

Priesthood of The Baptised and of the Ordained Correlated but Different

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Introduction

In the Year for Priests, priesthood is the prime topic of reflection and discussion in the whole Church and to some extent also in the society. As we study the origin and development of priesthood, we realize that the term 'priest' or 'priesthood' is used in three different ways in Christian tradition: 1) The priesthood of Jesus Christ; 2) the priesthood of the baptised; and 3) the priesthood of the ordained. The New Testament, however, uses the term 'priest' only in connection with the first two senses. Firstly, in the Letter to the Hebrews, the priestly identity and mission of Jesus Christ is well depicted. Accordingly, Jesus Christ is the priest or the 'High Priest' par excellence, though He never called himself a priest. His redemptive ministry of service, culminating in his death and resurrection, is the definitive act of priesthood, offering authentic obedient worship to God and atoning for the sins of the humanity. Secondly, the first Epistle of St. Peter refers to the priesthood of all the Christians. They are the priestly people of God who are called to share in the priesthood of Christ in view of continuing His redemptive mission of establishing the Kingdom of God. However, in the New Testament, we do not see any explicit reference to the priesthood of the ordained.

The salvation history tells us that Jesus Christ, the Eternal High Priest, wished that his one and indivisible priesthood be transmitted

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to his Church to continue His ministry in the Church and in the world. Today there exist two modes of priesthood in the Church for the realization of Christ's mission: Common Priesthood shared by all the baptised and Ministerial Priesthood which is specifically conferred to a few by the sacrament of ordination. In the present theological scenario, the two modes of priesthood have become a point of discussion and debate especially with regard to the relation and difference between the common and ministerial priesthood.

Two factors, in particular, have contributed to this acute interest. Firstly, the Church, gripped as it is, by a "vocation crisis", is struggling to deal with the depressing phenomenon of a growing shortage of priests for parish and other pastoral work especially in the western countries. Secondly, the post-Vatican II Church is witnessing an encouraging growth of lay participation in ministry. The laity are now increasingly involved in pastoral activities which had hitherto been presumed to be solely reserved to the ordained. Recently, Pope Benedict XVI warned the bishops from north-eastern Brazil not to allow the severe shortage of priests to blur the difference between the roles of the laity and ordained clergy, saying the distinction was "one of the most delicate issues in the existence and life of the Church" today.¹ He also stressed that it is necessary to avoid the secularisation of priests and the clericalisation of the laity. Such situation that exist in different parts of the world challenges us to reflect upon the correlation and difference between the common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood. In this article, we wish to stress that the two modes of priesthood that exist in the Church are related but different. On the one hand, we present the correlation between these two by the theology of *tria munera*. On the other, we also explain the difference between them with the theology of *in persona Christi*.

1. Correlation: Aiming at the Realization of One Mission

The Conciliar and post-Conciliar teachings affirm that there is only one priesthood in the Church but there are two ways of participating in it. There is only one goal to be achieved, but there are two ways of reaching it. There is only one ecclesial body animated by the Spirit of Christ, but there are two forms of priesthood both working harmoniously together to build up the Church.

¹ "Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Second Group of Bishops of the Episcopal Conference of Brazil (North East II Region) on their *Ad Limin' Visit'*", Castel Gandolfo, Thursday, 17 September 2009.

In order to explain the correlation between the two modalities of priesthood, the Magisterium employs the concept of *tria munera*.² This is to show that Jesus' threefold ministry as prophet, priest and king is carried out by the whole People of God. It also reveals that *tria munera* is the basis of all ministries in the Church, both the ministry of the baptised and of the ordained. This also stresses the fundamental relation between Jesus' ministry and the ministry of the People of God exercised through two modalities of priesthood.

In the pre-Conciliar era, though the concept of *tria munera* was used in relation to Christ, the Church and the Christians, it was specifically understood as the hallmark of the ordained. It was never used in order to show the relation between Jesus' ministry and the ministry of the People of God. Rather it was applied to Christ, the Church and the Christians independently, and often it was identified with the ordained ministry. Vatican II made use of this concept not only to emphasize the relation between Jesus' ministry and the ministry of the People of God, but also to stress the interrelation between the common and ministerial priesthood and therefore the equality of all Christians in the life and mission of the Church.³ The Council thus describes the threefold function of Jesus which is carried out by the Church through priestly,

² We find the first use of *tria munera* in the writings of Eusebius of Caesaria in the 4th century. In the 13th century, the trilogy appeared in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas and Albert the Great, but always in application to Jesus as the anointed one of God. In the 16th century, Calvin used *tria munera* extensively. In the twentieth century, we find the constant use of *tria munera* in the Catholic literature and theology. For details see J. Puthenveetil, *Priesthood: The Baptised and the Ordained. A Textual Hermeneutics in the Light of the Church Documents*, vol. II, Delhi, 2006, 370-389.

³ At the Council, there were also objections to using this paradigm because, some argued, "giving a tripartite division to the functions of Christ is a Protestant invention of the nineteenth century. It would be better if this distinction were reduced to a twofold distinction, namely, of prophet and of priest, which is both more Catholic and more traditional and better suits the classical distinction between the power of jurisdiction and the power of Orders. See *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani Secundi*, vol. II:I, 591. However, G. Tavad finds the threefold division of the ministry adopted by Vatican II to be somewhat arbitrary. It results from "a considerable oversimplification of the tasks of Christ as described in the Scriptures. Jesus is not only priest, prophet, and king; he is also Son of man, lamb of God, servant of Yahweh, friend, shepherd, healer, fire-bringer, preacher, rabbi." He argues that the scope of the ministry becomes even more truncated when the three-fold office as applied to the ordained is reduced to 'sanctification, teaching and government." See G. H. Tavad, *A Theology for Ministry*, Delaware, 1983, 127.

prophetic and kingly ministry of the baptised and the ordained. The different ministries of the baptised and the ordained indicate that they all participate in the one prophetic, priestly and kingly ministries of Jesus. The correlation between these two modes of priesthood is mainly discussed within the Christological and ecclesiological framework.

1.1 Christological Character of Correlation

One of the Christological schemes that attempts to investigate the correlation between the common and ministerial priesthood gives four diverse yet interlocked themes: ontological, existential, practico-social and eschatological.⁴ On the basis of these themes, we consider the baptised and the ordained and their interrelation: (i) Ontological participation, (ii) existential fellowship, (iii) practico-social liberation, and (iv) eschatological witness. Each of these points will be discussed with specific reflections on the prophetic, sacerdotal and pastoral responsibilities of the common and of the ministerial forms of priesthood in relation to Christ as mediator, brother, liberator and Messiah.

1.1.1 Ontological Participation

One of the approaches to the interrelation between the common and the ministerial modes of priesthood is the concept of 'participation'. Both participate in the being and activity of Christ who fulfils the function of mediator between God and humankind. The two modalities of priesthood are seen as springing from the very essence of Christ and they share in the common source that is Christ.⁵ This share which is sacramental, is considered ontological because any "human involvement in the mystery of Christ invariably effects a change in the intrinsic constitution of human persons."⁶ The ontological interconnection between the

⁴ These themes are related to four major theological trends of recent times: (i) the neo-Thomistic school of metaphysics, (ii) the transcendental and interpersonal thought patterns of the post-World War II, (iii) the ethical and political implications of Christian truth in response to Marxist ideology, and (iv) the future-oriented and hopeful world-view of the Scriptures and of the Fathers as opposed to the skeptical conceptions of humanity's identity. See P. Rosato, "La recezione delle nuove categorie dell'autocomprensione della Chiesa nel postconcilio," in M. Simone, ed., *Il Concilio venti anni dopo, I: Le nuove categorie dell'autocomprensione della Chiesa*, Rome, 1984, 73-98.

⁵ See M. Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, London, 1946, 558-592.

⁶ P.J. Rosato, "Priesthood of the Baptised and Priesthood of the Ordained: Complementary Approaches to Their Interrelation", *Gregorianum* 68 (1987) 220.

baptised and the ordained indicates that they have a common goal, that is to make present Christ to the Church and to the world. This is possible because the baptised are 'incorporated' into the ecclesial body by baptism and the ordained are 'configured' to Christ's headship in the ecclesial body. It points to the two distinct types of participation. The ontological distinction between the two modalities of Christian priesthood is directed to the greater good of the mystical Body of Christ. The distinct modes of participation are for the common goal of making Christ present to the world. Hence, this understanding of ontological participation shows that there is interrelation between the common and ministerial modes of priesthood.

1.1.2 Existential Fellowship

The correlation between the common and ministerial modes of priesthood is further delineated in terms of existential fellowship.⁷ Though the ordained have the role of the headship, it is to be exercised not to lessen but strengthen the participation of the baptised in the life and mission of the Church in the light of fraternal fellowship enunciated by Christ, the brother.⁸ The fellowship is to be seen in the sense that the ordained have the function of "being with" the Lord and the baptised as "being sent" by Him.⁹ The role of the ordained is thus seen as "intra-ecclesially" and the baptised as "extra-ecclesially". The ordained and the baptised not only work jointly as collaborators in the mediating role of Christ but also act freely as co-witnesses of Christ's mission. The basis of existential fellowship is the inherent dignity of the common priesthood as originating from Christ and guided by His Spirit. The independence and interdependence, emerging from the nature and vocation of God's people, thus create true communion within the Church, binding the two modes of the one priesthood together and forming one fraternity in the charity of Christ and His Spirit. This indicates that ecclesial fellowship is willed by the Father so as to fulfill His universal salvific plan through the instrumentality of the representatives of the two modes of Christ's priesthood.

⁷ The existential approach in order to explain the co-operation of the two modes of priesthood is discussed in R. A. Tartre, *The Post-Conciliar Priest: Comments on the Decree on the Ministry and Life of the Priest*, New York, 1966. The concept of 'fellowship' complements the concept of 'participation'.

⁸ See *Apostolicam actuositatem* 3 & 25.

⁹ See MK 3, 14; J. Ratzinger also develops these themes clearly in J. Ratzinger, "Priestly Ministry: A Search for Its Meaning", *Emmanuel. The Magazine of Eucharistic Spirituality*, 76 (1970) 446-448.

1.1.3 Practico-Social Liberation

The practico-social approach to the correlation of the two modes of priesthood emphasizes the apostolic duty of the entire People of God to reach out to the poor and the needy in the world. This approach is well expressed by the image of Christ the liberator. In His public life, Jesus worked for righteousness (Mt 3, 15; 12, 20).¹⁰ Accordingly, the baptised and the ordained must live out their participation in Christ their mediator and their union with Christ their brother by serving God through living works which comprises an extension of the liberating justice of Christ in society. Thus those who share in the being and the fellowship of Christ must set about in a united way to promote His justice.¹¹ It is precisely because of this that the priestly identity of the baptised and the ordained is far more than an ontological status or a fraternal experience, for it is also a practico-social responsibility.

The practico-social ministry of the ordained is externalized by preaching, celebrating the sacraments and guiding the community. The lay faithful, on their part, have to carry out this ministry of liberation which is the specific secular characteristic of theirs. The social responsibility of the baptised generated from baptism has the teaching, sanctifying and shepherding dimensions which have to be worked out in bringing about justice in the world for the universal good of humanity. In order to bring about justice in the world, the conjoined efforts of the two modes of Christian priesthood are necessary. Thus, the ordained prepare their people for the practico-social mission of the Church by the proclamation of the justice of Christ through Word and sacraments. The baptised, after hearing and appropriating it, seek to transform the temporal order in the name of Christ, the priest-liberator, whose earthly body they are, and whose immanent presence in their human search for justice. By witnessing to and extending the just and liberating mission of Christ, both the baptised and the ordained are called to act together as members of the one missionary Church. Here also we see the correlation between the two modes of priesthood in terms of practico-social liberation carried out by priestly, prophetic and kingly functions.

1.1.4 Eschatological Witness

The ontological, existential and practico-social approaches to the interrelation of the baptised and the ordained are to be

¹⁰ See J. H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*, Grand Rapids, 1973.

¹¹ See Paul VI, *The Teachings of Pope Paul VI*, vol. 4, Vatican, 1968-1978, 268.

complemented with the eschatological goal of creation that is prefigured and anticipated in the relationship between the *sacerdotium commune* and the *sacerdotium ministeriale*.¹² As we look at the nature of the ministries of the baptised and the ordained, as given in two Conciliar passages (AA 16; PO 2), we understand that the representatives of both modalities of Christian priesthood are inaugurators of the messianic Kingdom of Christ. They are complementary signs to the world of the conjoined spiritual and temporal aspects of Christ's singly eschatological mission. Thus, while the ordained confirm the baptised in their faith in the *eschaton*, the latter witness to this future by anticipating it in time through the charity and joy they exercise in human society. The two modes of participation in Christ are to give witness to the presence of the Kingdom here 'already' although 'not yet' fully realized. Furthermore, when the ordained and the baptised give witness to the Kingdom in their own fields of activity, they prepare the temporal order for the eschatological times.¹³

The eschatological correlation is explicit in the Eucharistic celebration. Through the participation in the Eucharist, the baptised and the ordained strive to become involved in the transformation of the temporal order, so that it can anticipate the glory of the Kingdom of God. Participation in the Eucharist enables the baptised and the ordained to "make effective all those latent Christian and evangelical possibilities which already exist and operate in the world."¹⁴

Both the modes of priesthood collaborate together in the extension of the glory of God and in the growth of the Kingdom within history. The ordained, through their representation of the mediatory and messianic priesthood of Christ, encourage the baptised to await the full realization of the Kingdom in the end-time. The baptised give witness in the world to the sign of hope which points to the fulfillment to come. Thus, the ordained symbolize the priestly headship of Christ, the Lord of the *eschaton*, and the baptised represent His priestly presence within creation as the divine agent of the end-time. As a result, the two modes of Christian priesthood, each in its specific way, inaugurate the Kingdom which in the future is to be fully attained as a gift from God.

¹² See K. Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, New York, 1978, 418.

¹³ See P.J. Rosato, "Priesthood of the Baptised and Priesthood of the Ordained, 248-258.

¹⁴ PAUL VI, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, AAS 68 (1976) 70.

The Christological character of the interrelation between the two modes of priesthood within the ontological, existential, practico-social and eschatological framework in terms of 'participation', 'fellowship', 'promotion', and 'inauguration' respectively is well explained in the context of their single mission and goal.

1.2 The Ecclesiological Character of Correlation

The ecclesiological character of correlation can be explained within the context of the sacramentality of the Church which is realized in and through the sacraments. This sacramentality is expressed by two modes of Christ's priesthood: common and ministerial. Though there is only one mission for the Church, the way it is carried out is different. The ecclesiological character of correlation is discussed in relation to (i) the sacramentality of the Church, (ii) complementary vocations of the baptised and the ordained, and (iii) vocation to holiness.

1.2.1 The Sacramentality of the Church

The Church is the Sacrament of Christ. The sacramental nature of the Church is realized through the mission and ministry of all Christians. In the Church, the two modes of priesthood are rooted sacramentally in the one priesthood of Christ who is the primary Sacrament of God. The ecclesial interrelation of the common and ministerial modes of priesthood is more intelligible through the ecclesiology of communion. Accordingly, in the Church as mystery, communion, mission, all are made brothers and sisters through baptism, and are integrated responsibly in charisms and ministries for a common mission which is the salvation of people and the renewal of the whole temporal order. Each according to its own proper mode is directed to the accomplishment of the one mission of Christ which is the mission of the whole Church.¹⁵

It is also to be noted that this collaboration between the two modes of priesthood is possible because the Church is a Spirit-filled community, the primary sacrament of Christ in which there are various gifts, enabling different ministries. This view maintains the fundamental equality of all believers. Ordained ministry is seen as a sacrament within the Church existing for the sake of the community.¹⁶ It is also held that those who are ordained

¹⁵ See M.C. Coomans, "On Formation in View of the Collaboration of Priests with the Laity", *Synodus Episcoporum Compendium Interventionis*, 09.X.1990, E Civitate Vaticana, 1990, 2.

¹⁶ See E. J. Kilmartin, "Lay Participation in the Apostolate of the Hierarchy", in J. H. Provost (eds), *Official Ministry in a New Age*, Washington D.C., 1981, 106-107.

sacramentalise the priestliness of the entire community in order to facilitate that priestliness in the larger community. An important characteristic of the ordained priest then is to be found precisely in his support of the priesthood of the faithful. Thus, the ministerial priesthood conferred by the sacrament of holy orders and the common or 'royal' priesthood of the faithful, which differ essentially and not only in degree (*LG. 10*) are ordered one to the other, for each in its own way derives from the one priesthood of Christ. In short, we can state that the basis of the ecclesiological character of correlation is the sacramentality of the whole Church in which the single mission is realized through different ministries.

1.2.2 The Complementary Vocations of the Baptised and the Ordained

The ecclesiological character of interrelation is further explained in the context of the single Christian vocation which is the point of departure for determining the correlation that marks the two modes of Christian priesthood. There is only one universal Christian vocation and all other callings are ways in which this one call manifests itself in the life of the Church, because the totality of Christian vocations belongs explicitly to the one divine offer of salvation in Jesus Christ.¹⁷ Since baptism is the source of all vocations, it is Christ, in and through the sacraments, and not the hierarchy, who both calls and commissions a person to such a Christian vocation. The call and commission to the *tria munera* of Jesus are not, therefore, assigned or delegated tasks given to Christians by the Church hierarchy; they are given *vi sacramenti*, not *vi delegationis*.¹⁸

The two modes of priesthood are correlated because baptism is understood as the basis for the sacrament of orders. The ordained are placed among the sanctified members of the common priesthood because "the ordained priest achieves the fullness of his personal Christian life in virtue of the fact not that he imparts, but rather that he receives this sacrament [baptism] like any other Christians".¹⁹ Rahner makes it more clear saying: "The officially ordained priest is not the sacral representative of God who is equipped with celestial power and set apart from an unholy people

¹⁷ See K. Rahner, *The Religious Life Today*, trans., V. Green, London, 1977, 23; *LG. 33*.

¹⁸ See K. B. Osborne, *Ministry: Lay Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church: Its History and Theology*, New York, 1993, 546-557.

¹⁹ K. Rahner, "The Sacramental Basis for the Role of the Layman in the Church," in *Further Theology of the Spiritual Life. Theological Investigations*, vol. VIII, (trans.), D. Bourke, London, 1971, 70.

by God. Rather he is the bearer of one specific and necessary function within a people that has already been sanctified by God. The universal priesthood is not an entity deduced from the official priesthood by a process of metaphorical refinement. Rather it constitutes the sustaining basis for their official priesthood.”²⁰ This makes it clear that the ordained do not stand over against the Church, the People of God. “Every Christian has a radical vocation to develop to the full, and to prove his being a Christian, which has been given to him by God’s own act in baptism.”²¹ Consequently, “the clergy exist because the laity exist.”²² Hence, the basis for the exercise of all ministries in the Church is sacramental in the sense that, whether it be juridical or ordained, it rests primarily on the sacrament of baptism and not orders. We can thus see that being configured to Christ, all share in the threefold office of prophet, priest and king. This indicates how the ordained are to relate themselves to the baptised. They are not to stand over the baptised but to stand with them. We cannot understand the ministerial mode of priesthood apart from the common mode, since “the Sacrament of Orders is essentially based upon baptism as the sacrament of faith”.²³ The ministerial priest, therefore, can exist only because being a Christian is being a priest and vice versa.²⁴

1.2.3 The Vocation to Holiness

The complementarity of vocations of the baptised and the ordained is further understood by the fact that every Christian is called to holiness.²⁵ The fundamental consecration at baptism is the basis for Christian holiness.²⁶ The ordained are called to revive this holiness which was received initially at baptism through the power

²⁰ K. Rahner, “Theological Reflections on the Priestly Image of Today and Tomorrow,” in *Confrontations, Theological Investigations*, vol. XII, (trans.), D. Bourke, London, 44-45.

²¹ K. Rahner, “On the Evangelical Counsels,” in *Further Theology of the Spiritual Life. Theological Investigations*, vol. VIII, (trans.), D. Bourke, London, 1971, 135.

²² K. Rahner, “The Sacramental Basis for the Role of the Layman in the Church”, 67.

²³ K. Rahner, “Priestly Existence”, in *The Theology of the Spiritual Life: Theological Investigation*, vol. III, (trans.), K. -H. & B. Kruger, London, 1967, 261.

²⁴ K. Rahner, “The Priestly Office and Personal Holiness”, in *Servants of the Lord*, (trans.), R. Strachan, London, 1968, 104.

²⁵ See LG. 39-42, PO. 12.

²⁶ See K. Rahner, “Consecration in the Life and Reflection of the Church”, in *Faith and Ministry, Theological Investigations*, vol. XIX, (trans.), E. Quinn, London, 1983, 67.

of the Holy Spirit, and to orient it to the care of souls.²⁷ Since all Christians are called to perfection by virtue of baptism, the ordained cannot have an exclusive spirituality that arises from their special mission in the Church.²⁸

Rahner places the holiness of priestly spirituality within the category of Christian spirituality. Priestly spirituality, according to him, is first of all, Christian spirituality based on Christian faith, hope and love. It is therefore not an addition to Christian life.²⁹ Thus, priestly spirituality is not different from the normal Christian way of life in faith, hope and love, and priestly consecration is inextricably linked to nourishing the Christian vocation of all in the Church. B. Cooke makes this very clear: "Those who belong to this special minister group are not more priestly than other Christians, but they are called to give special sacramental expression to Christ's priestly action of Passover so that the entire community can celebrate more authentically and fully its priestly character."³⁰ Thus baptism endows all Christians with the never ceasing consecratedness rooted in divine grace by which all the baptised and the ordained are entitled and obliged to extent Christ's mission to the world.

The Christological and ecclesiological character of the theology of *tria munera* makes it clear that the common and ministerial modes of priesthood are correlated and they exist to continue the one mission of Christ for the realization of the Kingdom of God.

2. Difference: A Search for Priestly Identity of the Ordained

We have already seen that there is an interrelation between the two modes of priesthood. At the same time, the Magisterium teaches that there is an essential difference between them.³¹ It is a vital question to be asked how these two modes are different and why they are essentially different. We attempt to explain the difference between the two by focusing our attention on the specific identity of the ordained. *Lumen gentium* gives the hermeneutical key to explain the distinctive identity of the ordained, i.e., the theology of *in persona Christi*. Any discussion on the theology of

²⁷ See K. Rahner, "Priestly Office and Priestly Life", in *The Practice of Faith: A Handbook of Contemporary Spirituality*, K. Lehmann & A. Raffelt, ed., London, 1985, 167.

²⁸ See J. T. Farmer, *Ministry in Community. Rahner's Vision of Ministry*, Louvain, 1993, 208.

²⁹ See K. Rahner, "Priestly Office and Priestly Life", 163-165.

³⁰ B. Cooke, *Ministry to Word and Sacrament: History and Theology*, Philadelphia, 1976, 645.

³¹ LG. 10.

the ordained cannot ignore this significant phrase. The magisterial teachings often make use of this phrase in order to explain the distinctive and, in a strict sense, the essential difference between the common and ministerial priesthood.

2.1 Priest: Acting *in Persona Christi*

As the historical investigation shows, the theology of *in persona Christi* has been used to interpret the specific identity of the ordained priest in relation to Christ and to the community of the faithful. The importance of this phrase is evident from its use in the magisterial documents throughout the history of the Church.³² There are different interpretations of the use of this phrase in relation to the ordained.

2.1.1 The Representational Interpretation

Most of the Catholic and Christian documents seem to stress the representational dimension of *in persona Christi*. The ordained act not just as a minister, but occupies a representational role. D. N. Power thus states: "It is because he is made Christ's representative through reception of the character that the priest exercises all his pastoral activity of word and government, as well as of sacrament, acting in the name and person of Christ."³³ The term 'representation' does not mean a mere substitution of one person for others. In theology, however, the idea of representation is not juridical but organic. The ordained is configured to Christ in order that Christ may act in him. The ordained thus are said to represent Christ in the offering of the sacrifice of the cross. At consecration, the priest is seen as acting alone as the representative of Christ, who, as principal agent, consecrates the gifts and offers the sacrifice of the cross in the name of all the faithful.³⁴

2.1.1.1 The Literal Representation

Some theologians even emphasise the literal representation of Christ by the ordained. Accordingly, a priest, acting *in persona Christi* is the mode of signification by which the sacramental symbolism of person as inclusive of the natural resemblance is presented. Sacramental signs, therefore, which represent what they signify by way of natural resemblance, must be perceptible and

³² For details see J. Puthenveettil, *Priesthood: The Baptised and the Ordained*. 438-462.

³³ D. N. Power, *Ministers of Christ and His Church: The Theology of Priesthood*, London, 1969, 176.

³⁴ See E. J. Kilmartin, "Apostolic Office: Sacrament of Christ", *Theological Studies* 36 (1975) 247.

recognizable.³⁵ The Eucharistic sacrifice is the representation of Jesus in his event-full act of the gift of himself *for* us as sacrifice, and *to* us as communion. The Eucharistic minister thus represents the risen Christ with the marks of the wounds which signify Christ in his gift to us. "Only one who shares the same psycho-somatic-pneumatic form of the self can represent the risen Lord marked with the signs of his 'kenosis', his emptying of self in order to fill us."³⁶ This indicates that the ordained literally represent Christ when they act *in persona Christi* especially in the Eucharist.

2.1.1.2 The Sacramental Representation

The literal representation, according to many, is in contradiction to the nature of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. The priest's representation is only symbolic which implies presence as well as absence of Christ. Identification between Christ and ministers would be the end of ministry because Christ is unique. Christ is never substituted by the Church and its ministers and the latter never come totally in the place of Christ.³⁷ Any positive representation of Christ by the priest would obscure the sacramental visibility of Christ as the true and effective speaker of the consecratory words. It is therefore only a symbolic rather than the real presence of Christ.³⁸

Generally, the sacramental sign deals with the external sign and does not deal with the inner 'identification' with or 'configuration' to Christ. J. M. Tillard thus argues that the Eucharistic anamnesis looks to the past, and in fact recalls a real, concrete event in history. But it does not leave the event in the past or reproduce it as such in its natural condition. Rather, it makes the past event effectively present now. History is irreversible, so the historical event is not itself repeated, but by the Holy Spirit, and by means of signs, this very event becomes sacramentally present.³⁹ This is further understood with the instrumental interpretation of *in persona Christi*.

³⁵ See S. Butler, "Quaestio Disputata: *In Persona Christi*: A Response to Dennis M. Ferrara," *Theological Studies* 56 (1995) 69.

³⁶ See J. R. Sheets, "Form: The Ordination of Women", *Worship* 65 (1991) 457.

³⁷ See R. Michiels, *Documentation on Ecclesiology*, *Katholieke Universiteit Leuven*, 1988, 132.

³⁸ See D. M. Ferrara, "Representation or Self-Effacement? The Axiom *In Persona Christi* in St Thomas and the Magisterium" *Theological Studies* 55 (1994) 215.

³⁹ See J. M. Tillard, "Sacrificial Terminology and the Eucharist", *One in Christ* 17 (1981) 314.

2.1.2 The Instrumental Interpretation

There are theologians who interpret the use of the phrase for the ordained in an instrumental sense. According to them, the basic meaning of the phrase is that Christ himself is at work through the minister. The priest is only the instrument of the real presence of Christ. His action *in persona Christi* does not transcend instrumentality in the direction of some kind of mystical coincidence with Christ, but is rather an instrumentality in its purest and most sublime form.⁴⁰

The instrumental role of the priest who acts *in persona Christi* further indicates his mediatory role. G. Greshake, quoting St Paul, argues that the ordained minister is essentially a mediator of Christ. In 2 Cor 5, 18ff, we read: "So we are ambassadors for Christ; it is as though God were appealing through us..." He further elucidates the role of the apostle by the metaphor of a window. Just as the window does not hinder contact with the reality "out there", so the official mediation of ordained minister does not prevent immediacy to Christ, but mediates this immediacy.⁴¹ Accordingly, the ordained are mere instruments of Christ in the realization of God's salvific action in Christ.

2.2 Priest: Acting *in Persona Ecclesiae*

The question whether the ordained represent Christ or the community is crucial in this discussion. Therefore, *in persona Christi* is interpreted in connection with *in persona Ecclesiae*. The inseparable union of Christ with the Church implies two dimensions of the Church's sacramentality: it mediates the grace of God and it does so only as an instrument of Christ's saving action. The efficacy of the *forma indicativa* is understood when it is seen as God's response to the *forma deprecativa*, the prayer addressed to God officially by the Church in the name of Christ.⁴² Both kinds of actions require the mediation of the minister acting either in the person of Christ or in the person of the Church.

If both representations are accepted, further clarification is required to explain which representation comes first: the representation of Christ or the representation of the community. On the one hand, as already seen above, it is constantly affirmed that the ordained represent first and foremost Christ, and because

⁴⁰ See D. M. Ferrara, "Representation or Self-Effacement?", 212.

⁴¹ See G. Greshake, *The Meaning of Christian Priesthood*, Dublin, 1993, 36.

⁴² See E. Schillebeeckx, *Christ, the Sacrament of the Encounter with God*, (trans.) P. Barret, Kansas City, 1963, 72.

of this they are able to represent the faith of the community which is clearly evident in the Sacraments especially in the Eucharist. On the other hand, those who claim that the ordained represent primarily the faith of the community and hence are able to offer the prayers of the community, argue that the priest represent the community because of this they can represent Christ.⁴³ This shows the intimate relationship between the ordained and the community, at the same time leads to the unique role of the ordained in the community which is explained by another theological phrase: *in persona Christi Capitis*.

2.3. Priest: Acting *in Persona Christi Capitis*

We also are faced with the question of how the ordained minister represents Christ when acting as the minister of the assembly. In order to explain the specific identity and the role of the ordained in the Church, the phrase *in persona Christi Capitis* is also used. Accordingly, the ordained represent Christ, the head of the Church. There is only one head of the Church and that is Christ. What the ordained by their specific ministry do is sacramentally represent Christ, the head. This is possible because they directly participate in the apostolic ministry which gives a special power to the ordained to act in the person of Christ, the head. This image of the ordained also shows the mutual interdependence of the representation of Christ and the Church. Accordingly, he who represents the head represents the members and he who represents the members represents the head, because head and members are united in an indissoluble bond. M. Evans makes clear the distinctive and communal role of the priest as Head. "...the whole community of the faithful is *the* representative, indeed the sacrament of Christ, and nothing must ever be said about ordained priesthood which lessens the dignity of the baptised faithful, a dignity which is after all the very foundation of the ministry of the ordained. On the other hand, precisely in order to maintain its sacramental nature, the Church needs the active presence of its Head, leading and uniting, and it is primarily through the ordained priesthood that this particular aspect of Christ's involvement with his Church is made manifest."⁴⁴

In short, we can say that by exercising a special ministry in the Church, the ordained priest actualizes a threefold representation.

⁴³ See E. J. Kilmartin, "Apostolic Office: Sacrament of Christ", 243-264. For a detailed study see also J. Puthenveetil, *Priesthood: The Baptised and the Ordained*, 475-485.

⁴⁴ M. Evans, "In Persona Christi - the Key to Priestly Identity", *Clergy Review* 71 (1986) 117-125.

As directly representing Christ, the head, he alone places Christ on the altar in a state of victimhood: as head of the community, he offers Christ with the community to the Father; and finally as a Christian brother among other Christian brothers and sisters, they together offer the whole humankind in and with Christ to the Father.⁴⁵ However, the interpretation of *in persona Christi* together with *in persona Ecclesiae* and *in persona Christi Capitis* though highlights to a great extent the identity of the ordained, it is not sufficient to explain the essential difference between the common and ministerial priesthood because of many doctrinal and pastoral issues.

Conclusion

We have been discussing the correlation and difference between the two modes of priesthood: common and ministerial. The theological analysis of *tria munera* explains well how the two modalities of priesthood are interrelated and how they function for the realization of the one mission of Christ and the Church. The detailed discussion of the Christological and ecclesiological character of *tria munera* reveals further the correlation of these two modes of priesthood. At the same time, there is no identification between these priesthood of the baptised and the ordained. Though they are christologically and ecclesologically related to each other, they are also essentially different which is very vital in the life and mission of the Church. The difference between the two priesthoods is explained by the hermeneutical key of *in persona Christi* together with the theology of *in persona Ecclesia* and of *in persona Christi Capitis*. The above discussion makes a few things clear. The one and indivisible priesthood of Christ is transmitted to the Church to continue His salvific mission in the world. Today His priestly mission is carried out in the Church by ministry of the baptised and the ordained. They are interrelated because the source of their ministry is Jesus Christ, the High Priest and they are sent by the Lord to continue His one mission of the realization of the Kingdom of God. At the same time, we do not forget that there is a difference between these two priesthoods. However, the unique identity of the ordained may not be stressed too much as if they are entirely separated from the People of God.

⁴⁵ See W. A. Vanroo, *Basics of a Roman Catholic Theology*, Rome, 1982, 205-207.