

DOCTRINAL SECTION

CULT OR EVANGELIZATION?

(ANENT THE PRIESTLY MINISTRY)

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The priestly ministry is indeed one of the mooted themes in catholic circles nowadays. And among the various topics which many deem fashionable to take up, this question is often posed: "In the priesthood what is more important or essential, *cult* or *evangelization*?"¹—The problem is unfortunately open to deplorable confusions² because of a recurring tendency in our times to make use of "new, intruding forms of speech, a quibbling knowledge, which is not knowledge at all..."³ Let us try to bring things into the right focus. Our subject refers properly to the ministerial priesthood. Nevertheless it has a particular interest also for our Catholic laity, specially in our days when the common priesthood of all the faithful is very opportunely stressed, sometimes even exaggeratedly.

The office proper of a priest is to be "a mediator between God and the people."⁴ This mediation is perfectly and fully realized *only* in Christ, the Supreme and Eternal Priest, by virtue of His very human

¹ Cf. José Maria Burgos, *Tres Preguntas sobre el Presbiterado*, in *Incun-able*, Madrid, Septiembre 1968, p. 19. With all our due respect merited by the distinguished author, it seems necessary however to clarify some of his expressions which to our judgment appear inaccurate and misleading; as for instance, when he says that "evangelization" should be raised "to the very level of cult." If these words were not defined with greater precision they could justify certain erroneous attitudes which unfortunately abound these times. We have a recent example in the deliberations of the "Forum sacerdotale en Lyon" (cf. *Roca Viva*, Madrid, Enero 1969, pp. 55-57).

² Cf. *Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, IV (1966), p. 389: "La XVI Settimana di aggiornamento pastorale." (Tip. Poliglotta Vaticana)

³ I Tim. 6, 20-21

⁴ S. Thomas Aq., *Summa Theol.*, III, Q. 22, a. 1 c; Q. 22, a. 4, c; Q. 26, a. 1, ad 1.

nature subsisting in the Person of the Word of God.⁵ In all other priests the mediatory office is realized only through participation in the Priesthood of Christ, who is the "fountainhead of all priesthood"⁶ as the Angelic Doctor says with his characteristic luminous precision.

The faithful receive this participation of Christ's Priesthood with the sacramental "character" of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders. This priestly "character differs in each of the three sacraments essentially,⁷ and not only in degree. "The characters of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders are not simply three degrees of the same nature in direct prolongation, and as it were, quantitative one to the other. What unites them is a relationship of *analogy*, that is, a more and more similar resemblance, and a more and more real participation in the Priesthood of the Word Incarnate".⁸

Coming now to our topic we should note that this sacred "character" *always* implies "a certain consecration and deputation to DIVINE CULT".⁹ Through that "character" the faithful acquire "a certain power to receive or give to others whatever concerns the CULT OF GOD".¹⁰ By the baptismal "character", and still more by that of Confirmation, the faithful become members of Christ the Priest. "Christ has incorporated us in Himself, and that is why the (priestly) unction (which Baptism confers) touches all Christians",¹¹ and thus they obtain the capacity to participate *validly* in Christian CULT. But this consecration "even though it is real, does not confer upon them the right to represent Christ and the Church; it merely grants them the right to

⁵ Ibid., Q. 26, a. 2, c. Cf. Emmanuel Card. Suhard, *Dios, Iglesia, Sacerdocio*, Ed. Rialp, Madrid 1961, pp. 235-239.

⁶ S. Thomas Aq., *Summa Theol.*, III, Q. 22, a. 4, c.

⁷ Sacrosanctum Oecumenicum Concilium Vaticanum II, *Constitutiones, Decreta, Declarationes*, Libr. Editr. Vatic. 1966: "Lumen Gentium", n. 10, p. 110.

⁸ Clement Dillenschneider, C.S.S.R., *Christ the One Priest and We His Priests*, B. Herder Book Co. 1964, vol. I, p. 134

⁹ S. Thomas Aq., *op. cit.*, III, Q. 63, a. 6, ad 2; Q. 63, a. 3, ad 2. Cf. Suhard, *op. cit.*, pp. 251-252

¹⁰ S. Thomas Aq., *op. cit.*, III, Q. 63, a. 2, a. 3; cf; cf. Suhard. *op. cit.* 1. c.

¹¹ S. Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmos*, PL. 35:200. Cf. Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, p. 89

be represented by Christ and the Church."¹² While "by the sacerdotal consecration priests are clothed with the very person of Jesus Christ";¹³ and "thus the priest is in the Church as a living Christ"¹⁴ and exercises the public CULT "*in persona Christi*";¹⁵ i.e., acts in the place of Christ¹⁶ and may well be called *in some way* "vicar of Christ".¹⁷

In any case, however, this is out of question. The Christian priesthood, by the very sacramental "character" through which it is acquired, is *essentially* and *preeminently* related to DIVINE CULT. And such was also the case with the priesthood of the Old Testament and even that of all other heathen nations: "the most general concept of priesthood is centered in the notion of sacrifice (*sacrum facere*)"¹⁸ and is preeminently, if not almost exclusively, manifested in an act of public CULT. "He who says priesthood, says sacrifice".¹⁹

Hence, CULT, and more specifically the eucharistic sacrifice is *essentially* and *preeminently* PRIMAL or PRIMORDIAL in the Catholic Priesthood. In saying this, however, we do not mean to imply in any way that it is the *only essential and primary* function. Let us clarify this apparently subtle distinction which nevertheless gives us the key for a correct evaluation of the priestly services.

"Like Christ and by virtue of the mission received from Him, the priest holds in his person the prerogatives and functions traditionally attributed to the Word Incarnate: Pontiff, King, Prophet. He ought "to offer", "to preside", "to teach". But these ministries are summed up in a function that assumes them all: that of Mediator."²⁰

¹² Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, p. 134

¹³ Francois Bourgoing, *Introduction aux oeuvres de Bérulle*, Paris 1956, Preface, p. 106

¹⁴ Jean-Jacques Olier, *Traité des Saints Ordres*, Paris 1953, p. 237.

¹⁵ cf. Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, p. 146

¹⁶ "*vice Christi fungitur*": S. Cyprianus, Epist. 63, 14, Cf. Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, p. 142

¹⁷ Ambrosiaster, In I Epist. ad Timoth. 5, 19, PL. 17:596b. Cf. Dillenschneider, *loc. cit.*

¹⁸ Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, p. 3

¹⁹ Jean Giblet, *I presbiteri collaboratori dell'ordine episcopale*, in *La Chiesa del Vaticano II*, Vallecchi Editore Firenze 1965, p. 887

²⁰ Suhard, *op. cit.*, p. 270

We have therefore three ministries, all of them ESSENTIAL, PRIMARY, and mutually complementary: the ministry of CULT, the ministry of pastoral regime, and the ministry of the Word. Let us examine more closely how these three functions are related to each other in category of values.

The Priesthood (*Mediation between God and the people*) imports or connotes obviously two correlative and complementary functions: one of "ascent" towards God, the other of "descent" towards men. The ministry of CULT involves these two functions, since it consists not only in offering to God the worship due to Him, but also in dispensing to men Christ's redemptive grace, specially through the sacraments. Thus such ministry of CULT by itself and in itself comprises all the aspects of the *mediatory* function: it is a *comprehensive* ministry of the *whole* priestly office.

On the other hand, the ministry of pastoral regime and that of the Word are both functions of the mediatory service in its "descent" aspect *only*, since they are directed *to the people* in order *to lead* them to God, beginning with the *proclamation of the Christian message*. Therefore these two functions are not totally *comprehensive*, but rather *expletive* or *completive* of the priestly mediatory office, and cannot thereof claim the same preeminence or primacy as the ministry of CULT possesses.

The three ministries, we repeat, are ESSENTIAL, PRIMARY, and mutually complementary in the Priesthood. But the CULTUAL function is certainly PREEMINENT, PRIMAL or PRIMORDIAL, specific, and *necessarily inherent* to the Priesthood. The ministry of the Word and that of pastoral regime, although complementary and essentially related to that of CULT, are however of *subordinate* value and *not necessarily inherent* to the Priesthood insofar as the CULTUAL function may not demand at least some of their modalities. Thus, for example, the ministry of the Word in its modality of "evangelization", and the pastoral regime in that of "care of souls" (*cura animarum*, e.g. the parochial ministry) are indeed required by the ministry of CULT as *necessarily inherent* to the Priesthood *in its fulness* (the Episcopate), and to a certain degree to the *diocesan presbyterate*. Not so, however,

in the *merely* presbyterial priesthood as that which may be possessed, say, by a monk of contemplative life.

While, on the other hand, the CULTUAL function of offering the Eucharistic Sacrifice, forgiving sins and administering certain sacraments is always so necessarily inherent to the ministerial priestly office, that it belongs as much to the Bishops as to any other presbyter either diocesan or a religious of contemplative life. It is neither an *exclusive* episcopal power, such as the pastoral jurisdiction (which in the strict sense belongs by divine right ONLY to the Bishops)²¹; nor can the same CULTUAL ministry be ever communicated to the lower ministers in the Church hierarchy, and still less to lay persons, contrary to the ministry of the Word which may be exercised by deacons, clerics, lay religious and even the faithful in general, provided they be duly invested with canonical mission.

In order to offer to God a perfect CULT, specially in the Eucharist, "source and apex of the whole work of evangelization"²² it is absolutely necessary to prepare the faithful through the ministry of the Word.²³ Let us note, in passing, that "evangelization", as commonly understood, is not synonymous to the ministry of the Word, but it refers only to that ministry when directed to the instruction and edification of the faithful. The ministry of the Word is indeed *essential* to the Priesthood; but the reason why it is thus essential lies precisely in its need and *subordination* to the ministry of CULT which therefore retains its *primacy* and *preeminence* among priestly functions. Similarly, the *raison d'être* of the ministry of pastoral regime consists, in the last analysis, in its necessity for an opportune and adequate exercise of

²¹ Suhard, op. cit., p. 270, note 63; p. 266, note 58

²² Vaticanum II, op. cit., "*Presbyterorum Ordinis*", n. 5, p. 631, where it is pointedly remarked: "In Sanctissima Eucharistia totum bonum spiritual: Ecclesiae continetur", i.e. "In the Most Holy Eucharist the whole spiritual good of the Church is contained"

²³ Through the *kerygmatic* preaching (announcement of the Christian mystery of salvation), the *mystagogic* homily (orientation toward the Eucharistic celebration), and the moral catechesis (proclamation of Christian morality). Vaticanum II, op. cit., "*Sacrosanctum Concilium*", n. 56, p. 31 declares: "The liturgy of the Word and the Eucharistic liturgy are so closely connected with each other that they form one single act of worship."

the CULTUAL function in the midst of the people of God. Because "the ministry of priests is directed and finds its summit in the sacrifice"²⁴ of the Eucharist.

Hence, "the celebration of the Mass is in reality the exercise of an essential priestly power without which priesthood does not exist; and the same cannot be truly affirmed with respect to other hierarchical powers".²⁵ Even in Christ's Priesthood, the *cultural* function²⁶ was exercised *during all His life from the first instant of His Incarnation*, although it was preeminently manifested in the Sacrifice of the Cross and gloriously consummated in His Resurrection and Ascension; while His *prophetic* ministry of the Word, and more particularly His "evangelization" as well as His *regal* ministry of "Shepherd and Bishop (overseer) of souls"²⁷ were not exerted but quite lately and occasionally. And His Apostles also were indeed sent to be trained in their future evangelical ministry before they actually became priests; but it was only after the Eucharistic ordination in the Last Supper and after they received the priestly unction on the evening of Easter²⁸ when they received mission to "preach the Gospel"²⁹ and to watch over all the flock "of which the Holy Spirit made them the overseers (Bishops) to feed the Church of God."³⁰

Our Bishops and presbyters are the heirs of the mission of the Apostles chosen to become the "foundation of a building that has Christ Himself for its main cornerstone"³¹. In the same way as those chosen Twelve were not only *Apostles* but also *High Priests* and *Shepherds*, so also our priests ought to exercise their ministry "as Teachers for doctrine, Priests for sacred CULT, and Ministers for

²⁴ Vaticanum II, op. cit., "*Presbyterorum Ordinis*", n. 2, p. 623

²⁵ "Contemplation et sacerdoce", en *Angelicum*, Roma, Oct.-Dec. 1965, p. 485

²⁶ Cf. Suhard, op. cit., pp. 235-239; Dillenschneider, op. cit., pp. 22-53; 73-80. Cf. also I Tim. 2, 5; Hebr. 3, 1; Hebr. 4, 14; Ps 109, 4.

²⁷ cf. I Petr. 2, 25

²⁸ cf. Dillenschneider, op. cit., p. 100

²⁹ Mk. 16, 15

³⁰ Acts 20, 28

³¹ cf. Ephes. 2, 20

governing."³² Such is the doctrine of the Vatican II: "Teachers for doctrine" and "Ministers for governing" are concomitant functions to that of "Priests for sacred CULT". But if to be an Apostle or evangelizer and a Shepherd or pastor may be *essential* and *primary* functions of a High Priest or Pontiff, still his PRIMAL or PRIMORDIAL ministry as a Priest is always *the sacred CULT*; and in the sacrament of the presbyterate the PRIMAL or PRIMORDIAL power is that of "offering the Sacrifice and forgiving sins".³³

The traditional doctrine of the Church has always underscored the close relationship that links the priesthood to the Sacrifice of the Mass. And the Vatican II ratifies this doctrine making particular reference to the teaching of the Tridentine Council and of Pius XII.³⁴ The Bishop, declares the Vatican II, "is the steward of the grace of the supreme priesthood SPECIALLY (*"praesertim"*) in the Eucharist which he offers or causes to be offered, and by which the Church continually lives and grows";³⁵ and the presbyters "partakers on their level of ministry, of the function of Christ, the sole Mediator (I Tim. 2, 5), exercise their sacred function ABOVE ALL (*"maxime"*) in the Eucharistic CULT".³⁶

Having settled with precision the fundamental concepts, we are now ready for an accurate answer to the question: "In the Presbyterate, what is more important or essential, *cult* or *evangelization*?"

³² Vaticanum II, op. cit., "*Lumen Gentium*", n. 20, p. 128

³³ Ibid., "*Presbyterorum Ordinis*", n. 2, pp. 621-622. Cf. Concilium Tridentinum, Sess. XXIII, cap. 1 et can. 1: ap. Denz. 957 et 961 (1764 et 1771)

³⁴ Ibid., "*Lumen Gentium*", n. 28, p. 146, footnote 67: Cf. Conc. Trid., Sess. 22: Denz. 940 (1743); Pius XII, Litt. Encycl. *Mediator Dei*, 20 nov. 1947: AAS 39 (1947), p. 553: Denz. 2300 (3850)

³⁵ Vaticanum II, op. cit., "*Lumen Gentium*", n. 26, p. 141

³⁶ Ibid., "*Lumen Gentium*", n. 28, p. 146. It is to be noted that Vatican II in speaking of the ministries of Bishops and presbyters, mentions in the "first" place the ministry of the Word (see e.g. "*Presbyterorum Ordinis*", n. 4, p. 627 where it is said: "*primum habent officium evangelizandi*"). The reason is obvious: preaching or the proclamation of the evangelical message should come *first* with priority of time on account of its basic need as an *apostolic* function. But as a *priestly* function the ministry of CULT is given the PRIMARY by the same Vatican II, for instance, when in "*Lumen Gentium*", n. 21, p. 130 it affirms that "episcopal consecration, TOGETHER

We should firstly remark that the question proposed in that way is laden with ambiguity. From the start we can notice that in the same breath two phrases are used, *what is more important* and *what is essential*, as if they were equivalent, when for sure they are not synonymous. *Cult* and *evangelization* may be *essential* functions of the Presbyterate, and nevertheless they do not actually have the same importance in the category of values, preeminence or preference. If it is asked what is more *essential* in a human being, *body* or *soul*, everybody will agree that both are equally *essential*, but no one will reasonably dare to contend that the *body* should be appraised or valued as highly as the *soul*; but on the contrary, all are bound to admit that the *body*, though not anything accidental, secondary or accessory to men, ought to be subject or subordinated to the *soul*. Similarly, we all agree that *faith*, *hope* and *charity* are essential virtues to any real Christian life. Still more, in certain sense, *faith* should be considered the *first* in order of time, since it is the basis of the other two virtues which cannot exist without faith: "It is faith that brings life to the just man",³⁷ and "it is impossible to please God without faith",³⁸ This notwithstanding, it is doubtless that *charity* holds the preeminent, primal or primordial place in order of values, since the other virtues are in such a way subordinated to charity that without this they are not of much avail: "demons have belief and they tremble with fear";³⁹ "I may have faith in its fullness, yet if I lack charity I count for nothing";⁴⁰ "in short, these are three things that last, faith, hope and charity; but the GREATEST of them all is *charity*."⁴¹

On the other hand, to speak of "evangelization" in the question under our study, as if it were an *essential* function of the Presbyterate is to forget that in a Presbyter we can find two different realities that

WITH THE OFFICE OF SANCTIFYING, *also confers the office of teaching and of governing.*"

³⁷ Rom. 1,17; Gal. 3,11; Heb. 10,38; Hab. 2,4.

³⁸ Hebr. 11,6

³⁹ Jas. 2,19

⁴⁰ I Cor. 13,2

⁴¹ I Cor. 13,13

ought not to be identified with each other, though usually they are confused with one another: the *Priest*-clergyman and the *Presbyter*-clergyman; in other words, the Presbyter qua Priest, and the Presbyter qua Minister: the former, i.e., the Presbyter insofar as *simply a Priest*, truly participating in Christ's Priesthood by virtue of the Holy Order he received—and nothing else; and the latter, i.e., the Presbyter insofar as a Priest “of second dignity” or “of lesser order” in relation to the Episcopate.⁴² In this last sense, the Presbyter does not only “participate—as any other priest does—in the grace of the Bishops’ office, through Christ, the Eternal and Unique Mediator”,⁴³ but is furthermore an immediate “provident cooperator with the episcopal order, its (direct) aid and instrument called to serve the people of God”⁴⁴ in the pastoral field.

In both senses, the Presbyters, “although they do not possess the highest degree of the Pontificate and although they are dependent on the Bishops in the exercise of their power, nevertheless are united with the Bishops in sacerdotal dignity. By the power of the sacrament of Holy Order they are consecrated to preach the Gospel and shepherd the faithful and *to celebrate divine cult* as true priests of the New Testament. . . . But they exercise their sacred ministry ABOVE ALL (“maxime”) in the Eucharistic CULT”.⁴⁵ In short, all Presbyters possess at least *radically* and exercise *essentially* the three *primary* services of the Catholic Priesthood: the ministry of the Word, that of pastoral regime, and ABOVE ALL, *primordially* and *preeminently* that of DIVINE CULT.

⁴² According to ancient Roman *Sacramentaries* presbyters are priests “*secundae dignitatis, minoris ordinis, secundi praedicatoris*”; the presbyterate is “*secundi meriti munus*.” In the first centuries of the Church, the presbyter was called “*sacerdos secundi ordinis*”, while the Bishop was simply referred to as “*sacerdos*.” (Cf. Clement Dillenschneider, *Christ the One Priest and We His Priests*, B. Herder Book Co., 1964, Vol. I, pp. 113; 107)

⁴³ Sacrosanctum Oecumenicum Concilium Vaticanum II, *Constitutiones, Decreta, Declamationes*, Libr. Editr. Vatic 1966: “*Lumen Gentium*” n. 41, pp. 167-168

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, loc. cit. n. 28, p. 147

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, loc. cit. n. 28, p. 146

This last, the ministry of CULT, as well as the other two *insofar as related and subordinated to the CULT*,⁴⁶ are essentially exercised by *any Presbyter* on account of his own priesthood, i.e., as a *priest* that he is—and nothing more—, as it happens in the case of a monk of contemplative life, say, a trappist or carthusian priest. On the other hand, the ministry of the Word *in its modality* of missionary preaching, and the ministry of pastoral regime *insofar as involving the care of souls*, that is, the ministries that could well be included under the name of “evangelization” (in the usual meaning of apostolate of “exterior” and “public” activities) are *essentially* exercised as a normal functions of their state of life, *only* by priests who are diocesan Presbyters or religious of active life; and NOT indeed by priests who are religious of contemplative life.

Putting it in another way: for a Presbyter *as a priest* that he is, and regardless of any other office he may have due to his particular vocation or hierarchical mission, the ministry of CULT is the ONLY ONE ESSENTIAL; the “evangelization” (in the usual sense of the word) is NOT ESSENTIAL at all. On the contrary, for the *Presbyter*, as a priest who is also a pastor of souls “partaker of the Bishop’s office”, the CULTUAL function and the EVANGELIZATION are *both* equally *essential* and *primary*, although the first holds still its PRIMACY of value and PREEMINENCE of importance over the second.

“Ordination, and this alone, makes the *priest*; the canonical mission (or provision of office) is what really makes the *presbyter*: canon 109 of the Code seems to point this out. The Presbyterate is organically rooted in the Priesthood, so that the Hierarchy presupposes and includes the priestly power; but the reality involved by the Hierarchy is more ample. The Council of Trent seems to authorize such a distinction between *priesthood* and *presbyterate*. If we examine attentively canons 1-2 of Sess. XXIII and compare them with the following canons 6-7, we may notice that when the Council speaks of the presbyter in his relation with the Eucharist—a fundamental relation, by the way, according

⁴⁶ The ministry of the Word by the liturgy of the Word in the Mass, administration of sacraments and Divine Office; and the ministry of governing by the priests’ office of *presiding* the Christian community in any liturgical function.

to the same Council—the name “priest” is used; while when the priest is placed in relation to the hierarchy, he is called “presbyter”.⁴⁷

In conclusion we must affirm that under whatever aspect we may consider the Presbyterate, the ministry of CULT remains *always*, not only an *essential* and *primary*, but its *preeminent*, *primal* or *primordial* function. And while EVANGELIZATION is in *most cases* an *essential* and *primary* function, nevertheless this function *never* holds the *primacy* over CULT. In some cases (as those mentioned above) of priests who by their vocation are totally removed from all pastoral functions, EVANGELIZATION is NOT even an ESSENTIAL, and still more a PRIMARY function.

Hence, by no means can we say that “evangelization” should be placed “at the same level as CULT” so that in the Presbyterate “the apostolic dimension should amount as much as the cultural function”, although we may admit that both demand an “identical obligatory commitment”.⁴⁸ As a matter of fact “the ministry of priests BEGINS with the evangelical proclamation, but *derives its force and efficacy* from Sacrifice of Christ which is offered through their hands in the name of the whole Church. It is to this Sacrifice that *is directed* and in it *is consummated* the ministry of Presbyters.”⁴⁹

In saying this we do not mean to depreciate in the least the apostolic mission of *every priest*. The most obscure and forgotten priest in the world must be essentially a first class apostle and missionary even if all he could do is to offer his Mass and pray his Office. More. Even when due to sickness, invalidism or other constraining predicaments of his state of life he may be deprived of the exercise of the ministry of public CULT and of evangelization, still even solely with the holiness of his priestly life, sacrifices and private prayers, through the priestly sacramental “character” he possesses, he may keep on exercising a veritable apostolate exceedingly superior to that of any other lay apostles.

⁴⁷ “*Contemplation et sacerdoce*” in *Angelicum*, Roma, Oct.-Dec. 1965, pp. 486-487, footnote 30. Cf. also Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-118, footnote 58.

⁴⁸ Cf. Jose Maria Burgos, *Tres Preguntas sobre el Presbiterado*, in *Incunabile*, Madrid, Septiembre 1968, p. 19.

⁴⁹ Vaticanum II, *op. cit.*, “*Presbyterorum Ordinis*”, n. 2. p. 623.

We do not, then, underrate in any way the essential value and the imperative demands of a contemporary, bold and dynamic apostolic commitment which— let us not forget it— necessarily and spontaneously springs from a CULTUAL ministry performed with true piety and deep, solid interior life.⁵⁰ Vatican II has urgently insisted on the pastoral services so necessary to fulfill the mission of the Church in our modern world so far removed from God and so much engrossed and puffed up with its technology. But this pastoral outlook of Vatican II should never be taken as a pretext to justify in any way the “heresy of action”, so openly condemned by Pius XI and Pius XII.⁵¹ It should never be misinterpreted so as to belittle the preeminent value of the ministry of CULT over the exterior works of apostolate. It should never decry the authentic type of a “priestly priest”⁵² who never feels more deeply his own priesthood than when celebrating the Mass, administering the sacraments, praying the Office and preaching the Gospel in the church. It should never propose as the ideal to be followed in our days the fascinating type of a clergyman who tries to live out his priesthood better by devoting an unavoidable minimum to the cultural functions in order to engage in feverish activities undertaken at times with utter disregard of hierarchical coordination, and not rarely better left to lay apostles as more proper of their secular field.⁵³

If the sublime ideal of the cultural priestly function fades away, should we wonder at the alarming crisis of vocations among our youth? Indeed, they see in the priesthood nothing but an apostolic ministry or service which can be more efficaciously performed by laymen. Today it seems meaningless to become “Christ’s servants and stewards of God’s mysteries”,⁵⁴ “chosen from among men and made representatives of men

⁵⁰ Cf. Dom. J. B. Chautard, *L'Âme de tout Apostolat*

⁵¹ Cf. Encyclicals “*Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*” and “*Mente Nostrae*.”

⁵² This is an allusion to the article of Father John Groust, *The ‘Priestly Priest*, Persat!, published in *The Priest*, Our Sunday Visitor Inc. Huntington, Indiana, August 1967, vol. 23/No. 8, pp. 598-601. We beg to disagree with the author in many points.

⁵³ Cf. Jean Guittou, *The Priest of Tomorrow*, in *Christ to the World* Vol. XII (1967), No. 2, pp. 155-156.

⁵⁴ I Cor. 4.1

in their dealings with God to offer gifts and sacrifices in expiation of sins".⁵⁵ If the cultural ministry be regarded now as a hindrance to the effectivity of other humanitarian endeavors, we should not wonder at certain proposals advanced for a "part-time" priestly ministry that would allow more time for secular activities...and "necessary leisure"(!); we should not wonder at the sad fact that in some places churches are found "closed" and without cult during ordinary weekdays; and other similar aberrations.

Fourteen years ago Cardinal Montini (now Pope Paul VI) said to his priests of Milan: "To consecrate bread and wine, to offer the holy Eucharist to souls, to focus the piety of the faithful at the altar; to receive the humble confidences of penitent souls in order to return to them God's grace and peace; to foster prayer among the Christian people educating them in the sacred CULT: all that you could do to render the divine CULT worthy, meaningful, accurate and profound shall be wisely fruitful. Hence the careful attention and love for LITURGY (public worship) ought to be reckoned, not only as FUNDAMENTAL duties in your priestly life, but also as most efficacious and forceful means of approaching, winning and sanctifying men."⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Hebr. 5,1

⁵⁶ Cf. Giovanni B. Montini, *Sacerdocio Católico*, Ed. Sigueme, Salamanca 1965, p. 24.