriage as an impediment to authentic Christian living and that it is tolerable only to avoid fornication; he holds that a Christian husband who abstains from marital intercourse honors his wife while one who wishes to engage in marital intercourse fails in self-control and insults his wife. Jerome also refers to 1 Pt 3.7 (an exhortation to husbands) and ends his argument by interpreting it: "In effect he says this: Since your outer man is corrupt, and you have ceased to possess the blessing of incorruption characteristic of virgins, at least imitate the incorruption of the spirit by subsequent abstinence, and what you cannot show in the body exhibit in the mind. For these are the riches, and these the ornaments of your union, which Christ seeks." Moreover, commenting in I, 9 on Paul's statement, "It is better to marry than to be aflame with passion" (1 Cor 7.8), Jerome says: "If marriage in itself be good, do not compare it with fire, but simply say, 'It is good to marry.' I suspect the goodness of that thing which is forced into the position of being only the lesser of two evils. What I want is not a smaller evil, but a thing absolutely good."

teachings about personal vocation and the diverse charisms that build up the one body of Christ, the incipient communion that will reach perfection in the heavenly kingdom.

St. Paul holds (in 1 Cor 7) that both marriage and celibate chastity are charisms—gifts of God (v. 7). He teaches: "Only, let every one lead the life which the Lord has assigned to him, and in which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches" (v. 17). He specifies two respects in which remaining unmarried is superior, one based on a self-interested concern about impending distress and the avoidance of worldly troubles (vv. 26, 28), the other that remaining unmarried enables a Christian to wait on the Lord undistractedly (undivided devotion to the Lord) (vv. 32-35). The latter consideration calls attention to the real superiority of celibate chastity: those who practice it enjoy a more intimate relationship with Jesus and closer collaboration with him.

Thomas is right in saying St. Paul commends virginity as the better charism. But Paul maintains only that celibate chastity is better in a certain respect, whereas Augustine and Thomas consider it, in Pius XII's formulation of their and his view, "altogether higher than marriage and preferable to it." That Thomas is missing Paul's real point becomes clear when he substitutes "thinking on the things of God" for Paul's "anxious about the affairs of the Lord"—that is, focused on collaborating with Jesus.[462]

Thomas assumes that virginity is a divine good and marriage a human good. Insofar as Jesus is God, however, he is as incapable of celibate chastity as he is of dying. His celibate chastity and his dying are not divine goods but human ones, both good only insofar as they pertain to his life dedicated to the Father, accepted freely as side effects of doing the Father's will, and contribute to God's redemptive work. Both consecrated life and sacramental marriage are human goods that pertain to the supernatural order.[463]

Thomas assumes that virginity is a good of the soul and marriage a good of the body. Both consecrated life and sacramental marriage, however, are goods of whole human individuals; neither is the good of body or soul alone. Being a sign of the union of Jesus and the Church is not merely a bodily good, and, as Paul says: "the unmarried woman or girl is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit" (1 Cor 7.34).

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462. Someone might object: "the things of God" and "the affairs of the Lord" could be used interchangeably. Perhaps. But "thinking on" and "anxious about" cannot.

463. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 18, *AAS* 88 (1996) 392, *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, III, teaches that Jesus' "way of living in chastity, poverty and obedience appears as the most radical way of living the gospel on this earth, a way which may be called *divine*, for it was embraced by him, God and man, as the expression of his relationship as the Only-Begotten Son with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. This is why Christian tradition has always spoken of the *objective superiority of the consecrated life."* But, although Jesus' way of humanly living his gospel is radical and objectively superior, as I explained (in **B-2,** above), and although his lifestyle may be called *divine* inasmuch as he is a divine person, *human* goods explain both why he adopted his lifestyle and its objective superiority to other good human lifestyles. If Jesus adopted his unique lifestyle as an expression of his relationship with the Father and the Spirit, he did so because his mission itself somehow expresses that relationship. However, the consecrated life *of human persons* cannot rightly be called "divine." It is an objectively superior human lifestyle just insofar as it participates in Jesus' own lifestyle considered as the most perfect human lifestyle (see **2,** above).

Thomas assumes that virginity pertains to the contemplative life. But St. Angela Merici founded a company of virgins whose concern about the affairs of the Lord motivated them to carry on an active apostolate in the world, and some devout married women are no less contemplative than holy members of women's religious institutes devoted to teaching, health care, or other charitable works.

Thomas also answers three arguments for the view that virginity is not more excellent than marriage. The first two are based on the virtue of particular married people, and Thomas's responses to them make it clear he is comparing only the states of marriage and celibate chastity and not excluding the possibility that some spouses might be holier than some virgins. The third argument against virginity's superiority is this:

> Common good is higher than private good, as Aristotle makes clear. Now, marriage is ordered toward common good, for Augustine says: "What food is to the preservation of the individual, intercourse is to the preservation of the human race." But virginity is ordered to a special good of individuals, namely, that they avoid the worldly troubles that spouses experience, as Paul makes clear (see 1 Cor 7.28). So, virginity is not higher than conjugal continence.

This argument is answered by Thomas:

> Common good is higher than private good if both belong to the same genus; but a private good can be generically better than a common good. In this way, virginity dedicated to God is preferred to bodily fruitfulness. So Augustine says that "the physical fruitfulness even of those women of our era who seek nothing from marriage except offspring to commit to Christ cannot possibly be thought to compensate for loss of virginity."[464]

Augustine's statement is the conclusion of an argument in which he concedes that a claim by Christian mothers that their fruitfulness is as great a blessing as other Christians' dedicated virginity "would certainly be tolerable if the children to whom they gave birth were Christians" but points out that they are not until the "Church gives birth to them."[465]

If his argument were sound, Augustine's conclusion would support Thomas's claim that virginity dedicated to God is preferable to bodily fruitfulness. In fact, it might even support the claim's adequacy as a response to the view that virginity is not higher than conjugal continence. However, Augustine simply ignores the fact that Christian marriage and the parenthood it includes are more than the couple's reproductive behavior and its natural consequences.[466] Thomas's use of Augustine's conclusion therefore is fallacious. Thomas's (and Pius XII's) thesis is that virginity is more excellent than marriage; and Augustine's comparison—of virginity dedicated to God to bodily fruitfulness abstracted

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464. *S.t.*, 2-2, q. 152, a. 4, ad 3. The quotation from Augustine is in *On Holy Virginity*, 9; the translation here is taken from P. G. Walsh, ed., op. cit., 75.

465. P. G. Walsh, ed., op. cit., 7, p. 73.

466. United in Christ and themselves members of his Church, Christian parents have an important role in the cooperation by which the Church gives their offspring birth as new Christians. Church law makes parents' essential role clear by forbidding, except in special circumstances, that a child be baptized unless the parents consent and undertake to bring him or her up as a Catholic (see *CIC*, 868, §1).

from Christian parents' dedication of their marital intercourse and parenthood to God—cannot show that virginity is more excellent than marriage, any more than comparing marriage undertaken as part of a couple's vocation and an intact hymen abstracted from a virgin's dedication to God could show that marriage is more excellent than virginity.

At the end of this lengthy refutation of arguments for the unqualified superiority of consecrated life, I affirm again that holy consecrated life does mirror Jesus' uniquely excellent lifestyle. It involves a more intimate relationship with Jesus and closer collaboration with him than other forms of evangelical life lived with similar fidelity. Moreover, since the meritorious works of the saints are entirely the fruit of grace, holy consecrated life is a living miracle—a brilliant sign that clearly points both to the Spirit, who is the source of all grace, and to the heavenly kingdom, which will be its ultimate fruit.

E: How Ordained Ministry and a Lifestyle Like Jesus' Are Related

1) Jesus continues his saving work through those he sends.

Having been sent by the Father, Jesus sends others, beginning with the Twelve, and tells them they will make him present as he has made his Father present: "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me" (Mt 10.40; cf. Jn 13.20). He says essentially the same thing when he sends the seventy (see Lk 10.16). And he promises to remain *with* his Church as she carries out her mission with his authority: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations . . . and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt 28.18-20).

Those thus sent, as Ceslas Spicq explains, were appropriately called "apostles." Underlying the Greek *apostolos* (meaning "envoy, emissary"), Spicq detects the Semitic institution of the *salîah:* "This person is not a mere envoy but a chargé d'affaires, a person's authorized representative; his acts are binding upon the 'sender.' At this point the principal and the proxy are equivalent . . .. This rule carries over into the religious sphere: when the *salîah* acts on God's orders, it is God himself who acts."[467] Consequently, when those Jesus sends bind or loose on earth as he has authorized them to do, their action is effective "in heaven" (see Mt 16.19, 18.18)—that is, with God. The seventy Jesus sent reported on their mission's effectiveness: "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" (Lk 10.17).

Of course, of themselves those sent are incapable of making present Jesus' human acts, much less his divine actions. But Jesus gives them the Holy Spirit: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you. . . . Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." (Jn 20.21-23). Likewise, those he sends can convey God's saving truth, to be accepted with faith, because he has consecrated them in truth (see Jn 17.17-19) and given them the Holy Spirit (see Lk 24.49; Acts 1.4-5, 8; cf. Mt 10.19-20; Jn 14.16-17, 25-26; 15.26-27; 16.7-

467. Spicq, op. cit., 1:188-89; cf. Fitzmyer, *Luke,* 28A:857, on Lk 10.16. Also see John Paul II, *Pastores gregis,* 9, *AAS* 96 (2004) 836-37, *OR,* 22 Oct. 2003, III-IV.

15). Thus, after Pentecost (see Acts 2.1-4) the apostles taught, worked miracles, and did exorcisms "in the name" of Jesus (see Acts 3.6; 4.10, 30; 5.40; 9.27, 29; 16.18); and they presented the resolution of a divisive issue as the Holy Spirit's position as well as their own (see Acts 15.28).

In no way did the apostles' action replace Jesus' action or detract from its significance when they served as his authorized agents, acting in his name. Of course, after his resurrection and ascension, his presence and action were not obvious. But the apostles' role was similar to what it had been before. When, for instance, they carried out his directive to do in his memory what he had done in the Last Supper,[468] their role was not greatly different from what it had been when they fed the hungry thousands with food Jesus miraculously provided.[469]

St. Paul was fully conscious of being Jesus' agent. Writing to the Corinthians, he appeals "by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1.10; cf. Rom 1.5, 2 Cor 13.10, 2 Thes 3.6); he regards himself and others engaged in spreading the faith as ministers through whom God is working (see 1 Cor 3.5-9; cf. Eph 3.2, Col 1.25); in Jesus' name he judges a wrongdoer in the community, confident that Jesus will carry out the judgment (see 1 Cor 5.3-5). Explaining that God reconciled the world to himself through Jesus and established an ongoing ministry of reconciliation (see 2 Cor 5.18-19), Paul describes his ministerial role: "So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us" (2 Cor 5.20).[470] He also credits the Galatians for receiving him as Jesus' emissary—indeed, for receiving him *as Christ himself:* "You did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel [messenger] of God, as Christ Jesus" (Gal 4.14).

Thus, the New Testament makes it clear that the ministry of the apostles and those who share in it has a very special relationship to the Lord Jesus' own action and the Holy Spirit's work.

2) Clerics act in the person of Christ (in persona Christi).

That special relationship and its unique features came to be encapsulated in the expression, *in the person of Christ*, which also may have originated with St. Paul.

A wrongdoer having been disciplined by the majority of the Corinthian church at Paul's urging, he begs them to forgive that person (see 2 Cor 2.5-9). He certainly wants the Corinthians' forgiveness to be wholehearted, and probably for that reason he does not command or even anticipate it, but invites them to take the lead: "Any one whom you forgive, I also forgive." But he then adds: "What I have forgiven, if I have forgiven

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468. See Lk 22.19, 1 Cor 11.24-25. Paul includes the directive after the blessing of both the bread and the cup, and adds: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor 11.26). Fitzmyer, *Luke,* 28A:1401-2, explains that Jesus is replacing the Pascal lamb with himself, the old covenant with the new, and the Passover ritual with the re-presenting of him and his sacrifice.

469. See Lk 9.10-17; cf. Mt 14.13-21, Mk 6.30-44; in John's account (6.1-13), the apostles' role is limited to gathering up the leftovers.

470. The ministry of reconciliation of which Paul speaks certainly includes the administration of the sacraments of baptism and penance, but is not limited to that: Paul regards himself as an "ambassador" for the "mystery of the gospel" (Eph 6.19-20), for the whole of God's salvific work in Christ.

anything, has been for your sake"—and the Greek sentence goes on—"*en prosopo Christou"* (1 Cor 2.10).

That phrase is ambiguous. The RSV and most other recent translations, including the NAB and NJB, render it *in the presence of Christ,* implying that Paul either is reinforcing, as with an oath, his affirmation that any forgiving he has already done was for the Corinthians' sake or is explaining that his forgiving, if any, was not intended to preempt theirs but was exacted by his submission to Christ, in whose presence he is conscious of living.[471] However, St. Jerome translated *en prosopo Christou* as *in persona Christi,* and many others have interpreted the Greek similarly.[472] Not even all recent Scripture scholars agree that *en prosopo Christou* should be rendered *in the presence of Christ;* the NEB translates it "as the representative of Christ" and Alfred Marshall's interlinear translation is "in [the] person of Christ."[473] This reading implies that Paul is distinguishing between his promised forgiving *in propria persona,* where he will follow the Corinthians' lead, and the forgiving he may already have done *in persona Christi* for the benefit of the church at Corinth. The latter would have been an exercise of divine mercy that called for rather than preempted the Corinthian church's charity toward its wayward member.[474]

The context seems to me to support St. Jerome's translation, for Paul at once explains why he has forgiven, if he has, *en prosopo Christou:* "to keep Satan from gaining the advantage over us; for we are not ignorant of his designs" (2 Cor 2.11). Being very aware that only God, working in Jesus, has conquered the forces of evil, Paul has good reason to say that, if he forgave, he did so acting in Christ's person—that is, as his emissary (or salîah)—so as to counter Satan. Moreover, if he was acting *in propria persona,* any forgiving he already has done, even if done in Christ's presence, has anticipated what he is urging the Corinthians to do.[475]

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471. See, for example, Furnish, op. cit., 153, 157-58; Philip E. Hughes, *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1962), 69-71; Eduard Lohse, s.v. *prosopon* in *TDNT* (6:777) says that "in 2 C. 2:10 Paul appeals to Christ as witness to the sincerity of his forgiveness."

472. Hughes, op. cit., 71, fn. 18: "The Vulgate, Estius, Luther, Alford, AV, RV (one of the places where the latter differs from ASV) render *en prosopo Christou* here 'in the person of Christ', implying that Paul forgave the offender 'acting as Christ' (Alford)."

473. *The R.S.V. Interlinear Greek-English New Testament,* 3rd ed. (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1975), 711.

474. Hughes (loc. cit.) adds after his quoted remark: "But the authoritarian note of such a rendering is out of harmony with the context." However, that rendering no more has an authoritarian note than any other expression of awareness of being the instrument of God's pervenient grace.

475. *In the presence of Christ* is assumed to be the correct reading by Bernard Dominique Maliangéas in his seminal study of the history of *in persona Christi: Clés pour une Théologie du Ministère: In Persona Christi, in Persona Ecclesiae* (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1978), 31-48, 225-26. He shows that several of the Fathers: (1) used *ek prosopou* (Lat.: *ex persona)* and other expressions in attributing to Christ what others, such as the psalmists, had said; (2) held that Christ acts through his ministers; and (3) by the beginning of the fourth century, were taking 2 Cor 2.10 in a directly "sacramental" sense. Noting that St. Jerome put that sense into the vulgate by translating Paul's *en prosopo* as *in persona* but convinced that *en prosopo* always meant "in the presence of," Maliangéas holds (pp. 46 and 226) that Jerome and the tradition gave 2 Cor 2.10 an interpretation that the literal sense of the Greek text did not support. Similarly, Lohse, op. cit., 778, says of *prosopon:* "The sense 'person' occurs in the

Be that as it may, St. Thomas Aquinas accepted St. Jerome's translation of 2 Cor 2.10 and often cited that text in explaining that clerics can do various things only inasmuch as they act in the person of God or of Christ. For example, the authority of a prelate (a bishop or religious superior) is required to dispense vows, because prelates "hold the place of God [gerit vicem Dei] in the Church" and "determine in the person of God [in persona Dei] what is acceptable to him, according to 2 Cor 2.10." A prelate should dispense a vow only for the "honor of Christ, in whose person he dispenses, or for the benefit of the Church, which is Christ's body" (*S.t.*, 2-2, q. 88, a. 12, c.). Again, "Christ is the head of the Church by his own power and authority, while others are called heads inasmuch as they take the place of Christ [vicem gerunt Christi], according to 2 Cor 2.10 . . . and 2 Cor 5.20" (*S.t.*, 3, q. 8, a. 6, c.).

Thomas states unqualifiedly that Christian priests act *in persona Christi:* "Christ is the font of the entire priesthood, for the priest of the old law was a figure of Christ while the priest of the new law works in his person [in persona ipsius operatur], according to 2 Cor 2.10" (ibid., q. 22. a. 4, c.). But Thomas also clarifies the limits of the authority of the apostles and their successors. When 2 Cor 2.10 is cited to argue that they can institute new sacraments because "the apostles held the place of God [vicem Dei gesserunt] on earth" (ibid., q. 64, a. 2, obj. 3), Thomas answers that "the apostles and their successors are God's vicars with respect to the governance of the Church instituted by faith and the sacraments of faith. So, just as they are not free to constitute another Church, so they are not free to hand on another faith or to institute other sacraments" (ibid., ad 3.)

Most uses by Thomas of *in persona Christi* are in statements about ordained priests' role in the Eucharist. "Whoever acts in the person of another must do it by power granted by that other. Just as every Christian at baptism is empowered by Jesus to receive the Eucharist, so priests are empowered at ordination to consecrate in the person of Christ" (ibid., q. 82, a. 1, c.). A concelebrated Mass does not involve multiple consecrations because all the concelebrants participate in one and the same act insofar as all act in the person of Christ (see ibid., a. 2, ad 2). Since the Lord Jesus both consecrated and distributed his own body at the Last Supper, the ordained priest who consecrates in the person of Christ also fittingly distributes Communion (see ibid., a. 3). A priest who is a wicked minister remains Jesus' minister, and so can consecrate the Eucharist, because he does so acting in the person of Christ; still, the unworthy celebrant's own action deserves a curse (see ibid., a. 5). Since a priest "in the consecration of the sacrament speaks in the person of Christ, whose place in this he takes [cuius vicem in hoc gerit] through the

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NT at 2 C. 1:11" and also reports (770): "In the 2nd cent. Phrynichos [note omitted] complains that orators often spoke of *prosopa* in court and in so doing offended against correct Gk."; still, he holds (770) that one may not assume that "in the NT period or the age of the early Church" *en prosopo* had a sense corresponding to the Latin *in persona*. However, neither Maliangéas nor Lohse deals with Paul's explanation of *why* he did any forgiving he may have done *en prosopo Christou*, and the data they do present might be accounted for by a different hypothesis: Paul, perhaps familiar with the Latin *in persona*, anticipated the second-century orators' offense against correct Greek; Jerome and others, reflecting on 2 Cor 2.10 in its context, accurately grasped and expressed what Paul really meant. See also Charles R. Meyer, "The Ordination of Women: Responses to Bishop Untener," *Worship*, 65:3 (May 1991): 256-62.

power of orders," even if he cuts himself off from the Church "he consecrates the true body and blood of Christ" (ibid., a. 7, ad 3).

After Thomas, there seems to have been no significant theological progress in clarifying *in persona Christi* until Vatican II.[476] Obviously influenced by the statement of St. Thomas just quoted, the Council of Florence for the first time used *in persona Christi* in a document of the magisterium (the *Decree for the Armenians,* 1439), when it taught that the form of the sacrament of the Eucharist is "the words of the Savior, by which he effected this sacrament; for a priest effects this sacrament speaking in the person of Christ" (DS 1321/698). But not until Pius XII did Church teaching begin to make significant use of the expression.

In his encyclical on the sacred liturgy, Pope Pius begins with Christ, the unique priest of the new covenant. He points out that Jesus is present at the Eucharist not only under the appearance of bread and wine but also "in the person of his minister."[477] As ordained priests, they

> . . . represent [sustinent] the person of Jesus Christ before their people, acting at the same time as representatives of their people before God. . . . Prior to acting as representative of the community before the throne of God, the priest is the ambassador [legatus] of the divine Redeemer. He is God's vice-gerent [vices gerit] in the midst of his flock precisely because Jesus Christ is Head of that body of which Christians are the members. The power entrusted to him, therefore, bears no natural resemblance to anything human. It is entirely supernatural. It comes from God.[478]

Thus, the ordained minister's sacred power does not extend to anything he does *in propria persona.* Rather, he, "by reason of the sacerdotal consecration which he has received, is made like to the high priest and possesses the power of performing actions in virtue of Christ's very person [note omitted]. Wherefore in his priestly activity he in a certain manner 'lends his tongue, and gives his hand' to Christ [note omitted]."[479]

In its document on the liturgy, Vatican II develops Pius XII's teaching (see SC 7). The Council repeats that Jesus is present at the Eucharist in the person of the minister and makes it clear that the ordained priest's service makes present—not replaces—Jesus' own action. It does this by adding a quotation from the Council of Trent: "the same now offering himself by the ministry of priests who then offered himself on the cross" (DS 1743/940). Then, the Council also indicates that Christ's presence is not limited to the Eucharist by at once adding that Christ baptizes when anyone baptizes and speaks when Scripture is read in church.

Later in the same document, the Council teaches that, in the liturgy, God continues to speak to his people and Jesus continues to proclaim his gospel. Then it adds:

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476. See Maliangéas, op. cit., 228-31.

477. *Mediator Dei, AAS* 39 (1947) 528, *PE,* 233:20.

478. *Mediator Dei, AAS* 39 (1947) 538, *PE,* 233:40.

479. Ibid., *AAS* 39 (1947) 548, *PE,* 233:69. The first of the two omitted notes refers to Thomas, *S.t.,* 3, q. 22, art. 4, where he holds that Christian priesthood as such is characterized by acting *in persona Christi;* the second is to St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on John,* 86:4; in context, the quoted phrases help make the point that God alone bestows the benefits brought about through the ordained priest.

"Moreover, the prayers directed to God by the priest, who presides over the assembly in the person of Christ, are said in the name of the whole holy people and of all here present" (SC 33). The ordained priest not only consecrates but *presides* in the person of Christ and addresses prayers to the Father in the name of the whole Church, not just those present at the particular celebration. The Council's formulation also suggests what Pius XII had taught: the capacity of the ordained to act in the name of the Church *presupposes* their capacity to act in the person of Christ.

In distinguishing the ministerial priesthood from the priesthood common to all the baptized in its document on the Church, Vatican II might seem to limit what the ordained priest does in the person of Christ to consecrating the Eucharist. For it teaches that "by the sacred power he enjoys, he forms and governs the priestly people, effects the eucharistic sacrifice in the person of Christ, and offers it to God in the name of the whole people" (LG 10). When explaining the ministry of bishops, however, the Council teaches that Jesus is present in the midst of the faithful "in the bishops, whom priests assist," and that by the bishops' service Jesus preaches the word of God to all nations, administers the sacraments to Christians, incorporates new members into his body, and leads and governs the people of the new covenant in their journey toward eternal happiness. Thus, "the bishops, in an eminent and visible way, carry out the roles of Christ himself [ipsius Christi . . . partes sustineant]—teacher, pastor, and priest—and act in his person" (LG 21).

In the same document, explaining what presbyters are, the Council only explicitly teaches that they act in the person of Christ when celebrating the Eucharist:

> [Presbyters] proclaim the divine word to all people, participating in the role of Christ the unique mediator (see 1 Tm 2.5). But they exercise this sacred role most fully in eucharistic worship, in the eucharistic assembly of the faithful [synaxis]; there, acting in the person of Christ and proclaiming his mystery, they unite the offerings of the faithful to the sacrifice of their Head, and in the sacrifice of the Mass make present again and apply, until the coming of the Lord (see 1 Cor 11.26), the unique sacrifice of the New Testament, namely, that of Christ offering himself once for all as a spotless victim to the Father. (LG 28; notes omitted)

In the same article, however, the Council teaches that the ministry of bishops is shared within limits by presbyters, and their share includes participation in Christ's prophetic and pastoral roles, so that presbyters with their bishop work together in carrying out the three roles. The implication is that presbyters, like bishops, act in the person of Christ in all three roles. Appropriately, then, the Council refers back to this article in its document on missionary activity when it teaches: "Presbyters represent Christ [personam Christi gerunt] and cooperate with the episcopal order in the threefold sacred role that by its very nature pertains to the Church's mission" (AG 39).

Vatican II makes the point more clearly in its document on the ministry and life of priests in explaining how the priesthood of presbyters is different from the priesthood of the baptized in general and is related to that of bishops and of Jesus:

> The office of presbyters, inasmuch as it is joined to the episcopal order, participates in the authority by which Christ himself constitutes, sanctifies, and rules his own body.

> So, while the priesthood of presbyters presupposes the sacraments of Christian initiation, it is conferred by a distinctive sacrament, by which presbyters . . . are enabled to act in the person of Christ the head (see *Lumen gentium,* 10). (PO 2)

Elsewhere in the same document, the Council teaches: that ordained ministers in general "publicly fulfill their priestly office for the sake of others in the name of Christ" (PO 2); that every priest "represents Christ himself [ipsius Christi personam gerat]" (PO 12); and that presbyters "especially represent Christ [personam specialiter gerunt Christi]" as ministers of sacred rites, "especially in the sacrifice of the Mass" (PO 13).

In sum, Vatican II, like St. Thomas, holds that bishops and presbyters act in the person of Christ in a way somehow special when they celebrate the Eucharist, yet also really represent him and act in his person when carrying out other parts of the threefold ministry for which they are ordained.

The 1971 session of the Synod of Bishops neatly restates the Council's teaching. The Synod states that ordained priesthood must be understood in the context of the Church, which always remains subject to Christ. The

> priestly ministry of the New Testament, which continues Christ's function as mediator . . . alone perpetuates the essential work of the Apostles: by effectively proclaiming the gospel, by gathering together and leading the community, by remitting sins, and especially by celebrating the Eucharist, it makes Christ, the head of the community, present in the exercise of his work of redeeming mankind and glorifying God perfectly.[480]

Subsequently, the *Code of Canon Law* was completely rewritten to conform to the Council's teachings and decisions. The section on the sacrament of orders begins with a brief and carefully worded description of it:

> By divine institution, the sacrament of orders establishes some among the Christian faithful as sacred ministers through an indelible character which marks them. They are consecrated and designated, each according to his grade, to nourish the people of God, fulfilling in the person of Christ the Head [in persona Christi Capitis] the functions of teaching, sanctifying, and governing. (*CIC,* c. 1008)

Similarly, in treating the sacrament of orders, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* summarizes the Council's teaching:

> In the ecclesial service of the ordained minister, it is Christ himself who is present to his Church as Head of his Body, Shepherd of his flock, high priest of the redemptive sacrifice, Teacher of Truth. This is what the Church means by saying that the priest, by virtue of the sacrament of Holy Orders, acts *in persona Christi Capitis.*[481]

These passages confirm that bishops and presbyters act in the person of Christ in their whole ministry: every part of it, not only their celebration of the Eucharist, makes Jesus' saving actions present to his Church.

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480. *Ultimis temporibus,* I, 4, *AAS* 63 (1971) 906, *Vatican Collection,* ed. Flannery, 2:679.

481. *CCC* 1548. This paragraph opens a subsection headed, "In the person of Christ the Head . . .," is accompanied by a footnote referring to the relevant passages in Vatican II, and is followed by quotations from Pius XII's *Mediator Dei* and St. Thomas, *S.t.,* 3, q. 22, a. 4, c.

3) Acting in the person of Christ is not just serving as his agent.

People often designate someone to act on their behalf in a way that will be recognized by law. For instance, planning to be out of the country for a long time, Smith sets up a trust to handle his business affairs; the trustees' actions have the same legal effects his own would have. Under certain conditions, someone can even contract marriage by proxy (see *CIC,* cc. 1104-5). The acts of such representatives substitute for acts of those who designated them, who are called "principals." By legal fiction, the acts of designated agents are treated as if they were the principals' own.

Thomas argues from what is true about anyone who acts in the person of another (see *S.t.,* 3, q. 82, a. 1, c.), and thereby shows that his theological uses of *represents* and *acts in the person of* presuppose the use of such expressions to signify actions taken through designated agents, vicarious exercises of authority, and so on. Still, the meaning of *in the person of,* as used by Thomas (and the documents of the magisterium), should not be reduced to what is meant when the phrase is applied to other relationships between the actions of agents and the principals whom they represent. Generally, someone who acts through an agent is absent or unable to act on his or her own behalf. But God causes the effects of the sacraments, while the ordained minister serves only as an instrument (see ibid., q. 64, a. 1). Thus, the exercise of ordained ministry, for Thomas, is not a matter of a delegate acting instead of Christ but of someone making him present and performing acts that are really Jesus' own.[482]

The Lord Jesus also does saving acts through persons who are not ordained. For example, anyone at all, even a nonbeliever, can baptize, provided he or she properly says the words and uses the water, and intends to do what the Church does (or what Christians do) rather than, say, to act the role of someone baptizing in a drama or imitate the rite in order to ridicule it.[483] No matter who baptizes, it is Christ who baptizes, and the one who pours the water and says the words is only a minister of Christ.[484]

But even when the nonordained baptize, they do not serve just as his agents. What they do is meaningful only inasmuch as Jesus authorized others to baptize "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28.19), and anyone who baptizes does so by Jesus' power and helps bring about what he wants. Rather than substituting for his action by means of a legal fiction, however, the actions of others make his actions really present. As ministers, they pour the water and say the words that are a sign and instrument—a sacrament—of what he alone can do: baptize with the Holy Spirit (see Mt

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482. See Maliangéas, op. cit., 138. Writing in his own name, E. Schillebeeckx, O.P., *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God* (Kansas City, Missouri: Sheed Andrews and McMeel, 1963), 170-71, puts the point well: "Christ carries out his activity as High Priest in the acts of this [ordained] priesthood; priestly acts are the personal acts of Christ himself made visible in sacramental form."

483. See DS 802/430; *S.t.,* 3, q. 67, a. 5; *CCC* 1256; Bernard Leeming, S.J., *Principles of Sacramental Theology* (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1956), 435-61, 471-75.

484. See St. Augustine, *In evangelium Ioannis,* 6, 7-10; St. Thomas explains that the one "baptizing provides only outward ministry; but Christ, who can use human beings for whatever he wants, is the one who baptizes interiorly" (*S.t.,* 3, q. 67, a. 5, ad 1).

3.11, Mk 1.8, Jn 1.33). Even a nonbelieving baptismal minister somehow represents Jesus and might well be said to act "in the person of Christ."

Nevertheless, the use of *in persona Christi* by St. Thomas and in magisterial documents always is tied to ordained ministry—in fact, almost always to the ministry of presbyters and bishops. I have found only one statement in a Church document (*CIC,* c. 1008, quoted above) clearly including deacons among those who act *in persona Christi*.[485] But documents on the permanent diaconate published by the Holy See in 1998 speak of neither the ordained as a whole nor deacons in particular as acting "in the person of Christ." Quoting the *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* they instead say every ordained minister "is enabled to act as a representative [legatus] of Christ, Head of the Church, in his triple office of priest, prophet, and king"; and the minister acts "by virtue of Christ's authority" and speaks to the Church "in the name of Christ."[486] As for the deacon, he is a specific "sign, in the Church, of Christ the servant"; in the Eucharist, "in the name of Christ himself, he helps the Church to participate in the fruits of that sacrifice"; and he serves "God's people in the name of Christ."[487]

4) In a special way, those ordained priests act *in persona Christi.*

As has been shown, Vatican II teaches that presbyters "especially represent Christ" when acting as ministers of sacred rites, "especially in the sacrifice of the Mass" (PO 13), where they "make present again . . . the unique sacrifice of the New Testament" (LG 28). Following earlier teachings, Vatican II also makes it clear that Jesus really is present in the Mass, offering himself through the ministry of ordained priests (see SC 7; cf. *CCC* 1548). To understand the special way in which presbyters and bishops act *in persona Christi,* one must therefore consider more carefully what Jesus does and what ordained priests do in the Eucharist, which is the central case of their special relationship.

In celebrating the Eucharist, ordained priests really make present the unique sacrifice of the new covenant. It is not entirely in the past; rather, it is ongoing.[488] Priests do not repeat or renew, much less reenact, what Jesus did at the Last Supper and underwent on Golgotha. "The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ's Passover, the making present and the sacramental offering of his unique sacrifice, in the liturgy of the Church which is his

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485. While some passages in other documents, such as *CCC* 1142, do not clearly exclude deacons, read in context neither do they clearly include them, and *CCC* 875 distinguishes deacons from bishops and priests: "From him [Christ], bishops and priests receive the mission and faculty ("the sacred power") to act *in persona Christi Capitis;* deacons receive the strength to serve the people of God in the *diaconia* of liturgy, word, and charity, in communion with the bishop and his presbyterate."

486. Congregation for Catholic Education and Congregation for the Clergy, *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* and *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1998), 11-12 ("Introduction," I, 1).

487. Ibid., 24 (*Basic Norms,* 5); 94 and 101 (*Directory,* 28 and 37).

488. John Paul II, *Letter to Priests for Holy Thursday (1996),* 1, *AAS* 88 (1996) 540, *OR,* 27 March 1996, 3, teaches that Christ is "the one priest of the new eternal covenant. . . . For only the Son, the Word of the Father, in whom and through whom all things were created, can unceasingly offer creation in sacrifice to the Father, confirming that everything created has come forth from the Father and must become an offering of praise to the Creator."

Body" (*CCC* 1362). Jesus makes only a single offering of himself (see Heb 9.24-26, 10.12-14), but he performs *that single offering* in each and every Mass.

But how can a unique sacrifice be performed innumerable times? The unifying principle of Jesus' sacrifice was his free acceptance of the passion and death he foresaw when he chose, out of obedience to the Father, to return to Jerusalem to celebrate the Last Supper and establish the new covenant (see **1-C-4-5,** above). Because he never changed his mind about that self-sacrificing choice, it lasts (see **1-A-2,** above), and his self-offering continues. Moreover, his command, *Do this in memory of me,* showed that his intention in returning to Jerusalem was not limited to that first Eucharist but extended to all the celebrations that would carry out his command. Each Eucharist therefore is part of the carrying out of Jesus' unique self-sacrificing choice: his passion and death were the foreseen and freely accepted side effects of his obedient choice to return to Jerusalem with the intention not only of celebrating the first Eucharist but bringing about all subsequent Eucharists.

Precisely *how* ordained priests make present Jesus' self-offering in the Eucharist by acting in his person also must be made clearer. Someone might say: "Priests make Jesus' self-offering present simply by consecrating the Eucharist" and quote the *Code of Canon Law:*

> The eucharistic celebration is the action of Christ himself and the Church. In it, Christ the Lord, through the ministry of the priest, offers himself, substantially present under the species of bread and wine, to God the Father and gives himself as spiritual food to the faithful united with his offering. (*CIC,* c. 899, §1)

But while Jesus' substantial presence is sufficient for him *to be offered* and *to be given,* it is not sufficient for him *to offer* and *to give* himself. Both at the Last Supper and in the Mass, Jesus offers himself in consecrating, as the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* makes clear: "*Institution narrative and consecration:* In which, by means of words and actions of Christ, the Sacrifice is carried out which Christ himself instituted at the Last Supper . . .."[489] Thus, canon 899, §1, juxtaposes two truths: Jesus is substantially present *in* the Eucharist and he is present *doing* the Eucharist. The second helps explain the first, but the first does not explain the second. How, then, do ordained priests, by acting in Jesus' person, make him really present *as an acting person?*

In answering that, I shall draw on Church teaching, beginning with Pope Pius XII, about what baptism and presbyteral ordination do to those who receive them; but that teaching draws on a received theology of sacramental character, which I therefore begin by summarizing.

St. Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius, and others held that the three sacraments which cannot be repeated—baptism, confirmation, and holy orders—irreversibly change their recipients by consecrating them, and thus mark them off from people who have not received them—impart a "character." That doctrine came to be held and handed on

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489. *Third Typical Edition,* 79 d (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2003), 41.

throughout the Church.[490] The Council of Florence (1439) formulated this element of Catholic faith as follows: "baptism, confirmation, and holy orders indelibly imprint on the soul a character, that is, a certain spiritual sign of distinction from others. So, they cannot be repeated in the same person" (DS 1313/695). When this doctrine was denied during the Reformation, the Council of Trent solemnly defined it with respect to all three sacraments (see DS 1609/852) and again with respect to holy orders (see DS 1774/964).

Even so, early Christian writers never unanimously agreed entirely on what sacramental character is. Gathering and integrating others' insights, St. Thomas developed a systematic account that became widely though not universally accepted.

According to Thomas, the main thing sacraments do is cause grace in those who receive them. Of course, God alone is the principal cause of grace, but he uses Jesus' humanity and the sacraments as instruments—not because he needs instruments, but for the benefit of human beings. The sacramental characters that baptism, confirmation, and holy orders give are secondary effects of those sacraments. Characters, too, are instrumental, Thomas explains; sacramental characters belong to Christians as servants of God (ministris Dei), and a servant cannot act except as an instrument (see *S.t.,* 3, q. 61, a. 1; q. 62, aa. 1 and 3-5; q. 63, a. 2).

So, sacramental character is an instrumental capacity in respect to grace. Baptism, confirmation, and holy orders give their recipients such a "spiritual power," a capacity to participate in Christian worship by participating in various ways in Jesus' unique and permanent priesthood, which is the principle of all Christian worship. Because these characters are capacities to participate in Jesus' priesthood, they are said to "configure Christians to Christ." These capacities are characters—that is, seals or signs—inasmuch as baptism marks Christians off from non-Christians and the other two sacraments mark off Christians who have received them from those who have not (see ibid., q. 63, aa. 1-6).

Thomas holds that baptism gives each Christian the capacity to participate in worship as a recipient of "divine things"—the graces God causes. Confirmation gives a further character marking off more mature Christians from those who can only receive divine things: the capacity to participate in the prophetic dimension of Jesus' priesthood by publicly professing the faith despite risks and hardships. Holy orders gives those ordained still another character: the capacity to participate in Jesus' priesthood by handing divine things on to other believers.[491]

While Pius XII taught that only the priest performs the unbloody immolation of the Lord Jesus made present on the altar at the words of consecration, he also taught that the

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490. On the history of the doctrine and theology of sacramental character, see Leeming, op. cit., 129-279.

491. See ibid., q. 63, aa. 2 and 6; q. 64, aa. 1 and 8; q. 66, a. 11; q. 72, a. 5. Thomas sharply distinguishes the passive potency to receive divine things conferred by baptism from the power conferred by holy orders: "an active potency with some preeminence" to transmit divine things to others (*In 4 Sent.,* d. 24, q. 1, a. 1, qu'la. 2, ad 2 and ad 3; cf. d. 4, q. 1, a. 4, qu'la. 3). Pseudo-Dionysius is the source of that ordering of agents and patients in Thomas's account of sacramental character (see ibid., d. 4, q. 1, a. 1, c.; a. 4 qu'la. 3 c.). Thomas thinks the spiritual capacity conferred by confirmation is active, but only in bearing witness to faith, not in handing on "divine things" (see ibid., d. 7, q. 2, a. 1, qu'la. 1, ad 3).

faithful should participate actively in the Eucharist. This they can do primarily by joining with the priest in offering the divine victim—not by some outward liturgical performance, however, but by uniting their hearts with the priest's intention and Jesus' own self-offering.[492] Pius explains the faithful's ability to do this:

> [By baptism,] Christians are made members of the Mystical Body of Christ the Priest, and by the "character" which is imprinted on their souls, they are appointed [deputantur] to give worship to God. Thus they participate, according to their condition, in the priesthood of Christ.[493]

This teaching endorses the view that the baptismal character is a spiritual power by which the faithful participate in Jesus' priesthood. But Pius tacitly sets aside Thomas's limiting of that participation to the passive reception of divine things. Instead, he teaches that baptism capacitates the faithful to participate actively in the Eucharist.[494] Moreover, in teaching about the faithful's cooperation in Jesus' priestly human act of self-offering, Pius focuses on an aspect of the Eucharist not central to Thomas's analysis of God's causing of grace through instrumental causes.[495]

Still, Pius does not say that the baptismal character configures the faithful to Jesus. With regard to holy orders, however, he teaches that the sacrament not only confers appropriate grace

> but imparts an indelible "character" besides, indicating the sacred ministers' conformity [conformatos] to Jesus Christ the Priest and qualifying them to [aptos ad] perform those official acts of religion by which men are sanctified and God is duly glorified in keeping with the divine laws and regulations.[496]

Thus Pope Pius seems to think that only the sacramental character of holy orders assimilates its recipients to Jesus.

Vatican II's teachings on these matters differ in important ways from the theology of St. Thomas and the teachings of Pius XII, but the Council provides no basis whatsoever for denying or minimizing the distinction between the priesthood common to all the faithful and the priesthood of ordained ministers, or the institution of the latter by Jesus himself.

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492. Pius XII, *Mediator Dei, AAS* 39 (1947) 554-56, *PE,* 233:87-93.

493. Ibid., *AAS* 555; *PE,* 88.

494. Thus, Pius implicitly teaches that baptism empowers all the faithful to do something that Thomas thought only ordained priests, acting *in persona Christi,* can do. Thomas teaches that holy orders confers the power of consecrating the Eucharist and offering the sacrifice for the living and the dead, while baptism confers no "sacramental power," with the result that the devout layperson only "is united with Christ by spiritual union through faith and charity" and is given "the power of receiving this sacrament," and so only "has a spiritual priesthood for offering spiritual sacrifices" (see *S.t.,* 3, q. 82, a. 1, c. and ad 2). Pius XII has an expanded conception of spiritual priesthood: it includes a sacramental power conferred by baptism to do the volitional act of *offering the sacrifice,* reserving for the ordained minister only the behavior he performs *in persona Christi.*

495. In the eleven questions Thomas devotes to the Eucharist (*S.t.,* 3, qq. 73-83), only one article (q. 83, a. 1) deals directly with its sacrificial aspect.

496. *Mediator Dei, AAS* 39 (1947) 539, *PE,* 233:42.

In its document on the Church, Vatican II teaches that both modes of priesthood "participate in the one priesthood of Christ," each "in its distinctive way" but that they "differ in essence and not just in degree" (LG 10). In dealing with the mission of the priesthood in its document on priestly ministry and life, Vatican II begins by teaching that Jesus gave his whole mystical body a share in his own anointing by the Spirit, so that all the faithful together become a holy and royal priesthood, all share some common responsibilities, and each has a unique part to play (see PO 2). The Council then teaches that the same Lord Jesus "established some as ministers, who would enjoy the sacred power of Order in the society of the faithful . . . and would publicly fulfill their priestly office for the sake of others in the name of Christ" (PO 2). Sent by the Father, Jesus in turn sent the apostles and through them "made to share in his own consecration and mission their successors, the bishops, whose function of ministry was passed on, in a subordinate degree, to presbyters" (PO 2; cf. LG 17-20).

This conciliar teaching clearly reflects the New Testament's witness regarding the Church's origin as a covenantal community established by Jesus with definite leaders (see **1-D-4,** above). Unlike democratic societies that organize themselves and choose their own leaders, the Church's ordaining of presbyters and bishops hands on a divine gift and consecration.[497] So, the Church ordains only inasmuch as the Lord Jesus does so through successors of the apostles acting in his person.

Vatican II's teachings on sacramental character itself do not go beyond received teaching. All the baptized are called to offer spiritual sacrifices through their whole Christian lives (see LG 10), and their baptismal character sets them apart for Christian worship (see LG 11). In ordination to the episcopate, "the Holy Spirit is so conferred and the sacred character is so engraved that bishops, in an eminent and visible way, carry out the roles of Christ himself—teacher, pastor, and priest—and act in his person" (LG 21; notes omitted). And, "while the priesthood of presbyters presupposes the sacraments of Christian initiation, it is conferred by a different sacrament, in which presbyters, by the Holy Spirit's anointing, are marked with a special character and so configured to Christ the priest that they are enabled to act in the person of Christ the head (see *Lumen gentium,* 10)." (PO 2; cf. *CIC,* c. 1008; *CCC* 1563).

Unlike Thomas and like Pius XII, however, Vatican II teaches that the baptismal character capacitates Christians not only to receive divine things passively but to participate actively in Jesus' priestly acts. By reason of their baptism, the faithful, as a holy priesthood, should participate actively in the liturgy; this active participation "is the first and necessary source from which they imbibe a truly Christian spirit" (SC 14). Actively participating in the Eucharist, the faithful, "offering the spotless victim, not only through the hands of the priest but also together with him, should learn to offer themselves" (SC 48). In context, the Council's teaching also makes it clear that baptismal character is a power to act:

497. The essential elements of this teaching also were solemnly defined by the Council of Trent: see DS 1771-78/961-68.

> The nature of the priestly community, sacred and organically structured, is brought out by the sacraments and powers to act. The faithful are incorporated into the Church by baptism, deputed by its character for Christian worship, and, having been reborn as children of God, are held to profess before human beings the faith they received through the Church from God. (LG 11)

Rather than limiting the lay faithful's active participation in Jesus' priesthood to confirmation, as Thomas did, the Council teaches that confirmation *perfects* baptism (see LG 11, 33; AG 11).

Moreover, like Thomas and unlike Pius XII, Vatican II teaches that all the faithful are configured to Christ:

> As members of the living Christ, incorporated into him and configured to him by baptism and also by confirmation and the Eucharist, all the faithful are duty bound to cooperate in the expansion and growth of his body, so that they may bring it to its fullness as soon as possible (see Eph 4.13). (AG 36)[498]

This passage is remarkable for two reasons.

First, as has been explained, baptism, confirmation, and holy orders configure to Christ because they mark off recipients by empowering them to participate in different ways in his priesthood. The Eucharist does not do that; and so, by teaching that it along with baptism and confirmation, configures the faithful to Christ, the Council is broadening the meaning of *to be configured to Christ.* In this broader sense, the expression seems to refer to a real change that assimilates, or more perfectly assimilates, one to Christ and incorporates one into him or strengthens one's union with him.[499]

Second, the passage links this assimilation to Christ and incorporation into him to the duty to cooperate in the Church's apostolate. This also is implied when the Council teaches that every lay person, in virtue of the gifts he or she has received, "is at once the witness and the living instrument of the mission of the Church" (LG 33; cf. AG 41, *CCC* 913). Thus, their configuration to Christ makes all Christians living instruments of his body who share responsibility for its maintenance and growth. By this teaching, Vatican II enlarges upon Pius XII's focus on the faithful's cooperation in Jesus' human act of offering himself; the Council's vision embraces the cooperation of all the baptized in the Church's entire salvific mission (see AA 2-3).

As has been shown, Vatican II also teaches that bishops and presbyters share in Jesus' own consecration and mission in a way that involves their sharing in the authority by which he constitutes, sanctifies, and rules his own body, the Church. In being

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498. Cf. LG 7. In summarizing the Council's teaching, the *Code of Canon Law* indicates explicitly that the baptismal character brings about configuration to Christ: by baptism people are freed from sin, reborn as God's children, "and, configured to Christ by an indelible character, are incorporated into the Church" (*CIC*, 849; cf. *CCC* 1272). The *Catechism* also teaches that the baptized are "configured more deeply to Christ by Confirmation" (*CCC* 1322).

499. Other texts support this interpretation: see LG 48, GS 22; *CCC* 1460, 1505, 2844. In its document on the Church, Vatican II does not use *configured* in teaching about presbyters, but instead says that they are consecrated "in virtue of the sacrament of orders, after the image of Christ [ad imaginem Christi], the supreme and eternal priest . . . as true priests of the New Testament" (LG 28; cf. *CCC* 1564). The language suggests that presbyteral ordination makes men priests by making them like Jesus, the priest.

ordained, presbyters are "by the Holy Spirit's anointing, marked with a special character and so configured to Christ the priest that they are enabled to act in the person of Christ the head (see *Lumen gentium*, 10)" (PO 2). In other words, when presbyters are ordained, the Holy Spirit brings about a real change in them so that they are assimilated to Christ and united with him precisely insofar as he is the one and only priest of the new covenant. That real change capacitates them to act in the person of Christ as head of his body, the Church. At the beginning of its chapter on the life of presbyters, the Council recalls: "By the sacrament of holy orders, presbyters are configured to Christ the priest, as ministers of the head, so that in cooperation with the bishops, they might establish and build up his body, which is the Church." In this context, the Council also teaches that presbyters, in being ordained, "are made living instruments of Christ the eternal priest, so that they will be able to carry out through the ages his wonderful work" (PO 12).

So, while baptism and confirmation make the faithful in general living instruments of Christ, holy orders makes those of the faithful who become ministerial priests his living instruments in a special way.

In explaining this, the Council says the Church is "organically structured" (LG 11) and quotes (in PO 2) from St. Paul's teaching: "As in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another" (Rom 12.4-5). Indeed, Vatican II repeatedly links the Church's organic structure with every member's active power and responsibility to build up the body of Christ:

> Just as, in the structure of a living body, no part is merely passive, but every part shares in the body's workings together with its life; so, too, in the body of Christ, which is the Church, the whole body, "by the appropriate functioning of every part, brings about bodily growth" (Eph 4.16). (AA 2; cf. AG 5)

Thus, the Church's many living instruments with their different functions are complementary organs of Christ's one body.[500] Through the Eucharist, the whole fellowship shares in his glorious resurrection life, and the fellowship's bodiliness, though mystical, is not metaphorical but real (see **1-D-4,** above). Still, as the individuality of husband and wife is not compromised but perfected by their two-in-one-flesh communion, so the individuality of Jesus as man and those incorporated into

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500. By drawing out so clearly the implications for both ecclesiology and Christian life of St. Paul's insight into the Eucharist's forming of Christians into bodily communion with Christ and one another, Vatican II implicitly rejects the ecclesiology that divided various groups into a graded series of givers and recipients, from those at the top (who receive God's gifts from him and pass them along to the rest) down to those being prepared for baptism (who receive divine things but give to no one). Lacking any ground in the New Testament, that mistaken and pernicious theology was rooted in the neo-Platonism of Pseudo-Dionysius; see Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, op. cit., 61-78 (chs. 5-6). St. Thomas's sound insight that confirmation confers a power to participate actively in Christ's prophetic office did not offset the view, mistakenly accepted on the authority of Dionysius, that the relationship of clergy to laity, grounded in the clergy's active power and the laity's passive receptivity, pertained to the divinely established order of reality. As a result, with Aquinas's help, the writer who passed himself off as an immediate disciple of St. Paul transformed the servant pastors whom Jesus gave his Church into the hierarchy, understood as the caste superior not only to the laity in general but to "monks."

him by baptism is both safeguarded and fully realized in the one-flesh communion of the new covenant.

Having clarified what baptism and presbyteral ordination do to those who receive them, I return to the question: How do ordained priests, by acting in Jesus' person, make him present *as consecrating* the Eucharist and *as offering himself* in doing so?

John Paul II addresses this question in *Dominicae cenae,* his 1980 letter on the mystery and worship of the Eucharist. He teaches that the Eucharist is holy and sacred because the presence *and the action* of Christ are there. Explaining how, he focuses on the role of the ordained priest:

> The priest offers the Holy Sacrifice *in persona Christi;* this means more than offering "in the name of" or "in the place of" Christ. *In persona* means in specific sacramental identification with "the eternal High Priest" who is the Author and principal Subject of this Sacrifice of his, a Sacrifice in which, in truth, nobody can take his place. Only he—only Christ—was able and is always able to be the true and effective "expiation for our sins and . . . for the sins of the whole world."[501]

The phrase, *in specific sacramental identification with* translates the Latin "ratione peculiari et sacramentali idem prorsus sit ac," which literally means: *in a unique and sacramental way is entirely the same as.* One commentator dismisses that language as "theologically confused inasmuch as it transfers the true locus of Christ's identification in the Eucharist from the Body and Blood to the ministerial priest."[502] But that is a misreading. Since John Paul is explaining what the adverbial phrase *"in persona Christi"* means as a modification of "offers," he must be understood as saying, not that the celebrant is substantially the same as Christ, but that the celebrant and Christ are completely identified in the *act* of offering the Holy Sacrifice. That statement, too, might seem confused, but I believe it is both intelligible and true.

When the priest offers the Holy Sacrifice *in persona Christi,* there are not two offerings but only one: Jesus' self-offering. That would be true even if the priest offered Mass only in the name of Christ. If, for instance, a friend to whom I give a power of attorney to sell my house attends the settlement in my place, there still is only one act of selling—mine. But unlike the friend, who acts in my name and replaces me at the settlement, the priest makes the Lord Jesus present, offering himself. Nevertheless, because the priest's offering of the Mass and Jesus' self-offering are entirely the same in a unique and sacramental way, there is only one offering. What the priest does *in propria persona* is an instrument of what Jesus, present as an acting person, himself does then and there.

How can that be? A later passage in *Dominicae cenae* points to the answer. In being ordained, John Paul says, priests are consecrated, "to represent Christ the Priest: for this reason their hands, like their words and their will, have become the direct instruments of

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501. *Dominicae cenae,* 8, *AAS* 72 (1980) 128-29, *Vatican Collection,* ed. Flannery, 2:74 (notes omitted).

502. Dennis Michael Ferrara, *"In Persona Christi:* Towards a Second Naïveté," *Theological Studies,* 57 (1996): 67, referring to the same language as quoted by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Sacerdotium ministrale,* III, 4, *AAS* 75 (1983) 1006, *OR,* 12 Sept. 1983, 4.

Christ."[503] When priests consecrate, intending to do what the Church does, they do not offer their own sacrifice but make Jesus' sacrifice present. Like all the faithful, they really are members of Christ's body, but unlike other Christians' bodies, those of priests—their hands and voices—have been adapted by ordination to serve as the living instruments, as the organs, by which the Lord Jesus does his own priestly acts. The gesture and utterance that carry out the intention to consecrate are both the priest's and Christ's, so that the priest's offering of Mass and Jesus' self-offering are *entirely* the same—that is, the same not only in respect to what is offered but to the behavior by which the offering is performed. Behavior that appears to be only the priest's is in reality *also* Jesus'. The faithful participating in the Eucharist experience Jesus' self-offering not through and *beyond* the priest's offering of Mass but *by* it and *in* it.

An analogy helps explain the significance of that identity. Nonbelievers can represent Christ in administering baptism, and those baptized thereby enter into unbreakable, covenantal fellowship with God in Christ. Similarly, a man incapable of consenting validly to marriage can serve as a proxy for his absent brother, and the brother thereby enters into an unbreakable marriage. However, no one can represent either of the spouses when the couple actualize and experience their one-flesh communion by consummating their marriage. They must give themselves bodily to each other. Similarly, for Jesus to offer his body and blood to God the Father and to give his glorified, bodily self as spiritual food to the faithful, he must be bodily present as author and principal subject of the Eucharist. This is a role *in which nobody can take his place.* Nevertheless, the ordained priest, acting *in persona Christi,* is the living instrument of Jesus' bodily and active presence.[504]

According to the preceding explanation, the sacramental character given by presbyteral ordination involves an adaptation of the incorporation into Jesus' body that those being ordained already enjoy by reason of their baptism. This adaptation is required so that their priestly hands and voices will serve Jesus as the living instruments—the organs—of his own bodily behavior.

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503. *Dominicae cenae,* 11, *AAS* 72 (1980) 141, *Vatican Collection,* ed. Flannery, 2:82.

504. Ferrara, op. cit., 74-76, overlooks the fact that the human unions both of spouses in marriage and of Jesus and his Church in the new covenant can be immediate and physical without submerging the parties' distinct identities; he holds (75) that Christ and the Church are united *only* by the Holy Spirit, with the result that Jesus is not really present *as agent* in the Eucharist; rather, the Spirit acts through the Church in what is, essentially, only an *ecclesial* ritual. Ferrara sums up his view (76): "It is, in short, not directly but in and through his Spirit that Christ is united to the Church as its Head and Lord. It is thus also in and through his Spirit that Christ continues, through the Church, his saving activity and, in particular, 'acts in the sacraments.'" Having earlier (67) set out Pope John Paul's teaching in *Dominicae cenae,* quoted above, Ferrara later labels it "an ideology" at odds with "evangelical truth" (82-83): "To deny that the consecratory word is a word of the Church would not only shatter the unity of the sacrament of Order, but imply that its utterance is not the culminating act of the Church's priesthood, but one in which the latter transcends its own nature by becoming not just a sacrament of Christ, but in some sense Christ himself. Here theology must draw a firm and unequivocal line and call the theology of the priesthood away from the danger of such an ideology and back to its doctrinal roots in the theology of grace so as to preserve its evangelical truth."

Someone might reject that explanation by arguing that, since Trent teaches definitively that the character is spiritual (see DS 1609/852), it cannot involve bodiliness. But that argument is unsound. First, sacramental character is spiritual in two senses: (1) unlike a tattoo on a soldier or a brand on a slave, sacramental character is not perceptible to the senses, and (2) it is supernatural rather than natural. But other realities, such as the bond of sacramental marriage, that are spiritual in both of those senses involve bodiliness. Second, the bodily dimension of the capacity to act *in persona Christi* is spiritual inasmuch as it is an adaptation of the priest's incorporation into the risen body of Jesus, which, as St. Paul teaches, is spiritual (see 1 Cor 15.44-45).

Every baptized person who bears witness to the gospel with an authentically Christian life and thereby makes his saving work present to others is a living instrument, an organ, of Jesus. Someone might therefore argue that all such Christians act *in persona Christi,* and presbyters and bishops enjoy no special distinction by doing so. Indeed, holy orders does not confer special distinction in the sense of superiority over other Christians.[505] But it does consecrate the ordained to carry on the work that Jesus assigned to the apostles. That work involves action in the person of Christ precisely as the unique priest of the new covenant and as head of his body, the Church. Jesus thought out and chose to do the acts that presbyters and bishops do in the person of Christ. No human being except Jesus could do what the ordained do in his person. Whenever presbyters and bishops act in his person, however, they do nothing *in propria persona* except make him and his action present. By contrast, those who are not ordained but live authentically Christian lives think out and choose their own actions. While they follow Jesus by living according to his teachings and thus doing their part in the Church's apostolate, they discern their own personal vocations and commit themselves to them. The Lord Jesus certainly lives in such members of his body, which is built up toward its fullness by their lives. They are therefore his living instruments, his organs, but they are not the organs through which he personally acts.

Analogies might help clarify this point. Good citizens traveling abroad represent their nation, but the nation does not act by them as it does by its ambassadors. My lungs perform their vital function whether I am conscious of it or not; I breathe with my lungs, but their breathing is not my action as writing this is—or even as holding my breath is.

5) Ordained priests sacramentally represent Jesus, the head and shepherd.

In its document on the Church, Vatican II teaches that Jesus' authorization of the Apostles, "He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me" (Lk 10.16), applies to their successors, the bishops (see LG 20). The Council then goes on:

> In the bishops, therefore, whom presbyters assist, the Lord Jesus Christ, the supreme high priest, is present in the midst of the faithful. Sitting at the right hand of God the Father, he is not absent from the gathering of his high priests, [note omitted] but

505. While acknowledging the variety of gifts and the special service of sacred ministers in the Church, Vatican II stresses the Church's unity and what all members share in common, and teaches that "there is a true equality among all as to dignity and the action common to all the faithful in respect to building up the body of Christ" (LG 32).

> primarily through their signal service, he preaches the word of God to all nations and continually administers the sacraments of faith; by their fatherly office (see 1 Cor 4.15) he incorporates new members into his body by a new birth from above; and finally by their wisdom and prudence he directs and governs the people of the new covenant in its pilgrimage to eternal happiness. (LG 21)

Later in the same article, the Council makes it clear that in carrying out all three roles—teacher, priest, and pastor—the bishops act in the person of Christ. A footnote cites St. John Chrysostom and says: "The priest is a 'symbolon' of Christ."[506] This implies two things: (1) not only in celebrating the Eucharist but in everything they do in the person of Christ, bishops and presbyters make Jesus and his saving action really present by serving as organs of his own bodily behavior, and (2) in doing so, they themselves serve as the sign of Jesus' presence.[507]

Being both a sign of the Lord Jesus and a living instrument that brings about his saving presence and action, the ordained priest can be considered an ongoing sacrament of Christ. This conclusion was adumbrated by St. Thomas, who said the celebrant of the Mass "serves as the image of Christ [gerit imaginem Christi] in whose person and by whose power he pronounces the words of consecration" (*S.t.*, 3, q. 83, a. 1, ad 3) and maintained that, not the transient rite but "the interior character itself is essentially and chiefly the very sacrament of order."[508] While that inner character does not by itself make the priest a *symbolon* of Christ, it is the power that marks priests off for the service of acting in his person, imaging him, and thus representing him.[509]

The 1971 session of the Synod of Bishops states that the ministerial priest "is a sign of the divine anticipatory plan proclaimed and effective today in the Church. He makes Christ, the Savior of all men, sacramentally present among his brothers and sisters, in both their personal and social lives."[510] Making the Lord Jesus sacramentally present, ordained priests represent him, as sacramental signs always represent sacred realities. Just as the appearances of bread and wine do not replace Jesus' flesh and blood but represent him bodily present as sacrificed and to be received, so ordained priests acting in Jesus' person do not replace him and his action but represent him here and now offering himself to the Father and giving himself to the faithful. Thus the 1970 session of the

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506. Fn. 22: "Sacerdos est 'symbolon' Christi." Since the Council's statement is unqualified and Chrysostom's text is not quoted, the statement's magisterial authority is not affected by whether the text supports the teaching.

507. J. M. Somerville, s.v. "Symbol," *NCE*, 13:860, helpfully explains how the Greek word came to mean "one thing (usually material and visible) calling forth its complement or better half (usually something that is immaterial and unseen)."

508. *In 4 Sent.*, d. 24, q. 1, a. 1, qu'la. 2, ad 1.

509. A. G. Martimort, "The Value of a Theological Formula 'In persona Christi,' *OR*, 10 March 1977, 7, examines other texts and concludes that "the thought of the Angelic Doctor can be easily discerned: the Christian priesthood is of a sacramental nature, not only in the transitory act of ordination, but in the person of the priest. Certainly, the supernatural efficacy of his action . . . proceeds from the character received in ordination. But this character is invisible; the priest himself is and must be a sign . . .."

510. *Ultimis temporibus*, I, 4, *AAS* 63 (1971) 906, *Vatican Collection*, ed. Flannery, 2:679.

International Theological Commission holds that "the Christian who is called to the priestly ministry . . . represents Christ as head of the community and, as it were, facing [coram] the community."[511]

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's 1976 document on women's ordination made use of this developing thought regarding ordained priests' sacramental representation of Jesus:

> The supreme expression of this representation is found in the altogether special form it assumes in the celebration of the Eucharist . . . in which the People of God are associated in the sacrifice of Christ: the priest, who alone has the power to perform it, then acts not only through the effective power conferred on him by Christ, but *in persona Christi,* taking the role of Christ, to the point of being his very image [ita ut ipsam eius imaginem gerat], when he pronounces the words of consecration.
>
> The Christian priesthood is therefore of a sacramental nature: the priest is a sign, the supernatural effectiveness of which comes from the ordination received, but a sign that must be perceptible and which the faithful must be able to recognize with ease.[512]

This led some proponents of women's ordination to maintain that ordained priests do not represent Jesus sacramentally but only in the way other agents represent those for whom they act.[513]

In a theological study first published in German in 1982, Gisbert Greshake holds that the ordained priesthood fulfills the definition of a sacrament: "If we consider Church office [i.e., ordained ministry] under the aspect of its being representation of Christ, then it is, *within the people of God,* an essential *sacrament* of Christ, i.e., a sign and instrument of his action which it makes present."[514] Greshake argues that precisely

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511. *De Sacerdotio catholico,* "Thesis quarta," in *Documenta/Documenti (1969-1985),* ed. Candido Pozo, S.J. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1988), 30: "Christianus ad ministerium sacerdotale vocatus . . . Christus repraesentat ante communitatem et coram illa." The thesis was approved "in forma specifica" (28), which means (12) that an absolute majority of the members present at the plenary session approved the text, including the ideas and the formulation.

512. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Declaration on the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood (Inter insignores),* 5, *AAS* 69 (1977) 109, *Vatican Collection,* ed. Flannery, 2:339 (notes omitted).

513. See, for example, Dennis Michael Ferrara, "Representation or Self-Effacement? The Axiom *in Persona Christi* in St. Thomas and the Magisterium," *Theological Studies,* 55 (1994):195-224 at 195-96, 203-4, and, most clearly, 212: "The expression [*in persona Christi*] means no more, but also no less, than that the priest, by recalling, in obedience to Christ's command, the words of Christ, is the instrument of the real presence of Christ—to whom the eye of faith principally attends. This instrumentality is exercised by virtue of a power that is in the priest as not his own, a power virtually as mysterious as the effect of which it is the instrument. Action *in persona Christi* does not transcend instrumentality in the direction of some kind of mystical coincidence with Christ, but rather is instrumentality in its purest and most sublime form." The treatment of *in persona Christi* in **4,** above, and in the present section, falsifies Ferrara's thesis. For his reading of St. Thomas, he claims (198) the support of Marliangéas; but he ignores a key passage (op. cit., 138), cited above, that contradicts his reading of Aquinas. Ferrara's expression, *mystical coincidence,* caricatures both the sense in which the priest as sacrament represents Christ and effects his saving presence and the sense in which the priest as instrument provides behavior Jesus uses to perform his own acts.

514. *The Meaning of Christian Priesthood,* trans. Peadar MacSeumais, S.J. (Dublin: Four Courts, 1988), 69-70; cf. 28, 63. By *within the people of God,* Greshake excludes the view that ordained ministers (the hierarchy) are *above* the rest of the Church (monks, lay people, and catechumens); ordained ministers

because ordained ministry is sacramental it does not come between Jesus and the faithful; rather, the ordained "effect a (mediated) immediacy," with the result that those being saved by the Church's sacramental mediation "meet God himself in his self-revelation to the world."[515] Sacramental Church office also makes it clear that Jesus is permanently prior to the people of God, and the Church prior to her individual members, who can maintain their union with Jesus only by taking advantage of the Church's ministry.[516] Again, Greshake argues that the sacramental character of Church office makes it point beyond itself to Christ, and therefore both reminds the officeholder that "it is inadmissible that he should put himself in place of Christ" and reminds "the community of the faithful that the Church depends on Christ and is not the owner and still less the mistress of the gifts of salvation."[517]

The emerging lines of thought on the sacramentality of ordained priesthood are synthesized in John Paul II's 1992 post-synodal apostolic exhortation on priestly formation:

> In the Church and on behalf of the Church, priests are a sacramental representation of Jesus Christ, the head and shepherd, authoritatively proclaiming his word, repeating his acts of forgiveness and his offer of salvation, particularly in baptism, penance and the Eucharist, showing his loving concern to the point of a total gift of self for the flock, which they gather into unity and lead to the Father through Christ and in the Spirit. In a word, priests exist and act in order to proclaim the gospel to the world and to build up the Church in the name and person of Christ the head and shepherd [note omitted].[518]

This passage makes it clear that priests are a sacramental representation of Christ in respect to all that they do acting in his person—teaching, sanctifying, and leading his flock.

In the following section, the Pope makes several points reminiscent of Greshake's views. John Paul teaches that the ordained priest's identity primarily depends on his special relationship to Jesus: "The priest's relation to the Church is inscribed in the very relation which the priest has to Christ, such that [the relation of] 'sacramental representation' to Christ serves as the basis and inspiration for the relation of the priest to the Church." He then quotes the Synod Fathers with approval, and draws his own conclusions from what they say:

> "Inasmuch as he represents Christ the head, shepherd and spouse of the Church, the priest is placed not only *in the Church* but also *in the forefront of* [Latin: erga = over against] *the Church.* The priesthood . . . belongs to the constitutive elements of the Church. . . ."

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are simply those of Christ's faithful capacitated to exercise the indispensable role of making Jesus' action available, so that everyone can interact *directly* with him.

515. Ibid., 36-37. Greshake implicitly contrasts this immediacy with an erroneous notion of mediation previously described (19), which originated in Pseudo-Dionysius.

516. Ibid., 48-49.

517. Ibid., 64.

518. *Pastores dabo vobis,* 15, *AAS* 84 (1992) 680, *OR,* 8 Apr. 1992, IV. The omitted fn. 27 refers to the Synod Fathers' Proposition 7.

> Therefore, the ordained ministry arises with the Church and has in bishops, and in priests who are related to and are in communion with them, a particular relation to the original ministry of the Apostles—to which it truly "succeeds"—even though with regard to the latter it assumes different forms.
>
> Consequently, the ordained priesthood ought not to be thought of as existing prior to the Church, because it is totally at the service of the Church. Nor should it be considered as posterior to the ecclesial community, as if the Church could be imagined as already established without this priesthood.

The Pope also affirms that "by his very nature and sacramental mission, the priest appears in the structure of the Church as a sign of the absolute priority and gratuitousness of the grace given to the Church by the Risen Christ." He then restates and puts into perspective a point he has drawn from the Synod Fathers: "The Apostles and their successors, inasmuch as they exercise an authority which comes to them from Christ, the head and shepherd, are placed—with their ministry—*in the forefront of* [Latin: coram = facing] *the Church* as a visible continuation and sacramental sign of Christ in his own position before [coram] the Church and the world."[519]

Thus, John Paul II teaches that the sacramentality of the ordained priesthood makes it clear that the priest neither created the Church nor is her creature. Both are creatures of God's grace. Jesus forms the Church as a reality distinct from himself and sanctifies her by uniting her with himself. He is one with the Church and before her: he does not dominate her, much less absorb her into himself, but gives himself for her and makes her his bride. The ministerial priest's share in Jesus' priesthood involves sacramentally representing his spousal relationship of loving service and manifesting its origin in God's grace.[520]

6) Representing Jesus, ordained priests also act in the person of the Church.

As we have seen (in **2,** above), Vatican II teaches that "the prayers directed to God by the priest, who presides over the assembly in the person of Christ, are said in the name of the whole holy people and of all present" (SC 33), and likewise that the priest "effects the eucharistic sacrifice in the person of Christ, and offers it to God in the name of the whole people" (LG 10). Vatican II's *in the name of the whole people* expresses what St. Thomas expressed by *in persona ecclesiae*. For both, the ordained priest acts not only in

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519. Ibid., 16, *AAS* 681-82, *OR,* IV-V. Ferrara, *"In Persona Christi:* Towards a Second Naïveté," does not mention John Paul II's teaching in *Pastores dabo vobis* that the ministerial priest "represents Christ the head, shepherd and spouse of the Church," but clearly disagrees with it (81): "The eucharistic presence of Christ effected by the priestly consecration is not an isolated but an ecclesial presence, the presence of the Bridegroom to the Bride, of the Head to the Body. Here, assignation of a representational role to the priest is positively out of place, since, both symbolically and functionally, it interposes the priest between Christ and that Church which is, after all, Christ's and not the clergy's bride, the function of the priest being to serve as the official ecclesial instrument of their union, the 'marriage-broker,' to borrow Paul's image (2 Corinthians 11:2)." That seems to me as wrongheaded as it would be for someone to say: "Regarding the appearances of bread and wine as a sacramental representation of Jesus' body and blood is out of place, because doing so interposes those appearances between Christ's reality and the faithful to whom he gives himself in and by sacrament of the Eucharist."

520. For a more explicit statement of this line of thought, see *Pastores dabo vobis,* 22, *AAS* 84 (1992) 690-91, *OR,* 8 Apr. 1992, VI.

the person of Christ but in the person of the Church. But what exactly is the relationship between those two ways of acting?

Bernard Dominique Marliangéas carefully examined every instance in which *in persona Christi* and *in persona ecclesiae* occur in the works of St. Thomas. Summarizing his findings, he begins by recalling what he has shown about the deputation of the baptized to worship: It

> is not a matter of delegation to do something *in place* of the Church or of Christ. It is a capacitation [habilitation] to posit actions that are the actions of Christ and of the Church. Here we are not at all in a perspective where some do something in place of others, by a mandate. . . . [In St. Thomas,] we find a conception of the relation of the minister to Christ and the Church that is not juridical but organic. It is because the priest has become a participant in the priesthood of Christ, configured to Christ by a "character," that his act can be an act *in persona Christi.* Christ acts in the sacraments in him and by him, not by delegation but as a principal cause employing an instrument . . .. It is the same with priests acting *in persona ecclesiae.* The Church does not delegate priests to pray in place of the ecclesial community; but priests, because they are put into conformity with the unique priesthood of Christ can by that conformity be organs by which the Church, the community of believers, the mystical body of Christ, prays and professes her faith.[521]

Having been made by ordination organs of Jesus' body, ministerial priests are both instruments through which Jesus and his saving action are present and organs by which his body, the Church herself, acts. That scholarly conclusion shows that Thomas's understanding of *in persona ecclesiae* does not support the view that ordained priests merely preside at rituals in which they participate in exactly the same way as other members of the assembly; rather, it supports recent Church teaching that ordained priests' special configuration to Christ the priest grounds their capacity to speak and act in the person of the Church.[522]

Although St. Thomas's views foreshadowed recent teaching that ordained priests sacramentally represent Christ, Thomas never focused on that point. So, Marliangéas, in pointing out the real similarity between priests' actions *in persona Christi* and *in persona ecclesiae,* leaves unmentioned an important difference. Acting *in persona Christi,* priests make Jesus and his actions present, and the behavior that carries out those actions belongs both to Jesus and to the priest serving as his instrument. Acting *in persona ecclesiae,* however, ordained priests do not sacramentally represent the Church. Rather, just as nations act only when various citizens exercise powers assigned them by the constitution, so the Church acts only when her members fulfill their proper roles. Public officials carrying out their duties do not make some other acting person present, and neither do ordained ministers acting in the person of the Church. Rather, they act *in persona ecclesiae* by performing the behavior appropriate to carry out their intention to do what the Church does. Acting *in persona ecclesiae,* the ordained do in and on behalf

521. Maliangéas, op. cit., 138.

522. This recent Church teaching is presented and defended against theological critics by Lawrence J. Welch, "For the Church and within the Church: Priestly Representation." *Thomist,* 65 (2001): 613-37.

of the Church what she cannot do in any other way, while acting *in persona Christi* they make present what only Jesus himself can do.

It might seem that St. Thomas thinks that ordained priests act *in persona Christi* only when they consecrate the Eucharist. He says that the forms of the other sacraments are expressed as prayers or pronounced by ministers speaking in their own person ("I baptize you") but the form of the Eucharist "is pronounced in the person of Christ himself speaking [ex persona ipsius Christi loquentis], which makes it clear that in effecting this sacrament the minister does nothing but pronounce the words of Christ" (*S.t.*, 3, q. 78, a. 1, c.). But as other texts show (see **2,** above), Thomas does not limit priests' action *in persona Christi* to the Eucharist. Here he probably only means to point out that when the priest consecrates he not only acts in the person of Christ but uses Jesus' own words.

But with respect to the Eucharist, Thomas does limit the priest's action *in persona Christi* to consecrating. He argues that heretical, schismatic, and excommunicated priests can consecrate. Ordination, which they cannot lose, gives them power to act *in the person of Christ;* yet their prayers in the Mass have no efficacy, because those prayers are said *in the person of the Church,* and priests separated from the Church's unity cannot speak for her (see ibid., q. 82, a. 7, c. and ad 3).

However, while action in the person of Christ and in the person of the Church are distinct, Thomas is mistaken in separating the two. As has been shown (in **2,** above), recent Church teaching makes it clear that presbyters act *in persona Christi* not only in consecrating but in carrying out every aspect of their ministry, not least in administering the sacraments. But the fact that ministers of sacraments must intend "to do what the Church does" makes it clear that presbyters administering sacraments *in persona Christi* must simultaneously act *in persona ecclesiae.*[523] The two roles are distinct, but not separate, and priests often act in both ways at once.

The celebrant of the Eucharist does act *in persona Christi* in saying the words of consecration; but, as Vatican II teaches (in SC 33), he also *presides* in the person of Christ. And it is as presider that the priest not only consecrates but says the prayers.[524] At the same time, as presider, the celebrant both says the prayers and consecrates in the person of the Church.[525] For in the eucharistic prayer, the Church plainly carries out Jesus' command, "Do this in memory of me," by narrating what he did and *quoting* his

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523. In explaining the sense in which sacraments' validity depends on the minister's intention, St. Thomas, *S.t.*, 3, q. 64, a. 8, ad 2, cites with approval the view of those who hold that "the minister of a sacrament acts in the person of the whole Church, whose minister he is; and the words he utters express the Church's intention, which is enough to execute the sacrament, unless the contrary is explicitly expressed on the part of the sacrament's minister and recipient."

524. Moreover, Vatican II's teaching on ecumenism falsifies Thomas's view that priests separated from the Church's unity cannot speak for her. The Council makes it clear both that non-Catholic Christians' separation from the Church's unity is a matter of degree (see UR 3) and that validly ordained priests of the separated Eastern churches act in the person of the Church: through the Eucharists they celebrate, "the Church of God is built up and grows" (UR 15).

525. While St. Thomas, *In 4 Sent.*, d. 8, q. 2, a. 2, qu'la. 4, ad 4, says that words of the priest in consecrating "simul et recitative et significative tenentur," he does not notice that the words considered *recitative* (as quoted) are being said *in persona ecclesiae.*

words and gestures, including the words of consecration.[526] Thus, the entire eucharistic prayer, including the consecration, is the Church's prayer. Consequently, just as priests cannot lose the power ordination gives them to consecrate, neither can they lose the power to say the eucharistic prayer in the person of the Church.

Recent Church documents support this view. For example, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith explains:

> It is true that the priest represents the Church, which is the body of Christ. But if he does so, it is precisely because he first represents Christ himself, who is the head and shepherd of the Church. The Second Vatican Council [note omitted] used this phrase to make more precise and to complete the expression *in persona Christi.* It is in this quality that the priest presides over the Christian assembly and celebrates the eucharistic sacrifice "in which the whole Church offers and is herself wholly offered" [note omitted].[527]

Similarly, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches: "The prayer and offering of the Church are inseparable from the prayer and offering of Christ, her head. . .. It is because the ministerial priesthood represents Christ that it can represent the Church" (*CCC* 1553).

Though distinct, Christ and the Church are not separate. Jesus was able to act without the Church and to found the Church; but although the Church is completely dependent on him, he does not act through her without her cooperation, as if she were a merely passive instrument. Vatican II teaches: "Every liturgical celebration, because it is the action of Christ the priest and of his body, which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others" (SC 7). Christ the priest, acting as head of his Church, himself acts in the person of the Church in the liturgy, thus providing the communal action in which each of the faithful can cooperate.[528] Since ministerial priests act in the person

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526. See Robert Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence: A Study in the Theology of Disclosure* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press,1993), 82-93. Sokolowski also makes it clear (86) that the Eucharist is not a dramatic representation of the Last Supper, "a ritualized Passion Play." Ferrara, "Representation or Self-Effacement?" (209-11) rightly makes the same point, but mistakenly concludes (211): "Only a man (or an ungainly and heavily disguised woman) can play Abraham Lincoln; but anyone can quote the words of Christ." That overlooks the fact that the Church's quoting in carrying out Jesus' command makes him present not only as sacrifice offered to the Father and self given to the faithful (*sacramentally represented* by the species of bread and wine) but also as the person offering and giving himself (*sacramentally represented* by the priest). For a critique of Ferrara's attempt to reduce what the priest does in consecrating to quotation of Jesus' words, see Sara Butler, M.S.B.T, "Quaestio Disputata: 'In Persona Christi,' A Response to Dennis M. Ferrara," *Theological Studies,* 56 (1995): 61-80. Ferrara's "A Reply to Sara Butler," *Theological Studies,* 56 (1995): 88-91, concedes that the ministerial priest does speak *in persona Christi* in consecrating but denies that point's significance! For a critique of some other aspects of Ferrara's views about representation, see Benedict M. Ashley, O.P., *Justice in the Church: Gender and Participation* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 174-79.

527. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Declaration on the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood,* 5, *AAS* 69 (1977) 112-13, Flannery, 2:341. The first omitted footnote refers primarily to LG 28 and PO 6.

528. See Lorenzo Loppa, *"In Persona Christi"—"Nomine Ecclesiae"* (Rome: Libreria Editrice della Pontificia Università Lateranense, 1985), who sums up (114-16) his study as showing the organic unity of the single ministerial act that has as its two dimensions acting *in persona Christi* and *nomine ecclesiae;* cf. Maliangéas, op. cit., 238-41. That Christ acts *in persona ecclesiae* may seem strange; but even St. Thomas,

of Christ *the head,* they therefore never act in his person without acting in the person of the whole Church.

But though they are not separate, Christ and the Church really are distinct. The Father not only sends the Son to save humankind and establish the fellowship of the new covenant, which is the Church, but sends the Holy Spirit to sanctify that Church and through her reconcile all things to God in Christ (see LG 3-4). The Spirit fulfills his mission by dwelling in Christ, the head, and in the Church's members, to enliven, unify, and move the whole somewhat as our souls enliven, unify, and move our bodies (see LG 7). Thus, ministerial priests' action in the person of the Church, considered as a fruit of the Spirit, cannot be altogether explained by their action in the person of Christ.[529]

Still, some theologians reject recent Church teaching that ministerial priests represent the Church because they first represent Christ. They argue that the action of priests in the person of the Church is prior to their action in the person of Christ and should be used as the principle for explaining it.[530] These theologians seem to me at least partly correct. When ministerial priests do what they are ordained to do, they act, not as any of the faithful might act, but as Church officials, and so *in persona ecclesiae;* and only when acting as Church officials do they act *in persona Christi.* Therefore, there is a sense in which action in the person of the Church is prior to action in the person of Christ and part of its explanation. However, this priority does not exclude the priority recent Church teaching ascribes to acting in the person of Christ. As has been explained, the ordained act in the person of the Church when acting in the person of Christ, because Jesus himself, as head of his Church, acts in her person. So, when the ordained act both in the person of Christ and in the person of the Church, each in its own way depends on and is prior to the other. Therefore, while it is true that ministerial priests act in the person of Christ only in acting as Church officials, it is a mistake to reject the teaching that ministerial priests represent the Church because they first represent Christ.

7) Episcopal and presbyteral office is multidimensional.

Without denying (indeed, without even considering) that bishops and presbyters first represent Christ, Walter Kasper argued that the proper starting point for understanding the Church's ordained ministry is the charism of community leadership—that is, directive leadership, carried out in a collegial spirit and as a service for promoting the Church's unity. Kasper maintained that "the priestly office" is better described in terms of "its socio-ecclesial function" than "in terms of its sacral-sacramental-consecratory function."[531] All Christians share in the ministry of the word, but the ordained, as

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In 3 Sent., d. 17, q. 1, a. 3, qu'la. 4, ad 1, says that Christ "said in the person of the Church" the words: "I cry by day, but thou dost not answer" (Ps 22.2).

529. Greshake, op. cit., 85-101, provides a profound treatment of this matter; though I do not agree with him on some things, his reflections deserve consideration I cannot give them here.

530. See the works cited by Welch, op. cit., 613, especially the article by David Coffey, which Welch criticizes at length; also see Edward J. Kilmartin, S.J., *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology,* ed. Robert J. Daly, S.J. (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 348-49, 376-77.

531. "A New Dogmatic Outlook on the Priestly Ministry," in *The Identity of the Priest,* ed. Karl Rahner, S.J., Concilium, 43 (New York: Paulist, 1969), 27.

community leaders, carry out a special "directive function, seeking to preserve the unity of the Church in its witness to Christ and its profession of faith." Similarly, since the Eucharist is the sacrament of the Church's unity, "the priestly office, serving the unity of the Church, is authorized to preside over the eucharistic celebration."[532] Kasper's theology of episcopal and presbyteral office is cogent if one considers ordained ministry, as he plainly does, only insofar as action *in persona ecclesiae* is prior to action *in persona Christi.*

Some theologians, including many who argue that ministerial priests primarily represent the Church, point out that the focus on bishops' and presbyters' priestly role since the Council of Trent detracted from their prophetic role. Vatican II tries to redress the balance by giving a certain priority to the ministry of the word (see LG 25, PO 4), and many theological works and magisterial documents since the Council stress the responsibility to evangelize, catechize, and preach.[533] The word of God not only prepares people for the liturgy but permeates it; the Eucharist itself *proclaims* the Lord's death and resurrection until he comes again. Moreover, authentic pastoral leadership—which is not engrossed in ecclesiastical administration—feeds people with the word, helps them see their own vocations in its light, and encourages them to unite in carrying out the Church's apostolic mission. Thus, the ministerial priest's prophetic role is primary in the sense that everything else he does presupposes and is informed by God's word.

Proponents of the primacy of ordained ministers' priestly function also can make their case. We do not communicate with one another for the sake of communicating but for the sake of self-expression and of our relationships and cooperation, and the same is true of God's revealing.[534] God speaks his word for the sake of covenantal fellowship, and the fellowship of the new covenant is realized and, in a certain way, experienced in the Eucharist. So, Vatican II teaches that liturgical actions surpass all others (see SC 7), and that the Eucharist contains the Church's entire spiritual wealth (see PO 5) and is the source and culmination of the whole Christian life (see LG 11; cf. SC 10). Therefore, presbyters' and bishops' ministry as priests is primary insofar as their effecting the Eucharist contributes to the Church's supreme act.

Proponents of the primacy of the pastoral, prophetic, and priestly elements of ordained ministry all make sound and complementary cases, but the significance of what they say is diminished by an additional consideration. As I already explained (in **1-E-2**), Jesus simultaneously provided prophetic, priestly, and kingly service throughout his public life. The three roles are distinct aspects of his salvific service to humankind, but they are not separate, and whenever bishops and presbyters act in the person of Christ, they participate in all three roles, though at any particular moment one or another may stand out. Referring to Vatican II's document on the Church, John Paul II explains: "If

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532. Ibid., 30.

533. For a good, brief summary, see Avery Dulles, S.J., *The Priestly Office: A Theological Reflection* (New York: Paulist, 1997), 16-29.

534. St. Paul, a peerless minister of the word, calls his evangelization of the Gentiles "priestly service of the gospel of God" (Rom 15.16), because his purpose is the sanctification of their offering, the spiritual worship of their Christian lives (see Rom 12.1).

we examine the council texts carefully it becomes obvious that we should speak of a threefold dimension to Christ's office and mission, rather than of three different functions. In fact, these functions are closely linked to one another and they explain, condition, and clarify one another."[535] John Paul repeats this teaching in his apostolic exhortation on bishops and draws the conclusion: "For this reason, then, when the Bishop teaches, he also sanctifies and governs the People of God; when he sanctifies, he also teaches and governs; when he governs, he teaches and sanctifies."[536]

Since bishops and presbyters simultaneously carry on all the dimensions of their mission and office, how each dimension is prior to the others is in practice not very important. Having reached a similar conclusion, Greshake points out, in my judgment rightly, that "the individual priest has a basic spiritual need, while listening to his own personal vocation and reflecting together with his brothers, to ask himself where is or where ought to be his own special task, its centre of gravity and 'style'. This approach will lead to a legitimate multiplicity of 'images of the priest' which become distorted only when the triple nature of priestly office is obscured in favour of one or two isolated elements."[537]

Even so, one can wonder how best to characterize ordained ministers' single yet complex role in the Church.

Jesus refers to himself as the "good shepherd," who will be the "one shepherd" of all humankind (Jn 10.11-16). The early Church refers to him as the "great shepherd of the sheep" (Heb 13.20), "the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls" (1 Pt 2.25), "the chief Shepherd" (1 Pt 5.4) who will come to crown faithful presbyters, and the Lamb who, having saved those who wash their robes in his blood, "will be their shepherd" (Rev 7.17). Having compassion on the crowds who came to him, "because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Mt 9.36), Jesus commissioned the Twelve to carry on his pastoral service (see Mt 10.1-15). In fulfilling his promise to Peter and giving him the keys to the kingdom, Jesus makes it clear that Peter's task will be that of a shepherd: "Feed my lambs. . . . Tend my sheep. . . . Feed my sheep" (Jn 21.15-17), and the early Church regards it as presbyters' duty to "tend the flock of God" (1 Pt 5.2).

Pastor in English originally referred to a shepherd and often is used to refer to shepherds of souls. Vatican II considers all the responsibilities of bishops in its decree on their *pastoral office* (CD). John Paul II follows the Council's example by using *pastor* as the general characterization of the offices of presbyters and bishops in his apostolic exhortations *Pastores dabo vobis* and *Pastores gregis.* He understands *shepherd* inclusively in teaching that ordination "configures the priest to Christ, the head and shepherd of the Church, entrusting him with a prophetic, priestly and royal mission to be carried out in the name and person of Christ."[538] Certain theologians also have argued for

535. "Letter to Priests" (Holy Thursday, 1979), 3, *AAS* 71 (1979) 397, *OR,* 17 April 1979, 6.

536. *Pastores gregis,* 9, *AAS* 96 (2004) 837, *OR,* 22 Oct. 2003, III-IV.

537. Greshake, op. cit., 75.

538. *Pastores dabo vobis,* 27, *AAS* 84 (1992) 700, *OR,* 8 April 1992, VII.

defining ordained ministry as the office of the shepherd, understood broadly to include not only leadership but all three dimensions of episcopal and presbyteral service.[539]

Thus, Jesus and the Church have made it clear that bishops and presbyters are fittingly regarded as pastors, understanding *pastor* in its inclusive sense. That characterization also is fitting because ordained ministers serve the pilgrim Church; their service will end when faith gives way to sight, all sacraments drop away, and God is "everything to every one" (1 Cor 15.28). Until then, as Vatican II twice says: "Exercising the office of Christ as shepherd and head, they gather up the family of God, as a fellowship animated toward unity, and lead it through Christ in the Spirit to God the Father" (LG 28; PO 6). While here the Council is speaking of presbyters' pastoral role in the narrow sense, its statement could be expanded easily to include the ministry of the word, which both gathers and guides God's family, and priestly ministry, centering on the Eucharist, which nourishes the fellowship as Christ's one body.

Of course, regarding bishops and presbyters as pastors can lead to mistakes. One mistake lies in supposing that their responsibility extends only to their actual flock and those added to it by natural increase. In fact, pastors need to consider as lambs who need special care those who have never really heard the gospel, those who mistakenly think they can do without pastoral service, and those who have wandered from the fold. Another mistake is to suppose that, as shepherds are superior to their sheep, pastors are superior to the souls entrusted to their care. In fact, only the Lord Jesus is as superior to other human beings as the analogy suggests: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" (Ps 23.1). And he defined his pastorate as self-sacrificing service: "I lay down my life for the sheep" (Jn 10.15). The Church's pastors are to imitate him:

> Intrinsically linked to the sacramental nature of ecclesial ministry is *its character as service.* Entirely dependent on Christ who gives mission and authority, ministers are truly "slaves of Christ" (cf. Rom 1.1) in the image of him who freely took "the form of a slave" for us (Phil 2.7). Because the word and grace of which they are ministers are not their own, but are given to them by Christ for the sake of others, they must freely become the slaves of all (cf. 1 Cor 9.19). (*CCC* 876)

Moreover, while bishops and presbyters "exist and act in order to proclaim the gospel to the world and to build up the Church in the name and person of Christ the head and shepherd,"[540] they, too, are sheep insofar as they act *in propria persona*.

8) Ordained priesthood is subordinate to the common priesthood of the faithful.

While the Church's pastors exercise authority in Jesus' person, all they are ordained to do, considered insofar as they do it *in propria persona,* is a means to an end: the benefits Jesus provides all his faithful, including them, by what they do in his person. But any means is subordinate to the end for the sake of which it is used. So, the ordained priesthood is subordinate to the common priesthood of the faithful as means to end.

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539. See, for example, Galot, op. cit., 135-42; Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Explorations in Theology,* vol. 4, *Spirit and Institution* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1995), 365-81.

540. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis,* 15, *AAS* 84 (1992) 680, *OR,* 8 April 1992, IV.

This subordination is not a novel idea. By his apostolic ministry, St. Paul founded the church at Corinth, and he regards himself as a marriage broker who has promised that church as a chaste virgin to Christ (see 2 Cor 11.2). Even if the marriage broker's role is indispensable for bringing a couple together, it is limited. The marriage broker is not a party to the married couple's intimate relationship. Using abstractions, Vatican II makes the same point in speaking of bishops' prophetic role: "That office, which the Lord entrusted to the pastors of his people, is a true service and in sacred Scripture is significantly called *diaconia* or ministry (see Acts 1.17, 25; 21.19; Rom 11.13; 1 Tm 1.12)" (LG 24). Thus, the opening sentences of the Council's chapter on the hierarchical constitution of the Church are shaped by the New Testament when they speak of "ministries" instituted by Christ for "the good of the whole body," and point out that "ministers, who are endowed with sacred power, serve their brothers and sisters" (LG 18).

As usual, John Paul II develops and clarifies Vatican II's teaching. Writing to all priests, he exhorts them to exemplify for married couples fidelity to vocation and he teaches them that "we should understand our ministerial priesthood as 'subordination' to the common priesthood of all the faithful, of the laity, especially of those who live in marriage and form a family."[541] He spells out the relationship between the exercise of the common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood:

> The priest is for the laity: he animates them and supports them in the exercise of the common priesthood of the baptized—so well illustrated by the Second Vatican Council—which consists in their making their lives a spiritual offering, in witnessing to the Christian spirit in the family, in taking charge of the temporal sphere and sharing in the evangelization of their brethren. But the service of the priest belongs to another order. He is ordained to act in the name of Christ the Head, to bring people into the new life made accessible by Christ, to dispense to them the mysteries—the Word, forgiveness, the Bread of Life—to gather them into his Body, to help them to form themselves from within, to live and to act according to the saving plan of God. In a word, our identity as priests is manifested in the "creative" exercise of the love for souls communicated by Christ Jesus.[542]

Again, the Pope reflects on Vatican II's teaching about the difference in essence between the two ways of sharing in Jesus' unique priesthood:

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541. "Letter to all priests of the Church" (Holy Thursday, 1979), 9, *AAS* 71 (1979) 411, *OR,* 17 Apr. 1979, 8. Pointing out that the word *subordination* appears here in quotation marks, someone might argue that it is being used in some mysterious, figurative sense. However, John Paul's fuller explanations, quoted in this paragraph, make it clear that here *subordination* refers to the literal subordination of a means to the end for the sake of which it is used. The quotation marks surely were an attempt to exclude another literal meaning of subordination: subjection to another's authority. The subordination of ordained priesthood to the common priesthood of the faithful does not mean the Church's pastors are answerable to the faithful as democratically elected officials are to the electorate. In that sense, all the faithful, including ministerial priests, are subordinate to Jesus and answerable to him.

542. "Letter to all priests of the Church" (Holy Thursday, 1986), 10, *AAS* 78 (1986) 699, *OR,* 24 Mar. 1986, 3.

> The [ministerial] priesthood is not an institution that exists "alongside" the laity or "above" it. *The priesthood* of bishops and priests, as well as the ministry of deacons, *is "for" the laity,* and precisely for this reason it possesses a "ministerial" character, that is to say one "of service." Moreover, it highlights the "baptismal priesthood," the priesthood common to all the faithful.[543]

The Church hierarchy described by Pseudo-Dionysius is one in which the clergy receive divine things from above and hand them down to a passively receptive laity. Stripping away that ill-conceived remodeling, Vatican II and John Paul II restore the beautiful structure Jesus gave the Church. The laity are called to exercise their priesthood by living their entire lives as spiritual worship and witness. The ministerial priesthood is not above the common priesthood or even alongside it but subordinate to it.[544] To be sure, clerics must carry out Christ's program, not cater to the wishes of lay people, but ministerial priests are meant to be servants, as Jesus emphatically taught the Twelve they were to be.

The faithful in general and ordained presbyters and bishops all are called "priests" by analogies based on their different relationships to Jesus' priesthood. Understanding those relationships more exactly will help clarify precisely what ministerial priesthood is.

John Paul II began a series of Wednesday audiences on presbyters by pointing out that Christ "is the one 'High Priest' of the new and eternal covenant." Since his sacrifice is perfect and unending, "There is no further need or possibility of other priests in addition to or alongside the one Mediator, Christ." He alone is "the true and definitive *hiereús,* or Priest (Heb 5.6, 10.21). . . . No one else in the new covenant is *hiereús* in the same sense."[545] Thus, not only do the common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood differ in essence from each other (see LG 10), but both differ essentially from the unique and definitive priesthood of Christ.

Albert Vanhoye points out that nobody in the early Christian communities performed functions similar to those of the Jewish priests.

> Therefore the leaders of the Christians did not take the title of *kohen* or *hiereús*. They were given names which expressed the notion of mission, or of service, or of a position of responsibility and authority, such as *apostolos,* apostle, which means "one who has

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543. "Letter to all priests of the Church" (Holy Thursday, 1990), 3, *AAS* 82 (1990) 420, *OR,* 2 Apr. 1990, 3. Galot, op. cit., 120, makes the same point: "The two priesthoods are reciprocally related, but, when it comes to the finality that presides over that relation, the relation runs exclusively in favor of the universal priesthood. The ministerial priesthood can never be an end in itself, nor is the universal priesthood ever intended to be subservient to the ministerial priesthood."

544. Without such striking language, John Paul II restates the same teaching in the context of his synthetic account of the nature and mission of ministerial priesthood in *Pastores dabo vobis,* 12-18, *AAS* 84 (1992) 675-86, *OR,* 8 Apr. 1992, III-V. *CCC* 1547, similarly teaches: "The ministerial or hierarchical priesthood of bishops and priests, and the common priesthood of all the faithful participate, 'each in its own proper way, in the one priesthood of Christ.' While being 'ordered one to another,' they differ essentially (LG 10, §2). In what sense? While the common priesthood of the faithful is exercised by the unfolding of baptismal grace—a life of faith, hope, and charity, a life according to the Spirit—, the ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood. It is directed at the unfolding of the baptismal grace of all Christians. The ministerial priesthood is a *means* by which Christ unceasingly builds up and leads his Church."

545. General Audience (31 Mar. 1993), 2, *Inseg.*, ???. *OR,* 7 Apr. 1993, 11.

> been sent"; *diakonos,* deacon, "one who serves"; *episkopos,* from which the word "bishop" comes and which means "overseer"; *presbyteros,* which gives us the word "priest" and which means an "elder"; *hegoumenos,* which means "a leader."[546]

Priests mediate between a human community and God. Do those who receive the sacrament of holy orders mediate? Vanhoye says they do not: "They are not mediators who would substitute themselves for Christ, but are believers whom Christ the mediator makes use of."[547] Still, "because the mediation of Christ is made present through" the ordained leadership, one might consider it "more specifically priestly" than the common priesthood.[548]

Of course, acting *in persona Christi,* presbyters and bishops do mediate by offering Jesus' self-sacrifice to the Father and conveying Jesus' gift of his glorified self to his fellow human beings. Also, acting *in persona ecclesiae,* they can celebrate Mass for the particular intentions of the faithful, especially the poor, and are encouraged to do so and authorized to accept offerings for that service.[549] But what ordained ministers do *in propria persona* is neither offering nor mediating nor even applying the Mass for particular intentions, but simply intending to do what the Church does, uttering the words and making the gestures that constitute the sacrament of Jesus' presence and action, and intending to fulfill their responsibility as ordained ministers in respect to applying the Mass for a particular intention.

Of course, insofar as bishops and presbyters sacramentally represent Jesus, they do mediate between him and those benefited by his priestly acts. But since Jesus' priestly acts are human acts, ministerial priests' mediation is between Jesus *as man* and the faithful, not between the Father—or Jesus as God—and the faithful. Therefore, no ordained minister's mediation between Jesus and the faithful is, strictly speaking, priestly. Still, making Jesus' priestly mediation available, actions in his person by ministerial priests provide the basis for calling them "priests" in an extended sense.

The bases in Scripture and Vatican II's teaching for speaking of the common priesthood of the faithful were treated (in **1-D-1,** above). About it, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1141) teaches: "This 'common priesthood' is that of Christ the sole priest, in which all his members participate." Vanhoye points out that the New Testament distinguishes two aspects in the priesthood of Christ: that of offering and that of mediation. Jesus offers himself in sacrifice, and this "aspect of offering is found in the

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546. Albert Vanhoye, S.J., *Old Testament Priests and the New Priest: According to the New Testament,* trans. J. Bernard Orchard, O.S.B. (Petersham, Mass.: St. Bede's, 1986), 51-52.

547. Ibid., 232.

548. Ibid., 317.

549. See *CIC,* c. 945. Applying the Mass for particular intentions is an established practice not only approved but carefully regulated by the Church (see cc. 945-58; Paul VI, *Firma in traditione, AAS* 66 [1974] 308-11, *OR,* 11 July 1974, 3). So, the faithful reasonably assume that the actions *in persona ecclesiae* of bishops and presbyters who "say a Mass" for their intentions are effective in heaven, according to Jesus' authorization: "Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Mt 16.19, 18.18). On that reasonable assumption, Jesus himself intercedes in a special way for such particular intentions, and celebrants therefore also act *in persona Christi* in applying Masses for them.

priesthood of all Christians, who are invited to approach God with full confidence and to offer sacrifices, . . . to open their whole personal and social lives to the transforming action of God." The point of Jesus' sacrifice is to form the new covenant, "so that through him and in him all human beings can enter into intimate relationship with God. And this is the aspect of mediation." That aspect belongs only to Jesus; his members contribute nothing to it, but simply enter into the covenantal fellowship he established and forever maintains.[550]

Because "the common priesthood is a real transformation of existence" and "a personal *offering,*" while the ministerial priesthood "does not itself bring about the mediation," one might regard the latter as "less really priestly." Still, the two are not susceptible to that kind of comparison, because they are related to Jesus' priesthood in entirely different ways.[551] Neither depends on the other to exist or to be what it is; both depend directly on Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Differing essentially, neither is more nor less than the other—they do not differ in degree.[552] Therefore, the ministerial priesthood and the priesthood of the faithful should not be contrasted as superior and inferior or as primary and secondary.

Imprecise, adulatory language was used in the past to convey the nobility of ministerial priesthood. For example, the *Roman Catechism,* teaching about the dignity and excellence of the sacrament of holy orders, says:

> Bishops and priests being, as they are, God's interpreters and ambassadors, empowered in His name to teach mankind the divine law and the rules of conduct, and holding, as they do, His place on earth, it is evident that no nobler function than theirs can be imagined. Justly, therefore, are they called not only Angels, but even gods, because of the fact that they exercise in our midst the power and prerogatives of the immortal God.[553]

Many documents of the magisterium and theological works call the man ordained a priest "alter Christus"—"other Christ."[554] That notion, combined with the sound point that *action* in the person of Christ involves a sacramental identification with Christ, led to the exaggeration that ordained priesthood "is essentially and above all a configuration, a

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550. Vanhoye, op. cit., 315.

551. Ibid., 317.

552. From Vatican II's statement that the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial priesthood "differ in essence and not just in degree" (LG 10), someone might infer that they do differ in degree. But two things can differ in degree only with respect to their common attributes; so two things differentiated essentially with respect to something cannot with respect to that same thing differ in degree—that is, cannot be more or less that in which they differ essentially. So, the Council's "not only in degree" means "not in degree," just as "not only late" means "not late" in the statement: "Some were late; others were not only late, but absent." Tardiness and absence differ in essence, not just in degree.

553. II, 7, 2, in *Catechism of the Council of Trent for Parish Priests,* trans. John A. McHugh, O.P., and Charles J. Callan, O.P. (New York: Joseph F. Wagner, 1923), 318.

554. Even John Paul II sometimes uses that expression; e.g., he writes—"Letter to all priests of the Church" (Holy Thursday, 1991), *AAS* 83 (1991) 465, *OR,* 18 Mar. 1991, 6—of "each priest's participation in the saving mystery of Christ: *'Sacerdos alter Christus.'* This is an expression which indicates how necessary it is that Christ be the starting point for interpreting the reality of the priesthood."

mysterious and sacramental transformation of the person of the man-priest into the person of Christ himself, the only Mediator."[555]

Greshake characterizes certain statements in the *Roman Catechism* as "extremely questionable" and says that *sacerdos—alter Christus* expresses a misunderstanding: "a quasi-mystical identification of Christ and the office-bearer."[556] Those criticisms seem to me excessive, for such language, benignly interpreted, can have a sound sense. However, its imprecision does render it ambiguous and therefore likely to mislead faithful Catholics and provoke sincere Protestants, who mistakenly take it to mean that ordained priests duplicate or replace Christ and his unique priesthood rather than make him and his priestly acts really present.

Moreover, simply doing that is noble, as John Paul teaches: "For us priests *the priesthood is the supreme gift, a particular calling to share in the mystery of Christ,* a calling which confers on us the sublime possibility of speaking and acting in his name."[557] The sublimity is not due to what the ordained man himself is or does, but to what the Lord Jesus is and to the absolutely supreme goodness of what he does and its importance for all his fellow human beings. Most citizens of a great nation would regard it as a high honor to work closely with its president or prime minister or to serve as its ambassador. How much higher an honor for the ordained to work closely with the Lord Jesus and to serve as his ambassadors!

Of course, all Christians are anointed by the Holy Spirit when they are christened. St. Josemaría Escrivá, having recalled that everything is given in Christ, teaches: "But we have to join him through faith, letting his life show forth in ours to such an extent that each Christian is not simply *alter Christus:* another Christ, but *ipse Christus:* Christ himself!"[558] That responsibility to be Christ certainly is fulfilled by any bishop or presbyter who without hypocrisy or self-deception can say, as Paul did: "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Cor 11.1) and "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2.20). Such holy men also can tell their people what Paul told the Philippians: "Even if I am to be poured as a libation upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all" (Phil 2.17). For, exercising their own share in the *common* priesthood, such holy men join in the sacrificial offerings of the churches whose *members* they also are. But similar statements could be made by holy people who are not ordained. Mother Teresa of Calcutta, for instance, let Jesus' life show forth so perfectly in her own life that she, like Paul, was not simply *alter Christus* but *ipse Christus.*

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555. Alvaro del Portillo, *Consacrazione e Missione del Sacerdote* (Milan: Edizioni Ares, Milan, 1990), 55-56.

556. Op. cit., 20 and 29.

557. "Letter to all priests of the Church" (Holy Thursday, 1994), 1, *AAS* 86 (1994) 642, *OR,* 30 Mar. 1994, 3.

558. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, *Christ is Passing By: Homilies* (Chicago: Scepter, 1974), 147; again (137): "The Christian is obliged to be *alter Christus, ipse Christus:* another Christ, Christ himself. Through baptism all of us have been made priests of our lives, 'to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ' (1 Pt 2.5)."

This is not the case, however, with all those who have been ordained priests. Imagine an extreme instance.[559] A priest has had a successful career but, due to obduracy in a discreet but sinful intimate relationship, has entirely lost his faith; unwilling to give up the advantages of his position in the Church, he continues to play the part of a holy, dedicated, and skillful pastor. His homilies are orthodox and inspiring; his leadership builds up a vibrant community of faith. He presides in the liturgy of the Eucharist and administers the other sacraments with seemingly exemplary reverence. Though doing nothing but playing a role he secretly regards as meaningless, he knows that the Church intends to hand on the faith, confer sacraments, and lead the pilgrim people to their heavenly home by what he outwardly does. In intending to provide the services the faithful expect of him, he intends to do what the Church does, and so he continues to act *in persona Christi.*[560] Yet such a man would not be *ipse Christus.* Still, he would be *alter Christus*—and would share in the sublimity of ministerial priesthood. But that would be true only inasmuch as, continuing to represent Christ sacramentally, he would go on making Jesus' sublime, saving acts present for the faithful.

9) It would be fitting to ordain only men with charisms for a lifestyle like Jesus'.

Jesus' commitment to his mission accounted for his lifestyle (see **B-2,**-above), and he chose the Twelve to collaborate closely in his mission and to represent him in carrying it on. In forming them to serve as his apostles, Jesus therefore understandably required them to adopt some aspects of his lifestyle and commended forgoing marriage for the kingdom's sake (see **B-3,** above). Bishops are the apostles' successors; presbyters participate in their ministry; and both represent Jesus as he carries on his salvific service. So, Jesus' lifestyle is as appropriate for bishops and presbyters as it was for the Twelve. But men lacking charisms for that lifestyle cannot be expected to commit themselves to it and faithfully fulfill that commitment. It therefore seems men should be ordained for priestly ministry only if they have charisms for the aspects of Jesus' lifestyle he required of the Twelve, and that it would be fitting, at least, to ordain only those with the charism for celibate chastity.[561]

Ordination empowers men to act *in persona Christi,* but it seems that something else must have grounded Jesus' directives and advice regarding lifestyle. After all, validly ordained priests can act in Jesus' person despite lacking not only the distinctive aspects of his lifestyle but the virtues essential for any upright life.

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559. Since drafting what follows, I have been told about priests it called to some readers' minds, but the instance is purely fictional.

560. See St. Thomas, *S.t.,* 3, q. 64, a. 5, c.; a. 9, c., ad 1.

561. Paul VI, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus,* 31, *AAS* 59 (1967) 669, *PE,* 276:31, among other arguments in favor of celibacy, teaches: "In the community of the faithful committed to his charge, the priest represents Christ. Thus, it is most fitting that in all things he should reproduce the image of Christ and in particular follow his example, both in his personal and in his apostolic life. To his children in Christ, the priest is a sign and a pledge of that sublime and new reality which is the kingdom of God . . .. Thus he nourishes the faith and hope of all Christians, who, as such, are bound to observe chastity according to their proper state of life."

However, bishops and presbyters who do not share certain aspects of Jesus' lifestyle are thereby impeded from some ways of acting *in persona Christi.* Although those whose lifestyle obviously is very unlike Jesus' can consecrate the Eucharist and validly administer other sacraments, their attempts to preach and teach in his name are defective at best.[562] For even if they say *what* they should, Jesus' message, being revelatory, cannot be communicated without prophetic *deeds* that manifest and confirm the teaching and realities signified by the words (see DV 2). That need for deeds partly explains why Jesus undertook his peculiar lifestyle (see **B-2,** above), and its continuing importance is shown by the role of the apostles' *example* in handing on the message (see DV 7). Bishops and presbyters who are ambitious careerists, preoccupied with secular affairs, bent on ensuring their own comfort and financial security, and/or attached to escapist entertainment and sensory gratification can say clearly and even eloquently that the kingdom is supremely important and the world as we know it is passing away. But even if they speak *in persona Christi,* what they do *in propria persona* sends a contradictory message.[563]

Likewise, attempts at pastoral leadership in the person of Christ by bishops and presbyters whose lifestyle is manifestly unlike that of Jesus in relevant respects are at best defective. Vatican II, teaching about presbyters, explains what such pastoral leadership should be. They should

> ". . . gather up the family of God, as a fellowship animated toward unity, and lead it through Christ in the Spirit to God the Father" (LG 28). Spiritual power is conferred on presbyters for carrying out this service, as it is for their other tasks, and that power is given for building up (see 2 Cor 10.8, 13.10). Now, in building up the Church, presbyters should deal with everyone, according to the Lord's model, with extraordinary humanity. They should deal with everyone, not in accord with what

562. Guy Mansini, O.S.B., "Sacerdotal Character at the Second Vatican Council," *Thomist*, 67 (2003): 539-77, points out that the priestly office requires less of the minister than the others and concludes that the spiritual power to act *in persona Christi* included in the sacramental character conferred by ordination is limited to the *munus* of sanctifying. His study of relevant texts of Vatican II and the underlying documentation shows that the Council does not expressly settle the issue. But it seems clear that the Council's texts imply that the sacramental character of ordination is or includes the spiritual power to act in Christ's person in all three *munera.* One can account for the differences among the exercises of the *munera:* the power is one thing, its exercise another, and the latter requires more when teaching and governing than when sanctifying—more knowledge, care, and cooperation with the grace of the Holy Spirit. However, those differences are only of degree. Even an attempt at baptism might well be invalid if, for example, a cleric pours hydrogen peroxide instead of water on the head of an infant (whose parents had been told to use the antiseptic, not water, to wash an infected head wound) or says "I baptize you," not in the name of the three divine persons, but "in the name of God, the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Sanctifier."

563. John Paul II, *Pastores gregis,* 31, *AAS* 96 (2004) 866-67, *OR*, 22 Oct. 2003, IX, teaches with respect to bishops what holds for presbyters as well: "No full treatment of the ministry of the bishop, as the preacher of the gospel and guardian of the faith among the People of God, can fail to mention the duty of personal integrity: the bishop's teaching is prolonged in his witness and his example of an authentic life of faith. He teaches with an authority exercised in the name of Jesus Christ (see DV 10) the word which is heard in the community; were he not to live what he teaches, he would be giving the community a contradictory message."

> people find agreeable, but in accord with the demands of Christian doctrine and life, teaching them and warning them as their very dear children (see 1 Cor 4.14). (PO 6)

Even if an ordained minister whose lifestyle and behavior is unlike Jesus' tells people the truth about what they ought to do, he more or less fails to make present Jesus' own shepherding. Only that shepherding manifests the concern of self-sacrificing love for each person, draws everyone to Jesus, promotes solidarity in the new covenant's communion in all who respond, and encourages each fully to use his or her unique gifts to build up that fellowship.[564]

Those holding pastoral office in the Church might succeed as managers but will surely fail as pastors if they seek to dominate those entrusted to their care; if they are irascible, unreceptive to advice, offended by criticism, resentful, vindictive; if they refuse to cooperate with their peers or disobey Church law and their superiors; if they are unsolicitous about nonbelievers, separated Christians, fallen-away Catholics, habitual sinners, the lukewarm; if they are less concerned to know well the people they are called to serve than to maintain good public relations, look after temporalities, and have a balanced budget—if, in short, they fail to follow Jesus' example in caring about people, relating to them, and dealing with them.[565]

Even insofar as they do act in his person, bishops and presbyters whose lifestyle is unlike Jesus' often fail to help him achieve his purpose in acting by means of their ministry. Jesus intends not only that his saving acts be made present by the ordained who sacramentally represent him to those who might benefit from them but that those acts be fruitful: he intends that people listen to the gospel and believe it, devoutly receive and be sanctified by his sacraments, and flourish as active members of his flock. Of course, fruitfulness depends upon the dispositions of those who hear the message, receive the

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564. See the passage from PO 6, quoted in **A-6,** above, in which Vatican II teaches that priests, *exercising authority in their pastoral role,* should see to it that each of the faithful cultivates his or her own vocation; also see in the footnote John Paul II's comment on that passage regarding the standard of pastoral care set by Jesus.

565. John Paul II, *Pastores gregis,* 11, *AAS* 96 (2004) 840, *OR,* 22 Oct. 2003, IV, again teaches with respect to bishops what holds for presbyters as well: The bishop's spirituality will be ecclesial "since everything in his life is directed towards the building up of the Church in love. This requires of the bishop an attitude of service marked by personal strength, apostolic courage and trusting abandonment to the inner working of the Spirit. He will therefore strive to adopt a lifestyle which imitates the *kenosis* of Christ, the poor and humble servant, so that the exercise of his pastoral ministry will be a consistent reflection of Jesus, the Servant of God, and will help him to become, like Jesus, close to everyone, from the greatest to the least. . . . In the practice of charity, as the content of the pastoral ministry he has received, the bishop becomes a sign of Christ and acquires that moral authority needed for the effective exercise of his juridical authority. Unless the episcopal office is based on the witness of a holiness manifested in pastoral charity, humility and simplicity of life, it ends up being reduced to a solely functional role and, tragically, it loses credibility before the clergy and the faithful." Again, (ibid., 43, *AAS* 883, *OR,* XIII), commenting on Vatican II's teaching (in LG 27) that bishops govern their dioceses not only "by their counsel, exhortations and example, but also by their authority and sacred power," the Pope implies that bishops who are not holy simply cannot effectively govern *in persona Christi:* "This 'sacred power' is one which is rooted in the moral authority which the bishop enjoys by virtue of his holiness of life. It is this which facilitates the acceptance of his every act of governance and makes it effective."

sacraments, and enjoy the Church's pastoral guidance; but those dispositions partly depend on the lifestyle and behavior of ordained ministers.[566]

Those who adopt a lifestyle like Jesus', put on his mind, and share his sensibility and feelings treat people as he would. In sacramentally representing Jesus and making his actions present, they do not make it difficult for people to recognize Jesus' actions nor do they needlessly provoke resistance to cooperating with him and benefiting from his acts. Instead, they do what they can to overcome inappropriate dispositions and promote suitable ones. In a word, they make Jesus' saving acts not only *present* but readily *available.*

What else they do, beyond acting *in persona Christi*, to make Jesus' acts available is not done merely *in propria persona.* It pertains to their ecclesial offices and—along with everything they do *in persona Christi*—is done *in persona ecclesiae.* Since these things are essential to the ministry for which they are ordained, the Church, wanting the service provided by her ordained ministers to be of good quality, has a compelling reason for encouraging them to adopt a lifestyle like Jesus' and in all respects carry out their ministry as he would. But since it would be unreasonable to expect that of men who do not have the charisms for it, it is fitting that the Church ordain only those who manifest the charisms for a lifestyle like Jesus' and the readiness to behave as he would.

Vatican II teaches in its document on the formation of seminarians:

> May the students very clearly understand that they are not destined to exercise lordship and enjoy honors but to be bound over entirely for the service of God and pastoral ministry. Let them be formed with special solicitude in priestly obedience, a lifestyle of poverty, and the spirit of self-denial so that they will be habituated to renouncing unhesitatingly whatever is not advantageous, even if licit, and to conforming themselves to Christ crucified. (OT 9)

The Council develops the same line of thinking in its document on the ministry and life of presbyters, using Jesus' self-sacrifice as the exemplar for priestly self-mortification and pastoral service (see PO 12) and making the counsels of obedience, chastity, and poverty the framework for teaching about priestly obedience, celibacy, and dealing with material goods (see PO 15-17). But even though the Council teaches firmly about

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566. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis,* 25, *AAS* 84 (1992) 696-97, *OR,* 8 Apr. 1992, VII, links the Council of Trent's teaching about the relevance of the dispositions of those who receive the sacraments with the holiness of the minister, and quotes PO 12 on the relationship between priests' holiness and their ministry's fruitfulness. Then in 43—*AAS* 732, *OR,* XII—he teaches: "The priest, who is called to be a 'living image' of Jesus Christ, head and shepherd of the Church, should seek to reflect in himself, as far as possible, the human perfection which shines forth in the incarnate Son of God and which is reflected with particular liveliness in his attitudes toward others as we see narrated in the Gospels. The ministry of the priest is, certainly, to proclaim the Word, to celebrate the Sacraments, to guide the Christian community in charity 'in the name and in the person of Christ,' but all this he does dealing always and only with individual human beings. . .. So we see that the human formation of the priest shows its special importance when related to the receivers of the mission: In order that his ministry may be humanly as credible and acceptable as possible, it is important that the priest should mold his human personality in such a way that it becomes a bridge and not an obstacle for others in their meeting with Jesus Christ the Redeemer of man."

obedience and celibacy, and invites priests voluntarily to embrace poverty, it stops short of saying a lifestyle like Jesus' is necessary for all priests.

A document of the 1971 session of the Synod of Bishops hints that such an integral lifestyle is necessary: "If celibacy is lived in the spirit of the Gospel, in prayer and vigilance, with poverty, joy, contempt of honors, and brotherly love, it is a sign which cannot long be hidden, but which effectively proclaims Christ to modern men also."[567] A 1974 document of the Congregation for Catholic Education more clearly suggests the same thing:

> Celibacy constitutes a sign which completes the total picture of the other evangelical counsels. Insofar as it is chosen for the kingdom of heaven, it implies fundamentally the Gospel virtues of poverty and obedience. In fact, these are intimately connected with one another, and complementary to each other, and they signify a life which is perfectly evangelical in nature.[568]

However, it becomes fully clear that a lifestyle like Jesus' is fitting for all priests only in John Paul II's exhortation after the session of the Synod of Bishops on the formation of presbyters.

Having pointed out that Jesus himself exercises headship as service and total self-emptying, John Paul teaches that the presbyter is configured to Christ the head and *servant,* and concludes: "The spiritual life of the ministers of the New Testament should therefore be marked by this fundamental attitude of service to the People of God (see Mt 20.24ff., Mk 10.43-44), freed from all presumption or desire of 'lording over' those in their charge (see 1 Pt 5.2-3)."[569] He recalls Jesus' act of washing the Apostles' feet and, making the point that education in obedience, celibacy, and poverty should be in the context of pastoral "charity, which consists in the loving gift of oneself," he quotes the passage from *Optatam totius* that I quoted above.[570]

John Paul says in his treatment of priests' spiritual life that the three evangelical counsels are a particularly significant expression of gospel radicalism. Then he asserts: "The priest is called to live these counsels in accordance with those ways and, more specifically, those goals and that basic meaning which derive from and express his own priestly identity."[571] On another occasion, he points out that faith teaches that priestly ordination confers a new consecration; then, while using the indicative, he draws a normative conclusion:

> When the priest recognizes that he is called to serve as the *instrument of Christ,* he feels the need to live in intimate *union with Christ* in order to be a *valid instrument* of the "principal Agent." Therefore, he seeks to reproduce in himself the "consecrated

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567. *Ultimis temporibus, AAS* 63 (1971) 915, *Vatican Collection,* ed. Flannery, 2:687.

568. "A Guide to Formation in Priestly Celibacy," 6, in National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Norms for Priestly Formation,* vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Catholic Conference, 1993), 159; *EV* 5 (1974-76), 194.

569. *Pastores dabo vobis,* 21, *AAS* 84 (1992) 689, *OR,* 8 Apr. 1992, VI.

570. Ibid., 49, *AAS* 745-46, *OR,* XIII.

571. Ibid., 27, *AAS* 701, *OR,* VII.

> life" (the sentiments and virtues) of the one, eternal priest who shares with him not only his power, but also his state of sacrifice for accomplishing the divine plan.[572]

In treating poverty, John Paul observes that the synod Fathers "further developed" the Council's teaching, quotes their norm that priests "should be capable of witnessing to poverty with a simple and austere lifestyle," and adds his own teaching that poverty is required of priests: "It is a condition and essential premise of the apostle's docility to the Spirit, making him ready to 'go forth,' without traveling bag or personal ties, following only the will of the Master."[573]

John Paul takes the same tack in his treatment of the spiritual life of bishops:

> To all his disciples, and especially to those who while still on this earth wish to follow him more closely like the Apostles, the Lord proposes the way of the evangelical counsels. . . . The life of the bishop must radiate the life of Christ and consequently Christ's own obedience to the Father, even unto death, death on a Cross (see Phil 2.8), his chaste and virginal love, and his poverty which is absolute detachment from all earthly goods.
>
> In this way the bishops can lead by their example not only those members of the Church who are called to follow Christ in the consecrated life but also priests, to whom the radicalism of holiness in accordance with the spirit of the evangelical counsels is also proposed.[574]

With respect to poverty, the Pope recalls Jesus' example and teaching, and concludes: "Consequently, the bishop who wishes to be an authentic witness and minister of the gospel of hope must be a *vir pauper.*"[575]

10) A cleric's vocation to holiness takes one of three forms.

These statements of Vatican II, the 1971 session of the Synod of Bishops, and John Paul II make it clear that any man who accepts ordination ought to commit himself to live an evangelical life—that is, to forgo having an agenda of his own, to discern and accept God's entire plan for his life, and to strive always to carry it out perfectly. Thus, the Church now implies by her teaching that, when men who undertake celibacy accept ordination as presbyters, they should respond to the call to make their profession in the primal institute of consecrated life, the one founded by the Lord Jesus himself, and to abide by its rule of service and life, just as he commanded or encouraged the Twelve to do. This is the first of the forms a clerical vocation to holiness can take.

The fulfillment of that type of clerical vocation is exemplified by St. Paul, other saintly apostles and bishops, the Curé d'Ars, and other saintly celibate presbyters. They became holy by committing themselves to use *all* their gifts and resources as fully as possible in serving Jesus and his Church and by accepting in faith as from the Father's hand everything that befell them, constantly praying for the Holy Spirit's light and power

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572. General Audience (26 May 1993), 5, Inseg., ???, *OR*, 2 June 1993, 11.

573. *Pastores dabo vobis*, 30, *AAS* 84 (1992) 706, *OR*, 8 Apr. 1992, VIII.

574. *Pastores gregis*, 18, *AAS* 96 (2004) 850, *OR*, 22 Oct. 2003, VI.

575. Ibid., 20, *AAS* 852, *OR*, VII.

to faithfully do these things, always maintaining the intimacy with Jesus essential for friends working together so closely,[576] and regularly examining themselves, repenting their sins, and seeking the Lord's forgiveness and reconciliation with those they wronged.

If a man with that form of vocation to holiness does not sinfully reject the graces he is offered, he responds to his calling, and his life is evangelical in the sense defined in **A-9,** above. His lifestyle, being like Jesus' own, is superior to other evangelical lifestyles, as explained in **D-2,** above, and his holiness has the distinctive excellence pertaining to that lifestyle. While his vocation continues to unfold throughout his life, all of it is subordinate not only to his fundamental option of faith but to his one and only vocational commitment, namely, to carry out the ministry proper to his order.

Before Vatican II, it was commonly assumed that clerics could become holy only by taking time out from their ministry for personal religious practices; the holiness thus achieved would then contribute to the fruitfulness of their ministry. Vatican II overcomes that supposed split by teaching: "Presbyters will obtain holiness in a characteristic fashion by properly and tirelessly carrying out their roles in the Spirit of Christ" (PO 13). Working out this idea (see PO 12-17), the Council makes it clear that preparing well for various ministerial acts and properly carrying them out involves many things that foster a presbyter's love of God and neighbor and integrate his entire life with that love, while that growth in charity contributes to his increasingly effective and fruitful ministry. John Paul II restates and clarifies this teaching in *Pastores dabo vobis,* chapter three, "The Spiritual Life of the Priest," and *Pastores gregis,* chapter two, "The Spiritual Life of the Bishop."

Pastoral charity is central in all three treatments. This, in the first place, is Jesus' love of neighbor, the love with which the Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.[577] Jesus' pastoral charity is his human will's complete conformity with the Father's will that all human beings be saved. It flows from his divine communion in the Holy Spirit with his Father and his human love, joy, and gratitude toward the Father. It leads immediately to his perfect obedience to the Father: that obedience with which he commits himself to his mission, carries it out single-mindedly, and lays down his life—the obedience which is the acceptable sacrifice that establishes the new covenant. And, since Jesus' pastoral charity is the principle of his single-minded fulfillment of his mission, it is the principle of all the elements of his lifestyle, each of which is an aspect of his ministry and/or a means of facilitating it and/or promoting its fruitfulness (see **B-2,** above).

Next, pastoral charity is love of neighbor on the part of those clerics who respond properly to a clerical vocation to holiness of the first form.[578] It is the love with which

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576. See OT 8 and the teachings cited in its fn. 14; John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis,* 46, *AAS* 84 (1992) 738-40, *OR,* 8 Apr. 1992, XII-XIII.

577. On Jesus' pastoral charity, see John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis,* 22, *AAS* 84 (1992) 690-91, *OR,* 8 Apr. 1992, VI.

578. On the pastoral charity of presbyters and bishops, see PO 14-17; John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis,* 21-26, *AAS* (1992) 688-700, *OR,* 8 Apr. 1992, VI-VII; *Pastores gregis,* 11-13, *AAS* 96 (2004) 839-45, *OR,* 22 Oct. 2003, IV-V.

they bind themselves over for service when they accept ordination and by which they serve as well as they can for as long as they can. It is the conformity of their wills to Jesus' human will to save. It presupposes the love of God poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Spirit and is given specific form by the grace of the Holy Spirit given by ordination, which configures them to Christ, the Good Shepherd. As a grace constantly renewed, their pastoral charity flows mainly from the eucharistic sacrifice. It leads immediately to their special allegiance to Jesus insofar as he is the Church's head and chief shepherd: the allegiance with which they give themselves entirely to his Church, serve in cooperation with others according to the constitution he gave the Church, faithfully and carefully do in his person the acts he authorized, and with creative fidelity promote the fruitfulness of all his saving acts. Since pastoral charity is the dynamic, inner principle that shapes these clerics' entire lives of self-giving in service to the Church, it is also the principle of their special companionship with Jesus and their day-by-day living in a manner very like his.

It should be noted that some laypeople—for example, some catechists—who possess appropriate charisms are called to forgo marriage for the kingdom's sake and devote their lives entirely to collaborating closely in some aspects of clerical ministry. If they respond well to their calling, their holiness, which is very similar to that of holy clerics, shares in the same excellence.

Vatican II began its treatment of clerical celibacy with the proposition: "It is a sign of pastoral charity and at the same time a spur to it, as well as a unique font of spiritual fecundity in the world" (PO 16). In his encyclical on celibacy, Paul VI places his account of the reasons for it in a Christological context, and recounts how Jesus led the Twelve to share his lifestyle and commended celibacy to them. Today too, Jesus calls some to share in both his priestly service and condition of life.[579] The Pope then develops Vatican II's fundamental proposition regarding celibacy:

> The response to the divine call is an answer of love to the love which Christ has shown us so sublimely (see Jn 3.16, 15.13). This response is included in the mystery of that special love for souls who have accepted his most urgent appeals (see Mk 10.21). With a divine force, grace increases the longings of love. And love, when it is genuine, is all-embracing, stable and lasting, an irresistible spur to all forms of heroism. And so the free choice of sacred celibacy has always been considered by the Church "as a symbol of, and stimulus to, charity" (LG 42): it signifies a love without reservations; it stimulates to a charity which is open to all.[580]

In his apostolic exhortation on priestly formation, John Paul II also recalls and develops Vatican II's basic proposition. He shows that the Church's law on celibacy is not a mere arbitrary rule, for

> the will of the Church finds its ultimate motivation in the *link between celibacy and sacred ordination,* which configures the priest to Jesus Christ, the head and spouse of the Church. The Church, as the spouse of Jesus Christ, wishes to be loved by the priest

579. See *Sacerdotalis caelibatus,* 22-23, *AAS* 59 (1967) 665-66, *PE,* 276.22-23.

580. Ibid., 24, *AAS* 666-67, *PE,* 276.24.

> in the total and exclusive manner in which Jesus Christ her head and spouse loved her. Priestly celibacy, then, is the gift of self *in* and *with* Christ *to* his Church and expresses the priest's service to the Church in and with the Lord.
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> For an adequate priestly spiritual life, celibacy ought not to be considered and lived as an isolated or purely negative element, but as one aspect of a positive, specific and characteristic approach to being a priest. Leaving father and mother, the priest follows Jesus the good shepherd in an apostolic communion, in the service of the People of God. Celibacy, then, is to be welcomed and continually renewed with a free and loving decision as a priceless gift from God, as an "incentive to pastoral charity" (PO 16), as a singular sharing in God's fatherhood and in the fruitfulness of the Church, and as a witness to the world of the eschatological kingdom.[581]

Thus, beginning with Vatican II, the Church's magisterium has viewed priestly celibacy primarily as an element of the form of clerical life that shares unreservedly in Jesus' own pastoral charity and the entire lifestyle that flows from it.

This perspective differs from that of those who first formulated the disciplinary requirement—which later developed into the law of priestly celibacy—that married bishops, presbyters, and deacons must abstain entirely from conjugal intercourse. As Christian Cochini shows, using language that shows his agreement with the early legislators' assumptions, abstinence was required of "clerics working at 'the service of the altar' because they exercise an original function of mediation between God and man." That discipline, he explains, is a survival of Old Testament ceremonial law. When all the other "ancient rites of purification have been erased from the Christian memory, one thing only was remembered: at the very origins of the tribe of Levi . . the divine law demanded from priests that they abstain from conjugal intercourse in order worthily to accomplish their duties." Rather than considering this requirement of ritual purity obsolete like the others, the Fathers "selected it as a distinctive mark of the priesthood inaugurated by Christ and generally strengthened its scope by making conjugal abstinence a daily necessity."[582] On this view, the different discipline of many Eastern churches legislated by a regional council's late-seventh-century decree was due to the "schismatic climate prevailing then in Byzantium" and those bishops' failure to recognize "the divergence of their discipline from that of the early centuries."[583] Thus, Cochini considers the Eastern discipline an aberration and concludes that "the continence demanded from the Levites of the New Testament is founded on the original character of priestly mediation" so that celibacy is required by the very nature

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581. *Pastores dabo vobis*, 29, *AAS* 84 (1992) 704-5, *OR*, 8 Apr. 1992, VIII.

582. Christian Cochini, S.J., *Apostolic Origins of Priestly Celibacy*, trans. Nelly Marans (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1990), 429-30. Unlike Vanhoye, the careful and very able exegete of the Letter to the Hebrews, who shows the enormous difference between the Old Testament priesthood and the presbyterate of the new covenant (see section **8,** above), Cochini assumes (434) that "the anonymous author of that letter" regarded the Christian priesthood as the "heir of the Temple."

583. Ibid., 410. The relevant decree of the Council in Trullo never received papal approval but was widely regarded as valid Church law for the East.

of the priesthood and articulated by what is "in the full meaning of the term, *an unwritten tradition of apostolic origin.*"[584]

But if Cochini proves anything, he proves too much. If he were right, complete sexual abstinence would be essential for clerics, and the Church could never regard marital intimacy as a component of the vocation of any of her clergy. However, those who dealt with celibacy in the early centuries intuited its excellence better than they argued for it. Vatican II, understanding ordained ministry more precisely than those who legislated the early requirement, clearly shows that celibacy is appropriate for priests, while teaching that it "is not required by the very nature of the priesthood, as is obvious from the practice of the early Church (see 1 Tm 3.2-5, Ti 1.6) and the tradition of the Eastern churches." The Council also exhorts married men who have been ordained "to persevere in their holy vocation" (PO 16).

Paul VI greatly develops the Council's explanation and defense of celibacy in his encyclical on that subject. At the same time, he repeats and expands on the Council's appreciation of the discipline of the Eastern churches, which he believes was due to a different but not aberrant historical situation, "which the Holy Spirit has providentially and supernaturally influenced." He also recognizes among the married clergy of the East "examples of fidelity and zeal which make them worthy of sincere veneration."[585] In this encyclical, Pope Paul also allows for two exceptions to the traditional discipline of the West: ordination to the priesthood of married non-Catholic ministers who are received into full communion with the Catholic Church and desire to serve her as sacred ministers; and the ordination to the permanent diaconate of married men.[586]

The encyclical made a major shift in the perspective in which celibacy is understood, compared with what Cochini describes with approval. In 1974, seven years after the encyclical and seven years before Cochini's book was first published, there was a sign of that shift in the way Pope Paul's Congregation for Catholic Education distanced itself from the old perspective: "The Church is not prompted by reasons of 'ritualistic purity' nor by the concept that only through celibacy is holiness possible."[587]

Thus, there is a second form of the clerical call to holiness—the vocation of those called to both marriage and ordination as presbyters or permanent deacons. In some important respects, it is the same as the first: Both require resignation to the Father's will, conscious dependence on the Spirit's grace, and regular self-examination and repentance. But clerics whose call to holiness is of this second form and who are bound to fulfill marital and familial responsibilities cannot commit themselves to use all their gifts as

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584. Ibid., 427 and 439. Stefan Heid, *Celibacy in the Early Church; The Beginnings of a Discipline of Obligatory Continence for Clerics in East and West,* trans. Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2000), 333-47, also makes clear the very important role of ritual purity, which he defends, in the development of celibacy.

585. *Sacerdotalis caelibatus,* 38, *AAS* 59 (1967) 673, *PE,* 276:38; cf. sec. 17, *AAS* 663, *PE,* 17.

586. Ibid., 42, 663; *AAS* 674, *PE,* 42.

587. "A Guide to Formation in Priestly Celibacy," 13, in National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Norms for Priestly Formation,* vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Catholic Conference, 1993), 162; *EV* 5 (1974-76), 198.

fully as possible in serving the Church and Jesus, her chief shepherd. As Paul says, their "interests are divided" and they cannot give "undivided devotion [undistracted attention] to the Lord" (1 Cor 7.34-35). Inasmuch as they are called to holiness, however, they can love him with undivided hearts. They can conform in their ministry to his precepts forbidding ambition and domineering, and imitate his meekness, obedience, and humble service.[588] Moreover, they can practice the detachment and simplicity of life required of all Christians, and their generosity in providing ministry either without remuneration or with only a modest family wage can yield many of the benefits of the austerity of holy, celibate clerics.

If a man called to this second form of a cleric's vocation to holiness responds to it, his life also is evangelical in the sense defined in **A-9,** above; yet his holiness does not have the distinctive excellence of a saintly person who more fully shares Jesus' lifestyle. Pastoral charity inspires and informs the married cleric's presbyteral or diaconal service, but his love of neighbor also takes other forms. His vocation continues to unfold throughout his lifetime, but within the complex framework of his multiple commitments. Rather than resolve the tensions that complexity generates by systematically subordinating either set of responsibilities to the other, he must weave the elements into a seamless whole by systematically discerning and fulfilling God's will.[589] The challenge involved in this integrating is not very different from the challenge to celibate clerics who must look after aged parents or married men who must fight for their country or work far from home to earn a living.

Since married candidates cannot be ordained without their wives' consent, a holy married cleric would have remained a layman if his wife had not given it.[590] If she, too, is holy, she discerned that God wanted her to support her husband's commitment to ministry and help him fulfill it. As such a holy couple share many of their other friendships, they share an intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus and constantly grow in their commitment to his person and mission. Their close cooperation in fulfilling the husband's clerical responsibilities is their spiritual parenting of the faithful he serves, while his pastoral love embraces the members of his own family as he promotes their faith and salvation. The couple's conjugal love makes their marriage not only exemplary

588. See Congregation for Catholic Education and Congregation for the Clergy, op. cit., 24-25, 28, 41-42, 62, 67, 70, 101-3, 109-13, 132 (*Basic Norms,* 5, 11, 30, 72, 85, 89; *Directory*, 37-38, 43-47, 67). While these documents specifically concern permanent deacons, on this matter their provisions are equally relevant for all clerics. Those ordained presbyters and bishops always also remain deacons, so that every holy cleric always is "a living icon of Christ the servant within the Church" 28 *(Basic Norms,* 11).

589. Ibid., 124 (*Directory,* 61): Since married deacons' other responsibilities limit their ministry, "it will be necessary to integrate these various elements in unitary fashion, especially by means of shared prayer." The holy married cleric does not carry out that discernment individualistically but on the basis of constant communication with both the members of his family and fellow clerics.

590. See *CIC,* 1031, §2; *CCEO,* 769, 2°. The remainder of this paragraph articulates the ideal, from which, of course, some married clerics and their wives fall short.

but an unmistakable sacrament of the union of Christ and the Church, a sign that clearly proclaims the splendor of the heavenly wedding feast.[591]

There is yet a third form a cleric's vocation to holiness can take. Two groups are called to it: some who imprudently committed themselves to clerical service and life without having the appropriate charisms and some who had the charisms but were so unfaithful to their commitments in being ordained that they can no longer fulfill them. Clerics of both kinds receive a new vocation to holiness if, moved by grace, they acknowledge their folly and/or infidelity, sincerely repent, and believe, as they ought, that the merciful Father is ready to forgive all their sins.

Like the other forms of a clerical vocation to holiness, this one, too, requires resignation to the Father's will, conscious dependence on the Spirit's grace, and regular self-examination and repentance. It also is likely to involve special requirements—for example, answering honestly every legitimate question asked by ecclesiastical superiors, complete candor in sharing with them evidence of the impossibility of fulfilling certain commitments, patience with burdensome conditions imposed for the Church's good, and faithful performance of penances.

The new vocations of such clerics will differ greatly depending on differences among their records, defects, and situations, as well as differences in how ecclesiastical superiors deal with such cases. Some will lose the clerical state by a penalty of dismissal, while others will seek and receive from the Holy See the favor of being removed from the clerical state (see *CIC,* 290).[592] Some others will remain in the clerical state, bound by their promise of celibacy, but excluded from engaging in ordained ministry by others' decision or their own conscientious judgment. Some will continue in ordained ministry, but within limits and under safeguards.

Some who are deficient only in respect to charisms may receive them in answer to their and/or others' prayers, and thus become able to respond to the first or second form of the clerical vocation to holiness. But prayers for charisms may not be answered. Charisms are for service, and God may wish some to serve in other ways—for example, by the witness of a life of holiness as a cleric excluded from ministry. In every case, however, if such clerics pray earnestly for divine help and do the best they can, they will receive the graces they need to avoid sin (see DS 1536/804, 1568/828). No matter what their past follies and sins may have been, they can live that life to

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591. Congregation for Catholic Education and Congregation for the Clergy, op. cit., 48, requires the director of formation to make sure that families of married applicants are open "to accepting, sharing, and accompanying the vocation of their relative"; 53, calls for "a program of formation for the wives of candidates" (*Basic Norms*,, 42 and 56); 115-16, says (unfortunately, without mentioning wives) "deacons must know Christ intimately so that he may shoulder the burdens of their ministry" and that they should organize their ministry and other obligations "so as to grow in their commitment to the person and mission of Christ the Servant" (*Directory,* 50); 124-25, says that wives' nurturing conjugal love and cooperating in exemplary married and family life significantly contributes to their husbands' ministry (*Directory, 61*).

592. Those whose apparent ordination is determined to have been null are not dealt with here. Those excluded from ministry and even those who lose the clerical state remain clerics; they rightly hear the confessions of penitents in danger of death and validly absolve them from any censures and sins (see *CIC,* 976).

which they now are called and, with God's grace, persevere in grace and grow in holiness. Indeed, if a man with this third form of a cleric's vocation to holiness rejects none of the graces God offers but responds fully to his calling, even his life is evangelical in the sense defined in **A-9,** above.