

erspective, to begin from the starting point of faith itself, and justify rationally the interest that the Christian nonetheless attaches to the contingent realities of this world. Even more, it will be necessary to justify the obligation that binds man, precisely by reason of his faith and his hope, to work in all domains for the temporal improvement of humanity.

Two interrelated problems, as we see. For the theologian, the two tasks are sharply distinct, but at the same time tightly interwoven. If he takes them in their purest logic, he will start by seeking, in view of the first, to demonstrate to the believer that he cannot avoid the problem of his final destiny; from here he will proceed to reveal to him the basic truths—and reveal them in such a manner that he will be able in advance to prepare himself for hearing the Good News.⁹ In view of the second task, however, being now by the side of a Christian, he will exert himself to legitimate in his eyes the value of things of earth and of time, and their value especially in light of the supernatural vocation that has been revealed to him, of the supernatural life which he has received as a gift in Christ, and that eternity to which he aspires. Even more, the theologian will have to show that the Christian vocation is the final reason—and the only fully satisfying one—of the *navitas humana*, that is to say the terrestrial activity of man, and of the individual and collective efforts which, beyond the fulfillment of immediate necessities, must be carried through in view of a natural order.¹⁰

In fact, however, the progressions of the spirit are never so rectilinear. If they are abstractly distinct and of opposite meanings, our two problems nonetheless intersect with each other. They find themselves perpetually imbricated one in the other, and it is only for the clarity of analysis that, simplifying things, we envisage them here, to a certain extent, as distinct.*—Translated by *Susan Clements* □

It is thus a question of "manifesting, by a reflection on human existence, ontological pre-comprehension of what the Christian message says, or of going out 'the relationship between human existence and the Christian message considered as a calling': thus is constituted an understanding of the possibility and of the affinity of faith." Cf. Henri Bouillard, "Croire et comprendre" in *Mythe et Foi*, 1966: 300.

⁹Cf. *Gaudium et spes*, no. 34.

¹⁰This article has been translated from Henri de Lubac, *Athéisme et sens de l'homme* (Paris: Cerf, 1968), 91-96.

Notes and Comments

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS OF PRIESTHOOD

Preface:

Contemporary questions

Subsequent to the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic image of priesthood, which had been defined by the Council of Trent and given fresh vigor as a result of renewed attention to the witness of Sacred Scripture at Vatican II, passed into a state of crisis. The large number of those who turned away from the priesthood and the great decrease in priestly vocations in many countries certainly cannot be explained solely on theological grounds. However, causes having their origin outside the Church would not have had such an impact unless the theological foundations of priestly ministry had reached a critical point for many priests and young people. In the new cultural situation which developed after the Council, the old arguments of the Reformation of the sixteenth century, together with new ones of modern biblical exegesis—still nourished by the presuppositions of the Reformation—acquired a certain persuasiveness; Catholic theology was unable to counter these with adequate responses.

What are these arguments? First of all (in giving an answer to this ques-

tion by laying out the arguments—material in parentheses added, Ed.), a consideration having to do with terminology should be recalled. In its earliest days the Church described its ministries in language that was profane and not sacred. There is no visible continuity of these ministries with the priesthood of the Mosaic law.

For a long time these ministries were but little defined and characterized by great multiplicity as regards their names and forms. Only toward the end of the first century did they find fairly clear forms and content, although the process of their formation had not yet ended. This, however, is very important: there is nowhere explicit indication of cultic service on the part of these ministries. They are never explicitly connected with celebration of the Eucharist. Preaching of the Gospel stands out as the principal charge, together with various other offices in relation to the life of the Christian community.

From this a theory derives to the effect that the ministries of the nascent church were at that time considered only in terms of function and not sacred character. To these considerations is added spontaneously a certain theory maintaining that Christian faith intended to make the world profane and completely remove all that is sacred. This theory wishes to develop fully and apply the opinions of Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer regarding the opposition between faith and religion. Not infrequently by way of biblical foundation one finds proposed the words from the Letter to the Hebrews in which Jesus is said to have suffered outside the gate and to in-

vite us to go out to him (Heb. 13: 13ff). Contrary to the true meaning of those words, which express a profound theology of the Cross, it is now said: In the moment of the death of Jesus the veil of the temple was rent asunder. There is no longer a separation between temple and world, between the sacred and profane. Christ's death in the midst of the world shows us that love exercised in the midst of life is the only liturgy which can exist in the era of the New Testament.

Such opinions to a certain extent presuppose hermeneutical decisions worked out at the time of the Protestant Reformation and give it new strength. A fundamental key for a new reading of Scripture came alive during that period; it involves opposition between law and Gospel and derives from Pauline theology. The law which has been abolished is set over against the Gospel. The category of law includes priesthood and cult (sacrifice). The Gospel is said to find expression in prophetic figures and in the preaching of the word.

For this reason the categories of law, priesthood, sacrifice, and cult took on a negative connotation—this because they would lead the human being to the letter that kills and to works which cannot justify. The essence of the Gospel, on the contrary, would consist in the hearing of the word and in faith, which alone can justify a human being. Therefore it is the figures of prophet and preaching which correspond to the Gospel, while priesthood would belong to the law and was to have been totally excluded from the Church of the New Testament.

This way of looking at things

deeply influenced the path taken by modern exegesis and is very widespread. From it, the terminological considerations which were recalled above received their force. Catholic theology, which accepted modern exegesis after the Council without a great deal of dispute and which was unaware of the hermeneutical key of that exegesis, was unable to respond to the questions which were to arise from that source. Thus the crisis arose of which we spoke at the outset.

In the meantime the work of theologians has begun to acquire a more balanced view of these questions. One should not forget that already in the sixteenth century, after the initial opposition, the beginnings of a new equilibrium appeared. For Protestants, ordination to the ministry of preaching after a short while came to be understood as having a certain analogy with a sacrament. Similarly, the connection of the ministry of preaching with that of celebration of the Eucharist made its appearance once again. Although the term *priesthood* was avoided in the tradition of the confessions which had their origin in the Reformation, in various ways on the basis of the New Testament the ministry of the word was restored as a sacrament.

So also ecumenical dialogue has opened the way to the possibility of defining better the hermeneutical key to a correct understanding of Sacred Scripture. It has also pointed out the path by which the foundations of Catholic teaching regarding the priesthood may present themselves in a new way. In this sense I should like to show briefly how this teaching is reflected by the testimony of Scripture.

1. Foundation of the ministry of the New Testament: The apostolate as a sharing in Christ's mission

It is necessary to recognize the newness of the New Testament, to understand the Gospel as Gospel and to learn to see correctly as well the unity of the history of salvation, which progresses in the old and new covenant. Having become the visible, unifying center of God's action with us, Christ's message and works in their newness bring to completeness what has gone before them. If we look for the true newness of the New Testament, Christ himself stands before us.

This newness does not consist so much in ideas or thoughts; this newness is a person: God, who becomes a human being and draws humans to himself. The question asking what the priesthood of the New Testament is should start with Christology. The so-called liberal age was accustomed to interpret Christ's image out of its own proper presuppositions. According to its interpretation, Jesus opposed a pure ethos to a ritually deformed religion; to a communitarian and collective religion he opposed the liberty and responsibility of the individual human person. Depicted as a great ethical teacher, he frees the human being from the chains of cult and ritual and places that human alone in his or her conscience without other mediation before God.

In the second half of our century such opinions were joined with others coming from Karl Marx. Christ is now described as a rebel who sets himself in opposition to the enslaving power of institutions and dies in

the struggle—especially against the presumption of priests. He is to be met in this way as the liberator of the poor from the oppression of the rich, one who wills to set up a "kingdom"; that is, a new society of human beings who are free and equal.

The image of Christ that one encounters in the Bible is very different indeed! It is clear that in this context only those elements can be treated which are directly relevant to our problem. The essential feature in the image of Christ which is handed down by the New Testament writings consists in his unique relation with God. Jesus knows he has a mission directed by God, whose authority is at work in him (cf. Mt. 7:29; 21:23; Mk. 1:27; 11:28; Lk. 20:2; 24:19; etc.). He brings a message which he received from the Father; he is "sent" with a task entrusted to him by the Father.

The evangelist John illustrates very clearly this theme of the "mission" of the Son proceeding from the Father. But it is ever present as well in the so-called synoptic Gospels. The "paradoxical" aspect of this mission comes out with striking clarity in John's formula, which was interpreted in such depth by Augustine: My teaching is not mine (7:16). If the Father is left out, Jesus has nothing that is his own. His teaching is not his own because even he is not his own. Rather in his entire existence as Son he is from the Father and to the Father. But for the same reason, because he has nothing that is his own, all that belongs to the Father is his: "The Father and I are one" (10:30). Returning his entire existence and action to the Father, he did not seek his own will (3:30). This makes him credible for the fact that the Fa-

ther's word manifests itself lucidly in him. Here the mystery of the divine Trinity, which is the exemplar of our existence as well, shines forth in its splendor.

Only from this Christological center can the ministry of the apostles, in which the priesthood of Christ's Church had its origin, be understood. In the beginning of his ways Jesus created a new figure of twelve chosen men (*virorum*), which after his resurrection is continued in the ministry of those who are apostles; that is, "sent." For our question, it is important to recall that Jesus gave his power to the apostles in such a way that he established their ministry as a continuation of his own mission. "Whoever receives you receives me," he says to the Twelve (Mt. 10:40; cf. Lk. 10:16; Jn. 13:10). Many other texts in which Jesus gives his power to disciples can be cited here: Matthew 9:8; 10:1; 21:23; Mark 6:7; 13:34; Luke 4:6; 9:1; 10:19. The continuation of the ministry of Jesus and the apostles is again made very clear in the fourth Gospel: "As the Father has sent me, I also send you" (20:21, cf. 13:20; 17:18).

The seriousness of this assertion is seen clearly if we recall what was said above about the structure of the mission of Jesus. As was noted, Jesus himself is sent in the totality of his person; more yet, he is mission as well as relation from and to the Father. In this light one sees the great import of the parallelism contained in the texts: "The Son can do nothing of himself" (Jn. 5:19, 30) and "without me you can do nothing" (Jn. 15:5).

This "nothing" which the apostles share with Jesus expresses at one

and the same time the power and weakness of the apostolic ministry. Of themselves, on their own resources, they can do nothing that apostles ought to do. How on their own could they say, "Your sins are forgiven you"? How could they say, "This is my body"? How could they impose hands and say, "Receive the Holy Spirit"? Not one of these things which make up apostolic activity happens by virtue of their proper authority. But in this expropriation of their own resources is their communion with Jesus, who is wholly from the Father: with him all things, without him nothing.

Their "total inability" draws them into a community of mission with Jesus. A ministry of such a sort, in which the human being on the basis of divine communication acts and gives what can never be given or done on the basis of human resources, is in the Church's tradition called a *sacrament*. If in its usage the Church calls ordination to the ministry of priesthood a *sacrament*, this is the meaning that is intended: this human being is in no way performing works which issue from natural ability or talent, which are especially satisfying or which offer some gain.

On the contrary, one receiving the sacrament is sent to give what one cannot give on the basis of natural resources or powers, to act in the person of Someone else and be his living organ. Furthermore, no human being can declare himself to be a priest; in addition no community can by its decrees promote a human being to this ministry. It can only be received by a sacrament, which is God's. A mission can be received only from the Sender, from Christ in his sacrament, by which someone

becomes Christ's voice and hands in the world.

Nevertheless this gift of self, this renunciation and forgetting of oneself do not destroy a human being but rather lead to true human maturity. That is because they assimilate the human being to the Trinitarian mystery and produce the living image in which we were created. Since we are created in the image of the Trinity, he who loses himself will find himself.

With these words we have already in a way anticipated something. We have as well reached conclusions of great importance. According to the Gospels, Christ himself gave the apostles the essential structure of his own mission: He empowers them and joins them to his power. This union with the Lord, in which a human being receives power to do what he cannot do, is called a *sacrament*.

A new mission created in the election of twelve men (*virorum*) has a nature which is sacramental. This structure, as a result, flows from the center of the biblical message. Clearly this ministry, created by Christ, is something quite new, in no way taking its origin from the Old Testament, but arising from the new power of Jesus Christ. The sacramental ministry of the Church expresses the newness of Jesus Christ as well as his presence in all of history.

2. Apostolic succession (*Successio apostolorum*):

After this brief treatment of the origin and nucleus of the new ministry founded in Christ, we pose the question, How was this received in the apostolic age? And especially, How

does the transition take place between that age and the time after the apostles? Or in other words, How does the mirror of the New Testament reflect apostolic succession (*successio apostolorum*), which after the Christological foundation constitutes the second column for the Catholic doctrine concerning the priesthood of the New Testament?

We can treat the first question briefly, because the witness of St. Paul on the matter is so persuasive. With great clarity his vision of the office of apostle comes through in the celebrated assertion from the Second Letter to the Corinthians: "So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20). God makes appeal through the apostle, who is Christ's legate. As appears clearly in this text, the nature of the apostolic ministry is what we earlier recognized as constituting the essence of a "sacrament." This structure of speech and action not in one's name, but by God's authority, appears again where Paul says, "Let us conduct ourselves as God's ministers" (2 Cor. 6:4).

The substance of apostolic ministry is also summarized where Paul proclaims that "the ministry of reconciliation" has been entrusted to him (2 Cor. 5:18). Reconciliation with God comes from the Cross of Christ and therefore has a "sacramental" nature. Paul supposes the human being lives "alienated" from self (Eph. 2:12). Only by union with the crucified love of Jesus Christ can this alienation of the human being from God and self be overcome; only so can the human being find "reconciliation."

This process of reconciliation occurs on Christ's Cross. As an event of history, the death of Christ is past; it becomes present for us in "sacrament." In his First Letter to the Corinthians the apostle shows the great importance which the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist have in this process, together with the word of reconciliation, which gives rise to faith and generates us again.

When all these things are taken into consideration, it is clear that in the apostolic writings the apostolic ministry is clearly distinguished from the gifts that are the common endowment of Christian existence. With great persuasiveness this specific difference appears as well when Paul in the First Letter to the Corinthians writes: "This is the way one should regard us, as ministers of Christ and dispensers of God's mysteries" (4:1). From this specific difference flows the apostle's authority with regard to the community, which occasionally he expresses even in strong language, as for example when he asks, "Shall I come to you with a rod or in love and the spirit of meekness?" (4:21). On the basis of this authority he also has recourse to excommunication "so his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord Jesus" (5:5). The depiction of the apostle in this way has no nexus with that "pneumatic anarchy" which in our day certain theologians would derive as the true nature of the Church from the First Letter to the Corinthians.

From our analysis it is clear that the witness of St. Paul regarding the apostolic ministry squares with what we have already found in the Gospels. In the responsibility of the "ministers of the New Testament" (2

Cor. 3:6) of which he speaks, we see the same sacramental structure which is manifested to us by the words of the Lord: The apostle acts not out of his own authority but Christ's, not as a member of the community, but as over against the community and addressing it in Christ's name.

This dialogical structure belongs to the essence of revelation. Faith is not something thought up by a human being, who does not make himself or herself a Christian by meditation or upright morals. Conversion to the faith always has its source from without; it is a gift which always comes from another, from Christ, who comes to meet us. The structure of Christian faith is imperilled where this "divine factor from without" (*extra divinum*) is obscured.

A community which would wish to make itself a church or ecclesial community would destroy the dialogical mystery of revelation and gift of grace, which always comes from "another," from without. In all the sacraments God's gift and the human being receiving that gift stand opposite each other. The same structure holds as well with regard to God's word; faith comes not from reading but from hearing; the preaching of the word by the one who has been sent to preach belongs to the structure of the act of faith.

We move now to our second question: whether this ministry of the apostles is continued after their death in "apostolic succession" or whether their office is something unique, which ceases with their deaths. Looking for an answer to this very disputed question, we must first of all say that in the early days of the nascent Church the meaning of the

word *apostle* was somewhat broader. Only in the theology of St. Luke, toward the end of the first Christian generation, is this title reserved for the twelve men chosen by the Lord. Other ministries of various kinds which are found at that time do not yet have a clear, definitive form. Certain ministries appear which extend beyond the boundaries of a local community; for example, prophets and teachers. On the other hand, there are offices which serve the local church. Among Christians coming from the Jewish tradition they are called *presbyters*, while for the church which had its origin from pagans we find "overseers (*episcopos*) and deacons" first in the Letter to the Philippians (1:1).

Gradually, from these beginnings, a structure of ministries which is clear and definite grows and at the end of the apostolic age reaches its first maturity. Special witness to this maturation are two remarkable texts of the New Testament, about which I should like to speak briefly. First we should interpret the discourse of St. Paul to the presbyters of Asia Minor in Miletus. In the narration of St. Luke it appears as the "testament" of the apostle. In the words handed down here the principle of apostolic succession is persuasively established. According to the tradition of St. Luke, the apostle says, "Take heed for yourselves and the whole flock in which the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to rule the church of God which he won by his blood" (Acts 20:26).

A number of different things deserve consideration here. First, two notions which are still distinct are made equivalent; namely, *presbyter*

and overseer (*episcopus*). The traditions of Christians coming from among the Jews as well as from among the pagans coalesce and are explained as the unique ministry of apostolic succession.

It is the Holy Spirit who introduces one into this ministry, which comes in no way from delegation on the part of the community but is the gift of the Lord, who "established overseers." Because it is conferred by the Spirit it has the dignity of sacrament. The apostolic office of shepherding Christ's flock is thereby continued.

But the apostolic structure leads back to the mystery of Christ, the true shepherd, who "won" the flock "with his blood." In these words not only do the traditions of Christians who came from among the Jews and those of other Christians from among the pagans coalesce, but what is more and of greater import, the ministry of presbyter and overseer with regard to their spiritual essence appears the same as the ministry of an apostle.

St. Luke distinguishes this essential identity, in which the principle of apostolic succession consists, from a difference that is formal: while he designates only the twelve with the title of *apostle*, the unique nature of origin is distinguished from the permanent nature of succession. In this sense the ministry of presbyters and overseers is different from the mission of the Twelve Apostles. Presbyters-overseers are successors, not apostles. To the structure of revelation and the Church belong both a "once" and an "always." The

power Christ gave to reconcile, shepherd, and teach is continued unchanged in successors, but they are true successors only if "they per-

severe in the teaching of the apostles" (Acts 2:42).

The same principles found in St. Paul's discourse at Miletus are proposed in the reflecting mirror of presbyters in the First Letter of Peter (5:1-4): "So I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and 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. And when the chief Shepherd is manifested, you will obtain the unfading crown of glory."

Already in the first words of this apostolic admonition we find expression of the identity of the apostolic and presbyteral ministry. This is of great importance; the apostle calls himself a fellow elder (*conpresbyterum*) and in this way connects theologically the ministry of apostles and presbyters. The theology of the apostolate—which we considered in the first part—is here transferred to the presbyterate, and in this way the genuine theology of the New Testament about the priesthood is born. The apostle, designating himself a fellow presbyter with the presbyters, acknowledges them to be constituted in the same ministry and thus manifestly establishes the principle of apostolic succession.

Another aspect of great significance can be noted in this brief text. As in the discourse at Miletus, of which we have spoken above, so also here the nature of the apostolic charge is summarized in the word *pascite* (tend the flock), from the image of shepherd. The importance of

this expression is made clear by the fact that the apostle at the end of the second chapter (2:25) describes the Lord as the "Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."

Here in Chapter Five the apostle has recourse to the same way of speaking when he calls Christ the chief Shepherd. Presupposing the linguistic meaning of the term *episcopus*, i.e., an overseer who presides and gives watchful direction, he sees that this meaning is synonymous with the word *pastore* (shepherd). In this way, the originally profane word *episcopus* begins to designate Christ the Shepherd; a new Christian faith and a new "sacral character" of Christian faith begin to manifest themselves. As the term *conpresbyterus* (fellow presbyter) joins the apostles and their successors, so the word *episcopus* (overseer) refers to these successors to Christ and reveals the Christological foundation of episcopal and presbyteral ministry.

It follows that at the end of the apostolic era there is in the writings of the New Testament an explicit theology of the priesthood of the New Testament, one that is given to the Church in trust and that constitutes an irreplaceable nucleus of all theology of the Christian priesthood over the course of time.

3. The common and particular priesthood—Old and New Testament

At the close of our reflections we must treat the relation between this new priestly service resulting from Christ's mission and the priesthood shared by all the faithful. In the New

Testament writings the notion of this shared priesthood is proposed in two places, i.e., in the ancient baptismal catechesis which we find in the second chapter of the First Letter of St. Peter and in the greeting to the seven churches at the beginning of John's Apocalypse (1 Pt. 2:9; Apoc. 1:6). The language employed in these texts with regard to the shared common priesthood derives from Exodus (19:6). There it belongs to the discourse in which God, speaking with Moses on Mount Sinai, offers a covenant with the people of Israel that they may be the Lord's inheritance and become a "priestly kingdom" in the midst of the gentiles. As the chosen people, they must be a place of true adoration and at the same time priesthood and temple for the world.

The baptismal catechesis handed down in the Letter of St. Peter transfers to the baptized this call of the people of the old covenant. In this way it indicates that through baptism Christians share in the privileges of God's people. What occurred on Mount Sinai becomes present in a new way in the sacrament of baptism. Christ's Church in its totality is a living temple where God dwells and is rightly adored. Through the Church's ministry, the world is gathered together for the adoration of the true God.

St. Paul says the same thing in other words in his Letter to the Romans, where he speaks as the "minister (*leitourgon*) of Christ Jesus to the gentiles in performing the priestly service (*hierourgounta*) of the Gospel of God so that the offering (*he prosphora*) of the gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:16).

Clearly, therefore, the common priesthood of the baptized, which follows from their entrance into the history of God's covenant begun on Sinai and renewed on Christ's cross, is in no way opposed to the ministerial priesthood just as the common priesthood of the people of Israel is never opposed to its priestly orders. From these considerations it is also apparent in what sense this ministry of the succession of the apostles is something truly new and in what sense this Christian newness receives into itself anticipatory figures of the Old Testament. On the one hand, the apostolic ministry of the Church is new because of the newness of Christ, from whose words, life, and death this ministry flows. On the other hand, Christ, who makes all things new, at the same time fulfills all the figures by which history was moving toward him.

For this reason the new priesthood of the apostles of Jesus Christ and of their successors bears in itself all that was contained prophetically in the Old Testament. This is clear when we consider the formula which John Colson, after a very careful analysis of the sources, uses to define the nature of the Old Testament priesthood: "The essential function of *kohanim* (*hiereis*) is this: to keep the people conscious of their priestly nature so that they may live correspondingly and glorify God in all their existence." It is evident how close this formula is to the words of St. Paul cited above. But the new missionary drive proper to the Christian priesthood follows from the fact that on his Cross Christ is the one "breaking down the dividing wall of hostility" (Eph. 2:14) and bringing close in his blood those who were

once far off (Eph. 2:13). Therefore the priesthood of the New Testament works to the end that the whole world be made a temple and sacrifice acceptable to God so that finally God may be all in all (cf. 1 Cor. 15:28).

4. *Conclusions regarding priestly ministry today*

How these biblical foundations of priestly ministry should be applied to priestly formation in present-day circumstances is up to the Synod to discuss. I cannot and do not wish to anticipate its conclusions. I dare to propose only some general indications, which will be brief.

The New Testament priesthood, which appeared first in the apostles, has been seen to presuppose true communion with the mission of Jesus Christ. One who becomes a priest is implanted in his mission. As a result a deep, personal relation with Christ is fundamental for priestly life and ministry. All formation for the priesthood should be conducive to fostering that relation.

A presbyter ought to be a human being who knows Jesus intimately, if he has met him and learned to love him. Therefore a presbyter should be a human being of prayer, one who is deeply "spiritual." Without sound spiritual substance, he will not persevere in his ministry. He should also learn from the mystery of Christ not to seek himself in his life or his own advancement. He should learn to lay down his life for Christ and his flock.

Such a way of living is opposed to our natural inclination, but little by little it becomes clear that the one who is truly free is the one capable

of forgetting self. Living for Christ leads to the discovery that the one who sows and the one who reaps are not the same (cf. Jn. 4:36). There is no need to seek success so as to be able to put trust in oneself. The one who works for the Lord leaves the outcome up to the Lord and with joyful heart casts his cares in the Lord's hands. When we seek our own success, priesthood begins to appear an exertion beyond our strength and its burdens become too heavy for our shoulders. But in faith Christ supports us and out of union with him comes unshakable joy, flowing from the victory of the One who has conquered the world (Jn. 16:33) and is with us to the end of the world (Mt. 28:20).

From intimate communion with Christ there arises spontaneously as well a share in his love for human beings, in his will to save them and to bring them assistance. One whose inner self knows Christ wishes to communicate also to others the personally experienced joy of redemption in the Lord. Pastoral work flows from this communion of love; even in trying circumstances it is nourished by this motivation and fulfills life.

The one who loves wishes to know. True love of Christ as a result expresses itself in the wish to know him and everything that has to do with him. Since love of Christ is perforce love of human beings, education for Christ's ministry includes as well education with regard to the natural human virtues. Since loving him means knowing him, a will ready to undertake study which is careful and accurate is a sign of the solidarity of a vocation. Because Christ is never alone, but came to gather

human beings into his body, love of the Church must necessarily accompany love of Christ, who has willed to encounter us in the community of the Church. In the readiness to love the Church is manifested an intimate and strong relation with the Lord himself.

I should like to close with a citation from Pope St. Gregory the Great. In it he makes use of Old Testament images to illustrate the connection between the interior life and ministry:

"What else are holy men but rivers which water the parched earth of carnal hearts? Yet . . . they would very quickly be dried up unless they determine in their heart to take care always to return to the place from which they spring. For if they do not return inward to the heart and bind

themselves with chains in the love of their Creator's wishes . . . their tongue grows dry. Rather do they return inward always through love. And what they pour forth publicly in work and speech, in secret they draw from their fountain of love. For loving they learn what in teaching they put forth" (Hom in Ez. lib I hom V 16, PL 76, 828 B).*

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger

*This article was given as an address by Cardinal Ratzinger to the world Synod of Bishops, on October 1, 1990. The copyrighted translation from the Latin text was prepared by Carl J. Peter.