

THE TEACHINGS ON THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS
IN LUTHER AND VATICAN II

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Religion
McMaster University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
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September 1970

MASTER OF ARTS (1970)
(Religious Sciences)

McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: The Teachings on the Priesthood of All Believers
in Luther and Vatican II

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NUMBER OF PAGES: vi, 99

SCOPE AND CONTENTS: The thesis attempts to demonstrate the similarities and differences which exist between the teachings of Luther and Vatican II on the Priesthood of All Believers. As such it contains the exposition of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers by Luther and Vatican II and a comparative analytic appraisal.

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INTRODUCTION

Martin Luther re-emphasized the priesthood of all believers in his teachings. The Council of Vatican II did the same. I have attempted to make a comparative analytic study of the teachings of Luther and Vatican II on the priesthood of all believers based on the writings of Luther and the documents of Vatican II. There are conversations and lectures that have influenced the argument in this thesis that shall go unheralded.

I have also attempted to demonstrate what similarities and what differences exist between the teachings of Luther and Vatican II on the priesthood of all believers.

I can conclude on the basis of this study that Luther and Vatican II have similar fundamental principles, insights, and explanations concerning the priesthood of all believers. This is not to suggest that any direct or indirect dependency is evident between Luther and Vatican II. Luther rejected the sacramental character of the priesthood as he experienced it in its abuses of clericalism and its over-emphasis upon sacrifice.

For Luther the "ministerial" or clerical priesthood is derivative of the priesthood of all believers and has no special sacramental power or efficacy. The functional aspect of this priesthood is one of service and apostolate. There is

a similar interpretation which I will suggest is found in Vatican II, though maintaining the notion as power and efficacy.

By reconstructing the terminology, namely, substituting the term "apostolic" for "ministerial", one could hopefully eliminate the divisive elements of Luther and Vatican II. The parallelism of this study might aid the contemporary quest of ecumenism to re-interpret and understand the totality of Christian priesthood.

I am indebted to Dr. John R. Meyer who gave me invaluable assistance in the writing of this thesis. His patient criticism, good suggestions and encouragement were greatly appreciated.

I owe my sincere thanks also to Dr. John C. Robertson Jr. and Dr. Ben F. Meyer who carefully read and corrected the thesis offering suggestions at many points.

Finally, I must express my gratitude to my typist and all others who helped me in this work.

PART I

THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

I. At the Dawn of Reformation:

The Concept of Priesthood as the Ministry of the Word

Here, in this query, we are concerned only with the Christian Priesthood.¹ In the Catholic tradition, "priesthood" means sacerdotium² as shared by bishops and presbyters. For several centuries, the priesthood in the Catholic Church was defined in terms of eucharistic sacrifice. The priest was a Christian ordained to say Mass. He was an offerer of

¹We treat Christian Priesthood here as distinguished from Jewish, Vedic, Brahminic, Buddhist, and other such non-Christian cultic concepts of priesthood.

²Etymologically, as J. Pohle gives in his article "Priesthood" in the Catholic Encyclopædia, XII (1913), 409, the word priest (Germ. Priester; Fr. prêtre; Ital. prete) is derived from the Greek ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΣ and is, in the hieratical sense, equivalent to the Latin sacerdos, the Greek ἱερεὺς, Hebrew קָהֵן, Syriac ܩܗܘܢܐ and in some Indian languages പ്രോഹിതൻ or പ്രോഹിതൻ. By the term is meant a (male) person called to the immediate service of the Deity and authorized to hold public worship, especially to offer sacrifice. In Greek, literally, to be a priest means "to kill" sacrificially. In the LXX ἱερεὺς is used for קָהֵן and זָהָב. LXX also uses ἱερεὺς for the high priest. In Jewish and Christian writings the pagan as well as the Jewish priest is ἱερεὺς. See also Gerhard Kittel, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, III (1965), 257-265.

sacrifices.³ The Council of Florence (1431-1445(?)) declared

Sextum est sacramentum ordinis, cuius materia est illud, per cuius traditionem confertur ordo: sicut prebyteratus traditur per calicis cum vino et patenae cum pane porrectionem.... Forma sacerdotii talis est: "Accipe potestatem offerendi sacrificium in Ecclesia pro vivis et mortuis. (Dez. 701)⁴

Luther introduced a renewed concept of priesthood directly based on his fundamental understanding of the Gospel, that justification is by faith. Faith comes through hearing the Word of God. The Word, meaning, Christus praesens et vivens,⁵ is efficacious; it creates faith; faith justifies; thus justification is by faith.⁶ Therefore faith

³See Gregory Baum, "The Ministerial Priesthood", The Ecumenist, IV (1965), p. 4.

⁴Denzinger-Schonmetzer, ed., Enchiridion Symbolorum, 32nd ed.; (Rome: Herder, 1963) p. 336. Also see John F. Clarkson and others, trans., The Church Teaches (New York: Herder Book Co., 1957), pp. 328-29. "The sixth sacrament is holy orders. Its matter is that which is handed over in the conferring of the order; the priesthood for example, is conferred by the presentation of the chalice containing the wine and the paten holding the bread.... The form of the order of priesthood is this: 'Receive the power of offering the sacrifice in the Church for the living and the dead.'"

⁵Weimarer Ausgabe, ed., Luther's Works cited in B. A. Gerrish, "Priesthood and Ministry in the Theology of Luther", Church History, 34 (1965), 409-410, 421 n. 23.

⁶See Luther, Early Theological Works, ed. and trans. James Atkinson, The Library of Christian Classics, XVI (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1962), 94-98. Luther's Lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews gives an elaboration of his insights on this point.

alone is the righteousness of a Christian.⁷ Luther explains how the Church is formed of faith:

The Eucharist is not so necessary that salvation depends on it. The Gospel and baptism are sufficient, since faith alone justifies and love alone lives rightly. Surely if in this way two, three, or ten homes, or a whole city, or several cities agreed thus among themselves to live in faith and love by the use of the Gospel in the home.... Christ without a doubt would be in their midst and would own them as his Church.⁸

The Church is constituted by the Word. By the ministry of the Word the mysteries of God are made known, and that creates faith. "The Church owes its birth to the Word of promise through faith."⁹ The Church is the "Body of Christ"¹⁰ formed of those who believe in Christ. Luther in his Sermons on the Catechism, explains the Christian Church, as the "Communion of Saints" or "Congregation of

⁷ See Martin Luther, The Freedom of A Christian, ed. John Dillenberger, Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings, (New York: Anchor Books, 1961), p. 62. Luther's explanation of the Word of God is given on pp. 52-63.

⁸ Luther's Works, American Edition, 40 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), 9-10. Hereafter the American Edition of Luther's Works in 55 volumes will be abbreviated as L.W.

⁹ L.W. 40, 11; also Weimarer, Ausgabe, ed., Luther's Works, 11.408.8 cited in B. A. Gerrish, op. cit., p. 410.

¹⁰ G. T. Tappert, The Book of Concord (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p. 169.

Saints" composed of the believers in Christ.¹¹

This new understanding of the gospel, achieved by Luther, led to so great an emphasis upon the ministry of the Word, that henceforth the very reality of the church was grounded in preaching. The seventh article of the Augsburg Confession, in which Melancthon summarized the faith of the Lutherans, for the diet of Augsburg in 1530, defined the church thus: "The congregation of the saints in which the gospel is rightly preached and the sacraments are rightly administered."¹² So also Calvin wrote in his Institutes that the marks of the church "...where the preaching of the gospel is reverently heard and the sacraments are not neglected, there...the church is seen."¹³

Wilhelm Pauck, the contemporary scholar of the Reformation, defines the general Protestant conception of the church in terms of the ministry of the Word thus: "Where the Word of God is rightly preached and heard and the sacraments are rightly administered and received, there

¹¹ Martin Luther, Sermons on the Catechism, ed. John Dillenberger, op. cit., p. 212.

¹² Wilhelm Pauck, "The Ministry in the Time of the Continental Reformation" in Niebuhr and Williams, eds., The Ministry in Historical Perspectives (New York: Harper, 1956), p. 110.

¹³ Calvin, Institutes of Christian Religion, IV. 1.10 trans. et ed., Library of Christian Classics, XXI (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1960) 1024.

is the church. Protestants attribute priority to the Word of God (i.e., the Christ of the Bible) and they assert, that the Word is communicated by preaching and by the administration of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.¹⁴ They assume, furthermore, since faith comes by hearing... when people hear and accept the gospel preached to them, they recognize themselves and each other as members of the Church, i.e., the people of God."¹⁵

Such a conception implies a tremendous simplification of Christianity. In the final analysis only two things matter: The Word of God and faith. Or in Luther's own words, "The gospel and baptism are sufficient." "The sum of the gospel is this: who believes in Christ, has the forgiveness of sins." Belief in Christ can be real only if it depends on the Bible. Therefore it is most important for religion to make the Bible accessible and that is accomplished by the ministry of the Word. Thus the Reformers based everything on this understanding of the nature of

¹⁴ Denying that the Lord's Supper was in any sense a sacrifice, Luther reduced the ordained priests' ministry to that of preaching and of administering the sacraments of baptism and of the Lord's Supper. Luther's views were shared by Calvin, Zwingli and Cranmer, in keeping with their own views on the non-sacrificial character of the Eucharist. As a result of their teaching, the word priest was supplanted by the titles minister or pastor. See Palmer, "Priest and Priesthood, Christian", New Catholic Encyclopedia, XI (1967), 769-770.

¹⁵ Wilhelm Pauck, op. cit., pp. 110-111.

Christianity¹⁶ and the role of the ministry of the Word therein.

Now, against this background we can see better why Luther preferred the title "minister" to "priest," saying:

We neither can nor ought to give the name priest to those who are in charge of Word and sacrament among the people. The reason why they have been called priests is either because of the custom of heathen people or as vestige of the Jewish nation. The result is greatly injurious to the Church. According to the New Testament Scriptures better name would be ministers.... For thus Paul writes in 1 Cor. 4:1, "This is how one should regard us as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." He does not say "as priests of Christ", because he knew that the name and office of priest belonged to all... The authority and dignity of the priesthood resided in the community of believers.¹⁷

¹⁶ L.W. 40, p. 9; also see Wilhelm Pauck, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-112.

¹⁷ L.W. 40.35. The term "minister" belongs particularly to the reformed tradition in contrast to priest in Catholic and Anglican traditions, and "pastor" in Lutheran and many other protestant churches. Yet all these names pass back and forth through the traditions and become useful in many ecclesiastical vocabularies. See H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams, ed., The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, (New York: Harper, 1956), p. vii. The Reformers customarily spoke of the "minister" as pastor (shepherd in relation to certain New Testament passages, e.g., John 10:2; 10:16; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25) but they called him most frequently "preacher" (prediger or Praedikant). The term "pastor" came into general use only during the eighteenth century under the influence of Pietism, especially in Lutheranism. The German Reformers also adhered to the medieval usage and called the preacher Pfarrer, i.e., parson (derived from parochia - parish, and parochus - parson). The common people most generally called the ministers "preachers", but they also

Thus Luther preferred the term "minister", i.e., minister verbi divini (servant of the Word of God) to "priest" and thereupon orientated a new conception of the priesthood in the church; namely, every Christian is, or should be a minister of the Word of God by virtue of his faith.

II. The Priesthood of All Believers: Luther's Exposition: Its Meaning

Luther seems to have emphasized and elaborated the idea of the universal priesthood of all the believers between the years 1519 and 1523. The main sources for our information are his works of the year 1520 and one of the treatises of the year 1523. They are:

1. The Freedom of a Christian.¹⁸
2. The Babylonian Captivity of the Church.¹⁹
3. An Appel to the Ruling Class of German Nationality.²⁰
4. Concerning the Ministry.²¹

continued to use the term "priest" as they had been accustomed under Roman Catholicism. See Wilhelm Pauck, op. cit., p. 116.

¹⁸L.W. 31, 327-377.

¹⁹L.W. 36, 3-132.

²⁰L.W. 44, 115-217.

²¹L.W. 40, 7-44.

Besides these major sources, Luther has cited the priesthood of all the faithful in his tract On the Misuse of the Mass (1521)²² and On Private Masses and the Consecration of Priests (1533).²³ All these writings seem to contribute to his main single theme which I give below.

Luther rightly laid the foundation of the common priesthood of all the faithful in the priesthood of Christ and thereupon he based his argument. In The Freedom of a Christian Luther writes:

That we may examine more profoundly that grace which our inner man has in Christ, we must realize that in the Old Testament God consecrated to himself all the first-born males. The birth right was highly prized for it involved a twofold honor, that of priesthood and that of kingship. The first-born brother was priest and lord over all the others and a type of Christ, the true and only first-born of God the Father and the Virgin Mary and true king and priest....

Now just as Christ by his birthright obtained these two prerogatives, so he imparts them to and shares them with everyone who believes in him.... Hence all of us who believe in Christ are priests and kings in

²²In the first part of the tract Luther shows how a wrong view of the mass inevitably entails a wrong view of the priesthood. In actual fact, the priesthood belongs to all Christians, and its "offices" are the spiritual sacrifice and proclamation of the Gospel. See Weimar Edition of Luther's Works, 8.485.28ff. cited in B. A. Gerrish, "Priesthood and Ministry in the Theology of Luther", Church History, XXXIV (1965), 405.

²³Ibid., p. 405. Luther asserts that Christians are born, not made, priests: they inherit their priesthood by right of baptisr.

Christ, as I Pet. 2:9 says, "you are a chosen race, God's own people, a royal priesthood, a priestly kingdom, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light". Thus Christ has made it possible for us, provided we believe in him, to be not only his brethren, co-heirs, and fellow-kings, but also fellow-priests. Therefore we may boldly come into the presence of God in spirit of faith (Heb. 10:19, 22) and cry "Abba, Father!" pray for one another, and do all things which we see done and foreshadowed in the outer and visible works of priests.²⁴

Luther repeats the same idea in his Babylonian Captivity of the Church:

Let everyone, therefore, who knows himself to be a Christian, be assured of this, that we are all equally priests, that is to say, we have the same power in respect to the Word and the sacraments.²⁵

In An Appeal to the Ruling Class of German Nationality he reasserts:

...we are all consecrated priests through baptism, as St. Peter says in 1 Peter 2:9, "You are a royal priesthood and a priestly realm." The Apocalypse says, "Thou hast made us to be priests and kings by thy blood" (Rev. 5:9-10). The consecration by pope or bishop would never make a priest, and if we had no higher consecration than that which pope or bishop gives, no one could say mass or preach a sermon or give absolution.

Also Luther deduces:

²⁴ Martin Luther, The Freedom of a Christian, I.V. 31, pp. 353-355.

²⁵ L.W. 36, 116.

It follows this argument that there is no true, basic difference between laymen and priests, princes and bishops, between religious and secular, except for the sake of office and work, but not for the sake of status. They...all are truly priests, bishops and popes. ...we are all one body of Christ, the Head, and all members one of another.²⁶

Luther's reasoning on the Priesthood of all believers can be summed up in a syllogism thus:

Faith unites the soul with Christ as a bride is united with her bridegroom: Christ and the soul become one flesh (Eph. 5:31-32).

It follows that everything they have, they hold in common: Christ is God and man in one person: He is king and priest.

Hence, all of us who believe in Christ are priests and kings in Christ, as 1 Pet. 2:9.

This teaching has a real social value: every believer in the gospel is a priest: he is a mediator and intercessor between God and man. He must transmit to others the power of the gospel. He must express his faith in living social action and thereby communicate it to others. All Christians are such ministers: they cannot but bring about a new kind of society - the fellowship of believers.²⁷

²⁶L.W. 44, 127-128; 129-130.

²⁷See Wilhelm Pauck, "The Ministry in the Time of Continental Reformation" in Niebuhr and Williams, eds., The

The statement that every believer is a priest may mean that every believer is

(a) his own priest,

(b) a priest to his brothers,

and (c) both his own priest and a priest to his brothers.

But the meaning here is that every believer is a priest to his brothers: for every believer is made priest in Christ and like Christ. Every one is to minister unto his brethren, transmitting to them the power of the Gospel and bringing about the fellowship of believers.

Luther himself draws the following conclusion:

God had placed his Church in the midst of the world among countless undertakings and callings in order that Christians should not be monks but live with one another in social fellowship and manifest among men the works and practices of faith.²⁸

The priesthood of all believers has come to be regarded along with Biblical authority and salvation by faith, as one of the three main points of evangelical theology. But like the other two, as B. A. Gerrish remarks, the priesthood of all believers has not always been interpreted in the same way, nor taken as seriously in practice as in theory. All too often it has become a dead letter in a clergy-dominated

Ministry in Historical Perspectives. (New York: Harper, 1956), p. 112.

²⁸Weimar edition of Luther's Works: Tischreden (Table Talk) IV, 62, 1.S, cited in Wilhelm Pauck, loc. cit.

institution. And where it has become alive, it has been used to support a bewildering variety of practices, such as, Congregational polity, the Quaker meeting, and the Methodist commissioning of lay preachers. Sometimes, again, it has become associated with such slogans as "the right of private judgment" or "immediate access to God", and interpreted so individualistically that any institutional or corporate expression of it becomes unthinkable.²⁹ Cyril Eastwood in The Priesthood of All Believers says:

The common error that the phrase "Priesthood of All Believers" is synonymous with "private judgement" is most unfortunate and is certainly a misrepresentation. Those who dismiss it as merely "private judgement" have never troubled to examine its full meaning.³⁰

T. H. Lindsay points out in his History of the Reformation³¹ that the priesthood of all believers is an attack on the medieval thought of the mediatorial function of the church and its priestly order. It meant the privilege of a direct access to God.

Such an understanding of Luther's insistence upon the common priesthood of all Christians seems not quite the same

²⁹See B. A. Gerrish, "Priesthood and Ministry in the Theology of Luther", Church History, XXXIV (1965), 404.

³⁰Cyril Eastwood, The Priesthood of All Believers (London: The Epworth Press, 1960), p. 80.

³¹See Thomas H. Lindsay, A History of Reformation (2nd ed.,; Edinburgh: 1907), 1.80, 443, cited in B. A. Gerrish, op. cit., 404-405.

as Luther meant. Luther does not mean, as is often believed, only that each person has a direct relationship with God without the mediation of a priest, but also that each person is mutually responsible for his neighbour. "We are all priests", writes Luther, "insofar as we are Christians, but those whom we call priests are ministers selected from our midst to act in our name, and their priesthood is our ministry."³² Luther makes it clearer in his Freedom of a Christian:

...as we are priests we are worthy to appear before God to pray for others and to teach one another divine things.... Therefore we may boldly come to the presence of God in spirit of faith...and cry "Abba, Father!" Pray for one another, and do all things which we see done and foreshadowed in the outer and visible works of priests.³³

Luther could not have made such a statement had he not held firmly to the idea that the whole Church is called by Christ into ministry, that all men are directly responsible to him, and that they are thus mutually responsible for one another.

Paul Althaus says that Luther never understands the priesthood of all believers merely in the "Protestant" sense

³²Luther, The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, in Weimar Edition of Luther's Works VI, 564 quoted in Howard Grimes, The Rebirth of the Laity (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962, p. 51. Also see L.W. 36, 113.

³³L.W. 31, p. 355.

of the Christian's freedom to stand in a direct relationship to God without a human mediator. Rather he constantly emphasizes the Christian's evangelical authority to come before God on behalf of the brethren and also of the world. The priesthood of all believers expressed not religious individualism but its exact opposite, the reality of the congregation as a community. The individual stands before God, because he has received the authority of substitution. The priesthood means "the congregation" and the priesthood is the inner form of the community of saints. Thus, Luther regarded the priesthood of all believers as the condition for the establishment of a genuine community in the Church.³⁴

It seems worth mentioning here what B. A. Gerrish reminds us of the historical scene at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530: Philip Melancthon advised against discussion of the priesthood of all the believers, relegating it to the "odious and unessential articles which are commonly debated in the schools." In the Augsburg Confession, which had already been finished and read when he gave this judgment, the doctrine is passed over in silence. But protestant tradition has not followed Melancthon in this respect.³⁵

³⁴See Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 314-315.

³⁵See B. A. Gerrish, op. cit., p. 404.

T. H. Lindsay asserts that Luther's teaching on the priesthood of all believers is "the one great religious principle which lies at the basis of the whole Reformation movement."³⁶ Cyril Eastwood adds that the history of Reformation could be re-written as the story of the extent to which Christians have understood and applied the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.³⁷

It is Luther's accomplishment that the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, which was overlooked for centuries, is brought to light again.

He made the doctrine clear, especially comprehensive in the biblical sense.

Luther expounded the doctrine intrinsically related to the High Priesthood of Christ: it is transmitted to believers through faith. If Luther's "justification by faith" states the believers' relationship to Christ, the priesthood of that faith is the obligation and privilege of that relationship. The believer fulfills that obligation or enjoys that privilege by his own faith-encounter with Christ.

This teaching elevates the status of the laity; it transcends the distinction between clergy and laity and

³⁶ Thomas H. Lindsay, *op. cit.*, p. 444, cited in B. A. Gerrish, *op. cit.*, p. 405.

³⁷ See Cyril Eastwood, *The Priesthood of all Believers* (London: The Epworth Press, 1960), p. 241.

united them in the exercise of a priesthood which is common to all believers.

But, it is to be pointed out that this concept of the priesthood of all believers is not a Protestant invention, but a Biblical category, which had an interesting history before Luther, and has never been wholly neglected in the Catholic tradition.³⁸

In the foregoing pages I wanted only to expose in general what Luther meant by his renewed conception of the priesthood of all believers. A further reflection on Luther's discussions on the topic with his distinctions between the ordinary believer who is priest by virtue of his faith and the ordained or commissioned priest (cleric), and other such interesting points are reserved for part II of this work.

Now, for the sake of a comparative comprehension, we turn immediately to the teachings of Vatican II in order to get a general view of what the Council speaks on the priesthood of all believers.

³⁸ See E. A. Gerrish, "Priesthood and Ministry in the Theology of Luther", Church History, XXXIV (1965), 404-405.

III. The Priesthood of All Believers in the Teachings of Vatican II

In order to grasp the full significance of the teachings of Vatican II on the priesthood of all believers, it seems helpful to take a quick look at the over all picture of the Roman teaching on the matter prior to Vatican II.

In the Catholic faith according to a firm and unbroken tradition, with an explicit basis in the New Testament (1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Heb. 13:15-16; Phil. 4:18; Rom. 12:1; Ap. 1:6; 5:10; 10:6), all the faithful are priests, but the foundation of this priesthood is essentially different from the special priesthood of Holy Orders.³⁹ The early belief that all the faithful are priests since they share in the priestly anointing of Christ had been first treated by St. Augustine (354-430) in his Civitate Dei.⁴⁰

³⁹ See K. J. McManara, "Lay Priesthood", New Catholic Encyclopedia, XI (1967), 578-579.

⁴⁰ Augustine taught against the Donatists that valid baptism consecrated the Christian irrevocably to Christ: "Just as we call them all Christ (anointed) because of the mystical Chrism (Chrisma), so also all are priests by virtue of the fact that they are members of One Priest". See De Civitate Dei, XX, 10; E. L. 41,676 cited in E. J. Smedt, The Priesthood of the Faithful, (New York: Paulist Press, 1962), p. 23.

Also see Rouet De Journal, Enchiridion Patristicum, 22nd ed., (Rome: Herder, 1951), p. 570: "Neque enim propterea mutandus vel improbandus est regius character in homine, si

St. Thomas Aquinas has explained how the faithful participate in Christ's priesthood in different degrees.⁴¹

The Council of Trent saw the Reformers renewing an error that went back to Tertullian (160-220), denying the existence of a special priesthood, conferred by the Sacrament of Orders, with exclusive power to celebrate the Eucharistic sacrifice. This led the Council of Trent to condemn explicitly the view that all Christians indiscriminately are priests of the New Testament or that all are endowed with equal spiritual power. The Council of Trent uses the term "priest" in a restricted sense. It is applied only to those who have been called and ordained by a bishop. The fourteenth session of the Council while speaking on the minister of the sacrament of Extreme Unction says:

...the proper ministers of this sacrament are the priests of the church by which name in that place are to be understood not the elders by age or highest in rank among the people, but either bishops or priests rightly ordained by bishops with the imposition of the hands of the priesthood.

Again it says in its Canon No. 4:

erroris sui veniam et militandi ordinem a rege impetraverit, quia eundem characterem quo sibi satellites congregaret, desertor infixit; aut propterea signa mutanda sunt ovibus, cum dominico gregi sociantur, quia iis dominicum signum fugitivus servus impressit."

⁴¹

S.T. 3a, 63.3.

If anyone says that the priests of the Church ...are not the priests who have been ordained by a bishop, but the elders in each community...let him be anathema.⁴²

In session twenty-three, speaking on priesthood, the Council condemns the opinion of those who assert, "that all Christians, without distinction, are priests of the New Testament, or that they are all interse endowed with an equal spiritual power..."⁴³ The Council excludes the idea of the priesthood of all the faithful when it uses the term "priest". It is restricted to mean more or less what is meant by "pastor" or "minister" in the Reformers' teaching.

But it does not mean that the idea of the priesthood common to all Christians as such is excluded from the Catholic teaching; the Council stressed an external, visible priesthood pertaining only to some.⁴⁴ Trent gave only less than due recognition to the Biblical and patristic doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. But the traditional doctrine never disappeared and in modern times it has come again into prominence. The Papacy has played a major

⁴² Schroeder, Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, (St. Louis: Herder Book Co., 1960), pp. 100, 105.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 162; see Denz. 960, "quod si qui omnes Christianos proniscue Novi Testamenti sacerdotes esse, aut omnes pari interse potestate spirituali praeditos affirmet."

⁴⁴ See A. Duval, "The Council of Trent and Holy Orders" in The Sacrament of the Holy Orders, (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1955), p. 236.

part in restoring this doctrine. Pius XI declared in his "Ubi Arcano" (1922) that the Christian apostolate was an important expression of the "royal" priesthood of the faithful,⁴⁵ and Pius XII (1947) in "Mediator Dei" explained the doctrine in detail dealing with its role in the liturgy.⁴⁶ He, again in 1954, dealt with the matter⁴⁷ stressing, that there is difference, not only in degree, but also in essence between the priesthood of the faithful and the special priesthood conferred by Holy Orders.⁴⁸

The Council of Vatican II has presented us with a deeper understanding of the priestly character of the people of God. It deals with the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers mainly in,

- (1) The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)⁴⁹ chapter two under the title "People of God",

⁴⁵Acta Apostolicae Sedis (hereafter abbreviated as AAS) 14 (1922), 695. Also in his encyclical Miserentissimus Redemptor, May 8, 1928: "The entire Christian people also, whom the prince of the Apostles rightly calls 'a chosen people, a kingly priesthood....' See The Church, Papal Teachings, trans. E. O'Gorman, (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1962), p. 460.

⁴⁶AAS 29 (1947), 552-562.

⁴⁷AAS 46 (1954), 669.

⁴⁸See K. J. McNamara, op. cit., p. 579.

⁴⁹Walter E. Abbott, ed., The Documents of Vatican II

(2) The same Constitution chapter four "The Laity"
and

(3) Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity
(Apostolicam Actuositatem)⁵⁰

From its very inception, The Council stressed the concept of the Church as the people of God. It means, that the Church - all its members, whatever their rank or their function - are in possession, basically and forever, of the vocation to the priesthood of the Lord. Even those who become ministers by ordination, even bishops and priests of the ministry, have, outside the exercise of their ecclesiastical functions, duties and responsibilities common to the whole people of God.⁵¹ This idea is expressed clearly in one of the speeches at the Council.

Jesus Christ is the supreme and eternal high priest. He himself received a triple office from the Father: the priestly office or the office of making holy, the prophetic office or the office of teaching, the kingly office or the office of ruling. Jesus Christ actually lives here and now in the layman by baptism and strives to make him share actively in his roles of the priest, prophet and king. The layman, who by his baptism and confirma-

(New York: The American Press, 1966), pp. 9-102. Hereafter abbreviated as Abbott; and the article numbers in each Constitution will be indicated in brackets after quotations.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 489-521.

⁵¹ See Joseph Marique, The Priesthood of the Faithful (New York: Paulist Press, 1962), p. 54.

tion in Christ the Priest is a consecrated person, should offer himself with him and in him and through him.... This union of the layman with Christ the Priest reaches its peak when he shares in his eucharistic sacrifice.⁵²

The Constitution Lumen Gentium defines the people of God in biblical terms: "Those who believe in Christ, who are reborn...through the Word of the living God (cf. 1 Pet. 1:24), ...from water and the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn. 3:5-6), are finally established as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people...are now the people of God" (1 Pet. 2:9-10). (9) The term "people of God" refers to the total community of the Church, including the pastors as well as the other faithful. The formulation of the priesthood of the faithful runs thus:

Christ the Lord, High Priest taken from among men (cf. Heb. 5:1-5) "made a kingdom and priests to God his Father" (Apoc. 1:6; cf. 5:9-10) out of this new people. The baptized, by regeneration and anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated into a spiritual house and a holy priesthood. Thus through all those works befitting Christian men they can offer spiritual sacrifices and proclaim the power of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light (cf. 1 Pet. 2:4-10). (10)

Now, Lumen Gentium states that the people of God have the privilege of exercising their priesthood.

Incorporated into the Church through baptism,

⁵²Emile Joseph de Smedt, "The Priesthood of all the Believers", in Congar, Küng and O'Hanlon, Council Speeches of Vatican II, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1964), p. 25.

the faithful are consecrated by baptismal character to the exercise of the cult of the Christian religion.... Bound more intimately to the Church by the sacrament of Confirmation, they are endowed by the Holy Spirit with special strength. (11)

Next, it points out how the people of God exercise their priestly office:

Taking part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is the fount and apex of the whole Christian Life, they offer the divine Victim to God, and offer themselves along with It. (11)

And how they share in the prophetic office:

The holy people of God shares also in Christ's prophetic office...the body of the faithful as a whole, anointed as they are by the Holy One (cf. Jn. 2:20, 27), cannot err in matters of belief. (12)

Finally it shows the relationship of the faithful to Christ as King:

All men are called to belong to the new people of God. Wherefore this people, while remaining one and unique, is to be spread throughout the whole world and must exist in all ages, so that the purpose of God's will may be fulfilled... God sent His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things (cf. Heb. 1:2), that He might be Teacher, King, and Priest of all, the Head of the new and universal people of the sons of God. For this God finally sent His son's Spirit as Lord and Lifegiver. He it is who, on behalf of the whole Church and each and every one of those who believe, is the principle of their coming together and remaining together in the teaching of the apostles and in fellowship....(13)

Participation in the Kingship of Christ is regarded as the fellowship of life, thereby bringing men of every nation into intimate spiritual union with one another "...making

them citizens of a kingdom which is of heavenly and not of an earthly nature" (cf. Jn. 18:36). (13)

The Chapter on The Laity reasserts:

These faithful are by baptism made one body with Christ and are established among the people of God. They are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ. (31)

The Council repeats the same idea again in its Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity:

The laity derives the right and duty with respect to the apostolate from their union with Christ their Head. Incorporated into Christ's Mystical Body through baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through confirmation they are... consecrated into a royal priesthood and a holy people (cf. 1 Pet. 2:4-10). (3)

This doctrinal exposition is implemented in other decrees of the Council such as the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy,⁵³ the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,⁵⁴ the Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity of the Church,⁵⁵ the Decree on Ecumenism,⁵⁶ and the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests.⁵⁷

The teachings of Vatican II on the priesthood of all

⁵³Abbott, pp. 137-138.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 199-308.

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 584-630.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 341-366.

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 526-579.

believers as far as we have discussed, can be summarized thus: through the sacrament of baptism the whole Christian people participates in the unique priesthood of Jesus Christ. The Church is a priestly people. Christians are, properly speaking, priests. Sharing in Christ's priesthood, they teach, worship and reign with him.⁵⁸ Quite simply, we can say that to be a Christian means to be a priest. The priesthood, received in baptism and growing to maturity in confirmation is Christianity. A Christian is a priest, a member of a priestly people. Every true act of a Christian is a priestly act.⁵⁹ This theme of Vatican II on royal priesthood can be put in a syllogism:

Christ is priest, prophet, and king.

The Church is the people of God who are incorporated into Christ's mystical body by baptism and confirmation; in other words, the Church is Christ living in His faithful.

Therefore, the faithful share with Christ His priestly, prophetic and kingly roles.

This conclusion, in substance, is the same as the one

⁵⁸See Gregory Baun, op. cit., p. 5.

⁵⁹See Robert A. Brungs, A Priestly People (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968), pp. 106, 134. Also it must be stressed that the totality of Christian priesthood is not expressed sacramentally in baptism and confirmation, as the totality of Christian life is not expressed either in baptism and confirmation. These sacraments are just the beginning or initiation of Christian life which calls for further growth and perfection. See ibid., p. 106.

we drew from the study of Luther's teaching on the priesthood of all believers on page 10 above.

It can be noted as the unmistakable accomplishment of the Council of Vatican II that it restored the priesthood of all believers to a place of honor and it is exposed in the biblical perspective. We can observe the first noteworthy consequence of this perspective in the fourth chapter of the Constitution Lumen Gentium:

By the divine institution holy church is structured and governed by a wonderful diversity. "For just as in one body we have many members, yet all the members have not the same function..." And if by the will of Christ some are made teachers, dispensers of mysteries, and shepherds on behalf of others, yet all share in a true equality with regard to the dignity and to the activity common to all the faithful for the building up of the Body of Christ. (32)

The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity implies that every activity of the mystical body, which is directed towards the building up of the kingdom of God, deserves to be called apostolate or priestly function: This is exercised in diverse manners by all church members.⁶⁰

Thus the Christian mission of the faithful as priests in the church and in the world is fully accepted (even though a certain dualism still persists).

The same decree states further:

As they "derive the right and duty with

⁶⁰ See Abbott, p. 491.

respect to the apostolate from their union with Christ their head...through baptism... they are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord himself." (3)

Thus the faithful share with Christ His priesthood.

Edward Schillebeeckx says that the whole Second Vatican Council could be described as the declericalization of the Catholic Church, though in its totality, this effect cannot be said to have succeeded one hundred per cent, fundamentally, it has succeeded in its initial stage.⁶¹

Thus in these pages we saw, in general, how the documents of the Council of Vatican II have explained the priesthood of all believers. We have had Luther's explanation in general earlier. Now we pass on to a particular study of those teachings in part II.

⁶¹See Edward Schillebeeckx, "The Priest and the People of God" in Spiritual Life (Spring 1968), p. 21.

PART II

THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES SEEN IN LUTHER AND VATICAN II

I. Basic Agreements

My attempt in this part is to demonstrate the similarities and the differences which exist in the teachings of Luther and Vatican II on the priesthood of all believers. I find that their exposition of the doctrine is similar in various aspects. First I shall trace some biblical resemblances.

(a) Basic Biblical Agreements

Both Luther and Vatican II use the same scriptural passages as the basis for their elaboration.

1 Peter 2:9 seems to be the nucleus of the arguments and is often repeated by both Luther and Vatican II. Luther writes in The Freedom of a Christian:

Hence all of us who believe in Christ are priests and kings in Christ, as 1 Pet. 2:9 says: "You are a chosen race, God's own people, a royal priesthood, a priestly kingdom...."¹

¹I.W. 31, p. 354; 40, p. 21.

The constitution of Vatican II the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity says:

They are consecrated into a royal priesthood and a holy people (see 1 Pet. 2:4-10)....(3)

In the same context along with 1 Pet. 2:9 both quote Rev. 5:10 "Thou has made a Kingdom of priests."²

Both make use of the simile in Eph. 5:32 to explain the intimate union of the believers with Christ. Luther explains:

...the benefit of faith is that it unites the soul with Christ as a bride is united with her bridegroom. By this mystery, as the Apostle teaches, Christ and the soul become one flesh (Eph. 5:31-32).³

Likewise Lumen Gentium explains the sacramental union that "signifies and partakes of the mystery of that unity and fruitful love which exists between Christ and His Church (see Eph. 5:32)." (11)

These sources explain further the believers' union and oneness in Christ. Quoting Gal. 3:28 Luther says:

...many similar expressions indicate our oneness with Christ - one loaf, one cup, one body, members of his body, one flesh, bone of his bone, and we are told we have all things in common with him (Rom. 8:32; Gal. 3:28).⁴

²L.W. 40, 21 and Abbott, p. 27 (Lumen Gentium: Article 10).

³L.W. 31, p. 351.

⁴L.W. 40, p. 20.

A similar explanation is given in Lumen Gentium:

There is in Christ and in the Church no inequality on the basis of race or nationality, social condition or sex, because "there is neither slave nor freeman; there is neither male nor female. For you are all "one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). (32)

Both these quotations equally express believers' unity with Christ by virtue of his faith; and as its consequence the equality that exists among the believers as the members of the body of Christ, the Church.

Also both Luther and Lumen Gentium cite Mk. 16:16 to prove the necessity of faith and baptism. Concerning this verse, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved", Luther gives a long argument against Anabaptists and affirms thus:

So this verse "Whoever believes", does not compel us to determine who has faith or not. Rather, it makes it a matter of every man's conscience to realize that if he is to be saved he must believe and not pretend that it is sufficient for a Christian to be baptized.⁵

Lumen Gentium, turning its attention to the Catholic faithful states:

In explicit terms, He Himself affirmed the necessity of faith and baptism (cf. Mk. 16:16; Jn. 3:3) and thereby affirmed also the necessity of the Church, for through baptism as through a door men enter the Church. (14)

Even though Luther and Lumen Gentium are speaking in different

⁵I.W. 40, pp. 239-241.

contexts, they both make use of the text Mk. 16:16 alike: They stress the necessity of faith and baptism. Luther aims to prove their inseparability also.

To explain the privileges and functions of the priestly people both Luther and Vatican II cite 1 Peter 2:5. Luther puts it: "Peter likewise commands in 1 Pet. 2:5 that we offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, that is, ourselves, not gold or animals."⁶ Lumen Gentium expresses the same idea, that "through all those works befitting Christian men they offer spiritual sacrifices and proclaim the power of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light (see 1 Pet. 2:4-10)." (10)

Again they speak of the union in charity in spite of the diversity of the priestly people in a similar manner quoting Rom. 12:4-5. Luther says:

"Through love be servants of one another". Through the figure of the members of the body Paul teaches in Rom. 12:4-5 and 1 Cor. 12:12-27 how the strong and honorable, healthy members do not glory over those that are weak, less honorable, and sick...; but on the contrary they serve them more, forgetting their own honor, health and power.⁷

Lumen Gentium in its turn, comments on the same passage thus:

⁶ L.W. 40, p. 29.

⁷ L.W. 31, pp. 302-303.

By divine institution Holy Church is structured and governed with a wonderful diversity. "For just as in one body we have many members, yet all members have not the same function, so we, the many, are one body in Christ, but severally members to one another" (Rom. 12:4-5). (32)

Thus both Luther and Lumen Gentium prove the same point from the same text.

These are only a few of the many but the main biblical resemblances, which one could see in Luther and Vatican II in their exposition of the priesthood of all believers. Luther and Vatican II appeal to the same Scripture texts and interpret them similarly. The above mentioned ones are the central texts for both Luther and Vatican II in their explanation of the priesthood of all believers.

(b) The Priesthood of Christ is the Foundation of the Priesthood of All Believers

The second similarity is in the derivation of the priesthood of all believers from the priesthood of Christ.

As Peter quotes Ex. 19:5-6 to write on the "royal priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:9), Luther also starts from the Old Testament.

...in the Old Testament God consecrated to himself all the first-born males. The birth right was highly prized for it involved a twofold honor, that of priesthood and that of kingship. The first-

born brother was priest and lord over all others and a type of Christ....⁸

Luther bases his argument on the priesthood of Christ. After explaining the priesthood of Christ in The Freedom of a Christian, Luther adds how the believers share with Christ the priesthood:

Now just as Christ by his birthright obtained those two prerogatives, so he imparts them to and shares them with everyone who believes in him.... Hence all of us who believe in Christ are priests and kings in Christ... Christ has made it possible for us provided we believe in him, to be not only his brethren,...but also fellow-priests.⁹

So, according to Luther, the priesthood of Christ is transmitted to the believers through faith.

Lumen Gentium follows the same procedure as that of Luther, but in a more elaborate manner proving that the common priesthood of the faithful is a participation in the one priesthood of Christ. The Constitution states:

Those who believe in Christ, who are reborn not from a perishable but from an imperishable seed through the Word of the living God (cf. 1 Pet. 1:23)...are finally established as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood." (9)

Is it not identical with Luther's explanation? The usage of the phrases "a chosen race", and "a royal priesthood" do signify the communal aspect of the priesthood of all believers

⁸ L.W. 31, p. 353.

⁹ L.W. 31, pp. 354-355.

agreeing with Luther in that respect also.¹⁰

(c) The Priesthood Originates in Baptism

Thirdly, Luther and Vatican II agree in locating the origin of the priesthood of all believers in baptism.

Luther in his Appeal to the Ruling Class of German Nationality says: "We are all consecrated priests through baptism."¹¹ and in his tract on the Consecration of Priests he again states that "all Christians are consecrated priests through baptism and that they inherit their priesthood by right of baptism."¹²

Cyril Eastwood commenting on the priesthood of all believers affirms:

Romanism and Lutheranism are agreed that the believer is united with his Lord. The beginning, and the sign, and the seal of this relationship is the sacrament of baptism: it unites all believers in a common dignity, a common calling, and a common privilege: it brings the believer into a true relationship with Christ through faith.¹³

In Lumen Gentium the chapters on The People of God,

¹⁰ See Supra. p. 12 and 13.

¹¹ L.W. 44, pp. 127-128.

¹² Weimar Edition of Luther's Works, 8.485.18ff. cited in B. A. Gerrish, op. cit., p. 405.

¹³ Cyril Eastwood, The Priesthood of all Believers (London: The Epworth Press, 1960), p. 15.

and on The Laity clearly say that the baptised are consecrated into priesthood:

The baptized, by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated into a spiritual house and a holy priesthood. (10)

These faithful are by baptism made one body with Christ and are established among the people of God. They are...made sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ. (31)

Hans Küng explains the point further:

Faith, baptism and receiving of the spirit together form the basis of the universal priesthood of all believers. Hence, one can say...that by baptism in the Spirit received in faith all believers are consecrated as priests."¹⁴

Yves Congar adds: "...the priesthood of the faithful is connected in the first place and principally with baptismal consecration."¹⁵

Thus Vatican II as well as Luther look at baptism as the initiation of the faithful into their priesthood in participation with Christ's priesthood and both base their teachings on the same scriptural foundation.

A joint statement of Lutherans and Catholics in

¹⁴Hans Küng, The Church, trans. Ray and Rosaleen Ookenden (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967), p. 373.

¹⁵Yves M. J. Congar, The Lay People in the Church, trans. Donald Attwater (Westminster: Newman Press, 1962), p. 130.

Dialogue¹⁶ supports my conclusion. It states thus:

We were reasonably certain that the teachings of our respective traditions regarding baptism are in substantial agreement, and this opinion has been confirmed at this meeting.

II. Functions of Believers as Priests

The teachings of Luther and Vatican II are alike in their interpretation of the priestly functions of believers.

One can pose the following questions to both Luther and Vatican II. What is the concrete content of this priesthood of all believers? Do they really exercise priestly rights and functions? If they do, what are they?

Luther's answer is found in his Freedom of a Christian:

We are also priests forever,...as priests we are worthy to appear before God to pray for others and to teach one another divine things. These are the functions of priests,... Christ has made it possible for us.... Therefore we may boldly come to the presence of God in spirit of faith...and cry "Abba, Father!" Pray for one another, and do all things which we see done and foreshadowed in the outer and visible works of priests.¹⁷

¹⁶ Paul C. Epie and William W. Baum, eds., Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue II (New York: National Lutheran Council, 1967), p. 85. It also states: "It was noted that the Council of Trent and the Formula of Concord say substantially the same things about baptism, and that contemporary theology in both traditions affirms what has been asserted in the past...." Ibid., p. 73.

¹⁷ L.W. 31, p. 355; italics are mine.

and also from his tract On the Misuse of the Mass:

The priesthood belongs to all Christians and its "offices" are spiritual sacrifice and proclamation of the Gospel.¹⁸

Luther speaks about those functions more precisely in his treatise Concerning the Ministry, which is an exhortation to the Bohemian Christians in 1523:

Mostly the functions of a priest are these: to teach, to preach and proclaim the Word of God, to baptize, to consecrate or administer the Eucharist, to bind and loose sins, to pray for others, to sacrifice, and to judge of all doctrine and spirits. Certainly these are splendid and royal duties. But first and foremost of all on which everything else depends, is the teaching of the Word of God.¹⁹

The Constitution Iumen Gentium speaks, in general, on the right of the faithful to exercise the functions of their priesthood:

Incorporated into the Church through baptism, the faithful are consecrated... to the exercise of the cult of the Christian religion. (11)

More explicitly, the council states in its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy:

Mothers Church earnestly desires that the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in Liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the Liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as a "chosen race,

¹⁸B. A. Gerrish, op. cit., p. 405. Italics are mine.

¹⁹L.W. 40, p. 21.

a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people" (1 Pet. 2:9; see 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism. (14)20

The above mentioned quotations are rather the introductions of Luther and Vatican II respectively of their teachings on the functions of the priestly people. At the very outset Luther clearly mentions the functions of the priests, while the Constitutions of Vatican II make an earnest appeal to the priestly people to exercise their priestly functions. Both are speaking about the functions of the priesthood of the faithful. While Luther says "as priests we are worthy to do all the functions of priests," The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy asserts that it "is their right and duty" by reason of their baptism. Luther also uses the same expression "right and duty" as he enumerates and explains those functions which I give below.

(a) The Teaching Office

This is the most important function according to Luther; he says:

The first office, that of the ministry of the Word, therefore, is common to all Christians. This is clear, from what I have already said, and from 1 Pet 2:9, "You are a royal priesthood that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his

marvelous light".²¹

Luther explains that Peter not only gives them the right, but the command, to declare the wonderful deeds of God. This certainly is nothing else than to preach the Word of God. He also quotes Paul's words 1 Cor. 14:16, "Each one of you has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation." And further on: "For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged" (1 Cor. 14:31). Luther concludes that "These passages very strongly and clearly corroborate that the ministry of the Word is the highest office in the Church, that it is unique and belongs to all who are Christians, not only by right but by command. Indeed, it is not a priesthood if it is not unique and common to all."²² He asserts again "that a Christian not only has the right but also the duty to teach the Word of God; and he fails to do so at the risk of his own salvation."²³

For Luther, the teaching office, here, means the preaching proper. He stresses two points: that it belongs to all and that it is the important priestly office.

²¹L.W. 40, p. 21.

²²See L.W. 40, pp. 22-23.

²³Weimar, ed., Luther's Works, II, 412, cited in Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 315.

Paul Althaus comments that the priesthood of all believers means that they have the right and duty to confess, to teach and to spread God's Word. This is the highest priestly office. Luther admittedly limits the public preaching of the word within the church to those, who have been called through the community and permits an individual, who has not been called, to preach publically only in genuine mission territory or in time of trouble when the called teacher fails or errs. Within these limitations, all have been called to proclaim God's word to one another. The community as a whole possesses the power and the unlimited authority and duty of such preaching.²⁴

A similar idea of the teaching office of the Church that it belongs to the whole community including both the hierarchy and the laity is given in the teachings of Vatican II. Concerning the communal aspect of the teaching office Lumen Gentium states that "The holy people of God share also in Christ's prophetic office" (12), which means, teaching and preaching. It clarifies:

Christ, the great Prophet, who proclaimed the Kingdom of His Father by the testimony of his life and the power of His words, continually fulfills His prophetic office.... He does this not only through the hierarchy... but also through the laity. For that very purpose He made them His witness and gave

them understanding of the faith and grace of speech (cf. Acts 2:17-18; Apoc. 19-10), so that the power of the gospel might shine forth in their daily social and family life. (35)²⁵

Hans K ung explains the implications contained in this teaching of Vatican II thus:

The preaching of the Word of God is entrusted to all, not just to a few: "But you are...a royal priesthood...that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). This preaching is performed not only in good conduct (1 Pet. 2:12) but also in words: "Always be prepared to make a defence to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you" (1 Pet. 3:15). The reference to darkness and light recalls the saying of Jesus at Mathew 5:14, which also refers to all believers: "You are the light of the world."... The primary

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By teaching office Vatican II means, not only preaching but also the other means of spreading the Word of God. That is why in the above quotation we see "the power of the Gospel must shine forth in their daily social and family life". Also Lumen Gentium expects that "they will better prepare the field of the world for the seed of the Word of God". (36) The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity points out the means other than preaching, to carry out the teaching office:

The very testimony of their life, and good works done in supernatural spirit, have the power to draw men to belief and to God. (6)

Thus the usage of the term "teaching office", here, has a broader sense in Vatican II than in Luther.

command which Jesus gives to his disciples is that of preaching the message of salvation (Mk. 1:35-38; 16:15; Mt. 18:18-20; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:17).²⁶

This explanation of Küng is more in agreement with the wordings of Luther.

Lumen Gentium adds that "The body of the faithful as a whole, . . . cannot err in matters of belief." (12) Thus, what Newman called the "sense of the faithful", which means, the faithful as a whole bear witness to the gospel, is recognized by the Council.²⁷

It is worth remembering here that since the renewal of the liturgy by Vatican II, it is a common practise for laymen to conduct the service of the Word and at times they preach too.

Also the Council, like Luther, stresses the importance of the Ministry of the Word in the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation saying:

²⁶ Hans Küng, op. cit., p. 375. This explains why there is such a variety of words in the New Testament, about thirty different terms, to describe the activity of preaching: speak, proclaim, announce, preach, teach, explain, say, testify, persuade, confess, charge, admonish, etc. The variety of different kinds of preaching allows each and every one to make his contribution towards the preaching of the gospel.

See also Karl H. Schelkle, Discipleship and Priesthood, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965), p. 59.

²⁷ Abbott, p. 29, footnote 40.

The ministry includes pastoral preaching, catechetics, and all other Christian instruction, among which the liturgical homily should have an exceptional place. (24)

Lumen Gentium while speaking on the duties of the priests says that "They are consecrated to preach the gospel" and again that they are to "announce the divine word to all". (23)

More explicitly, the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests states:

Since no one can be saved who has not first believed, priests...have as their primary duty the proclamation of the gospel of God to all. (4)

These passages are given applying to the ministerial priests. But what I wanted to point out is the importance they attach to the preaching and in that respect they are similar to Luther's stress on preaching.

To sum up this point, we can state that both Luther and Vatican II perfectly agree that all are called to preach the Gospel and it is the important priestly function.

(b) The Administering of Baptism, the Lord's Supper and Forgiveness of Sins

Luther speaks of these three functions in terms of the ministry of the Word and in its communal aspect in his treatise Concerning the Ministry.

"In baptizing", says Luther, "we proffer the Life-

giving Word of God, which renews souls and redeems from death and sins."²⁸ It is never disputed that every Christian has a fundamental right to baptize. From this Luther concludes that when women baptize, they exercise the function of priesthood legitimately, and that they do it not as a private act, but as a part of the public ministry of the Church which belongs only to the priesthood. By saying that they do it not as a private act, but as a part of the public ministry the communal aspect of the sacrament is stressed.

With regards to the Lord's Supper, Luther holds that "this function, too, like the priesthood, belongs to all", because "Christ at the Last Supper said, 'Do this in remembrance of me' (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24)...to all those then present and to those who in the future would be at table, to eat this bread and drink this cup."²⁹ He further argues that the Lord's Supper too is included in the ministry of the Word because of the fact that the Evangelists and Apostles seldom make mention of the Eucharist, and on the other hand, they ceaselessly emphasize the ministry of the Word. And he concludes: "Word and baptism, is conferred on all, then it can rightly be main-

²⁸
L.W. 40, p. 23.

²⁹
L.W. 40, p. 24.

tained that the lesser, the power to consecrate, is also so conferred, even if there be no direct authority of Scripture."³⁰

Forgiveness of sins is otherwise called the Power of the Keys. "The Keys" says Luther, "belongs to the whole Church and to each of its members, both as regards their authority and their various uses."³¹ He gives the reason, that the words of Jesus Mt. 18:15-18 conferring the power were addressed not only to the Apostles, but certainly to all brethren. Thus he stresses the communal aspect of the power of the Keys. Also he adds: "As we have declared already, the ministry of the Word belongs to all. To bind and to loose is nothing else than to proclaim and to apply the gospel".³² Thus the Keys are an exercise of the ministry of the Word and it belongs to all Christians according to Luther.

Paul Althaus explains that the forgiveness of sins is one form of preaching God's word to each other, the other forms being the actual preaching by the appointed ones, and others, each one, taking care of his brother with consolation of the word which he needs in his trouble. Thus all have been called to proclaim God's word to one another. The

³⁰ L.W. 40, p. 25.

³¹ L.W. 40, p. 27.

³² See L.W. 40, pp. 23-28.

community as a whole possesses the power and the unlimited authority and duty of such preaching. For Luther, the greatest good which the community possesses is that forgiveness of sins is to be found in it. The Third Article of the Creed says "I believe that the forgiveness of sins is to be found in this community and nowhere else". "The whole Church is full of forgiveness of sins".³³ This is the community's glory.

The communal aspect of Baptism, the Eucharist and forgiveness of sins, as Althaus explains, has been stressed by Luther. This aspect is important in this comparative study because it is in this respect that the teachings of Vatican II most closely agree with Luther. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy regards Sacraments³⁴ as "communal celebrations involving active participation of the faithful" (27). "Liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebrations of the Church." (26)

The fundamental right of anybody to administer baptism in the Church's name has never been questioned. With regard to The Lord's Supper, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy says that the rule, "to make provision for communal celebration involving active participation of the

³³See Paul Althaus, op. cit., pp. 315-317.

³⁴The concept of sacrament needs further examination which is outside the scope of this thesis.

faithful, applies with special force to the celebration of Mass," (27) so that all the faithful may be led to a "full, conscious, and active participation". (14) Accordingly today, in the celebration of the Eucharist, the old phrase "the priest who says the Mass" has been changed to "the president", and all other participants are called "ministers", of the celebration. Thus the communal aspect has become prominent as it is in Luther's teachings.

Concerning the forgiveness of sins Lumen Gentium says:

Those who approach the sacrament of penance obtain pardon from the mercy of God... They are at the same time reconciled with the Church. (11)

By saying "reconciled with the Church" the communal aspect is implied. To make it more explicit the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy decrees, that "The rite and formulas for the sacrament of penance are to be revised so that they give more luminous expression to both the nature and effect of the sacrament." (72)

Pans Küng explains the communal aspect of the Sacraments explicating the meaning implied in the teaching of Vatican II thus:

The preaching of the word of God occurs in a variety of ways in the Church. Even in formal worship it is not preached solely in the sermon. The word of God is associated with certain actions which are interpreted and divisively conditioned by the word....

As the Bible shows, the most important of these actions are baptism, the Lord's Supper, and absolution.... The command to perform these three actions is addressed not just to a few select persons, but to all the disciples of Jesus, to the whole Church.... The entire Church is given the power to baptize.... The charge of forgiving sins is laid upon the Church as a whole; Mt. 18:18 appears (as Luther explains) as part of a general directive to the disciples, or as part of the ordering of the community. The whole Church has power to forgive sins; and in communion with the Church, which exists in the communion of forgiveness of God and of Christ, every Christian is fundamentally empowered to take an active part in the forgiving of sins. And finally although the celebration of the Lord's Supper, first occurred in the limited circle of the twelve, the command "Do this in remembrance of me" (1k. 22:19), is a charge laid upon the whole Church. The whole Church is given power to eat the Lord's body and drink his blood, and every Christian is fundamentally empowered to take an active part in this eschatological meal of commemoration.... This indicates once again that the priesthood of all believers even in respect of formal worship is a completely concrete reality.³⁵

This explanation does not mean that every believer is authorized to administer all sacraments. It means only that the fundamental right of administering the sacraments belongs to the community. What it shows is the communal aspect of the sacraments. Küng makes that distinction clear saying:

The establishing of this fundamental right

³⁵See Hans Küng, op. cit., pp. 379-380. The note in the bracket is mine.

and duty to take an active part in baptism, the Lord's Supper and the forgiving of sins is not of course the same thing as determining who can and may be responsible for administering these sacraments in and for the community.³⁶

Here we are not speaking about the authorization of individuals to administer sacraments. The similarity I find here between Luther and Vatican II is only that they both emphasize the communal aspect of the Sacraments, namely they establish that the fundamental right and duty of administering the sacraments rests in the community.

(c) Offer Spiritual Sacrifices

Luther points out what Peter commands in 1 Pet. 2:5, that "we offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, that is, ourselves...." He affirms that in the Church today no other sacrifice is possible than that which is sacrificed and perfected by the Word of God, and since, the Word is common to all, the sacrifice too must be one pertaining to all. Now since there can be only spiritual sacrifices in the Church, as Peter says, that is, such as are in spirit and in truth, they can be offered only by one who is spiritual, that is, by a Christian who has the Spirit of Christ.³⁷ Cyril Eastwood explains, that

³⁶See Hens Küng, op. cit., pp. 379-380.

³⁷See I.W. 40, pp. 28-29.

"the self offering of each Christian is made on the grounds of sharing in the priesthood of Christ. This identification, which is effected through faith in our Lord's sacrifice enriches the meaning of the Mass." In support of his explanation Eastwood points out, that the idea is lucidly expressed by Pope Pius XII in his Mediator Dei:

They (the faithful) will consecrate themselves to the glory of God, desiring intensely to make themselves as like as possible to Jesus Christ who suffered so much, and offering themselves as a spiritual victim with and through the High Priest himself.³⁸

Paul Althaus concludes that in the final analysis, the Christian's priestly sacrifice is nothing else than Christ's own sacrifice. For the life of Christians is Christ's life. All sacrifices through which the community exists are an offering with and in Christ, in that one sacrifice which took place once, but is yet everywhere present, which cannot be repeated but lives on in the reality of the community.³⁹

There are two main points to note here, in Luther's explanation of the sacrifice. First, by virtue of faith a Christian is united with Christ and thereby spiritually

³⁸ Cyril Eastwood, The Royal Priesthood of the Faithful (London: The Epworth Press, 1963), p. 151.

³⁹ See Paul Althaus, op. cit., p. 315.

connected to the unique Sacrifice of Christ; secondly, animated by the spirit of Christ, each one can offer up his own sufferings that may occur in life, in his interpersonal-relationship. They are the spiritual sacrifices which are to be offered up in and through Christ.

These are the two points which the Council of Vatican II also mentions in its teachings regarding the offering of spiritual sacrifices. Lumen Gentium uses different phrases to explain the function of offering spiritual sacrifices. First, it shows the Christian's connection with Christ's unique sacrifice saying, "The faithful join the offering of the Eucharist by virtue of their royal priesthood." (10) Or again: "Taking part in the Eucharistic sacrifice which is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life, they offer the divine Victim to God, and offer themselves along with it." (11) Secondly, the Constitution speaks of the believers' self oblation by self-denial and active charity: "They likewise exercise that priesthood...by the witness of a holy life, and by self-denial and active charity" and through all the "works befitting Christian men they can offer spiritual sacrifices." Finally, it urges the faithful: "Therefore all the disciples of Christ, persevering in prayer and praising God (see Acts 2:42-47), should' present themselves as living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God (see Rom.12:1). (10)

Hans Küng has agumented this by claiming that the priesthood of all the believers is expected to make spiritual sacrifices, sacrifices wrought by the Spirit: "... a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:3). According to Paul, the Christian must offer the "sacrificial offering of faith" (Phil. 2:17), and the service of love as "a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God" (Phil. 4:18).⁴⁰

Thus, both Luther and Vatican II, make it clear that the spiritual sacrifices of the priesthood of all believers are twofold: one is the sacrifice of Christ to which they are joined as members of Christ; the other is not a part of worship in a sanctuary, but worship in the world in the midst of everyday life, the loving service of God. This is the practical sacrifice of the priesthood of all believers. Thus the priestly function of offering spiritual sacrifices takes its origin in the community's worship, especially in the Lord's Supper. But starting from there, it develops outwards and becomes effective in the world, in the service of one's fellow men.

⁴⁰ See Hans Küng, op. cit., p. 374.

(d) Mediatory Function

Luther asks the faithful "to pray for one another": "To pray for others is to go between and make intercession of God, which is befitting Christ only and all his brethren." Since, "Christ gave the Lord's prayer to all his Christians" and "since we are commanded to pray for all, certainly all are equally commanded to function as priests."⁴¹

For Luther, Christ's priesthood and the Christian's priesthood belong together as reconciling faith in Christ. Christ being the mediator between God and men, and Christian being united with Christ by faith, he could stand directly before God. He has received authority of substitution in Christ.⁴² That is why the function is one of mediation. This is carried out by "praying for one another."

Just as Luther asks the faithful, in so far as they are priests, "to pray for one another", Lumen Gentium also speaks of "exercising their priesthood... by prayer" (10) and further, exactly like Luther, it asserts, that the people of God is the one mediator with Christ: "Christ made present to us in His Body, which is the Church (the people of God), is the one Mediator." (14)

⁴¹See L.W. 31, p. 355; 40, p. 30.

⁴²See Paul Althaus, op. cit., p. 315.

As a necessary condition for mediation Luther speaks of direct access to God: "boldly come to God in spirit and faith...and cry "Abba, Father!" Here, Luther is emphasizing the freedom of the children of God; for he gives the reason: "Christ has made it possible for us, provided we believe in him..." Elsewhere Luther adds: "only Christians and all those who cry in spirit, "Abba, Father!" (Rom. 8:15), are genuine in their prayer and they alone are priests."⁴³

Similar to this idea of Luther, Lumen Gentium implies the freedom for a direct access to God as children to their father, in the following passage:

The heritage of this people are the dignity and freedom of the sons of God, in whose hearts the Holy Spirit dwells as in His temple. (9)

Is this not equal to Luther's invitation "come boldly to the presence of God...and cry 'Abba, Father!'"?

(c) Judging Doctrine

The next function which Luther mentions is to judge and pass on doctrine. He gives his reason:

For you will not be damned or saved by the teaching of another, be true or false, but by your faith alone...each of us, one by one, may prophesy, says Paul, a master and corrector even of Peter when he acted insincerely (Gal. 2:14 ff.).... And John

⁴³ L.W. 31, p. 355; 40, p. 31.

writes, "His anointing teaches you about everything" (1 John 2:27), that is, to put it briefly, a Christian is so certain about what he ought and ought not believe that he will even die, or at least be prepared to die for it.⁴⁴

Luther takes for granted the inerrancy of the Christian conscience in matters of faith. This teaching of Luther, as we have pointed out above⁴⁵ does not mean "the right of private judgment"; on the contrary, it is to be interpreted in its communal sense as for him the priesthood means "the congregation".

In this communal sense, Lumen Gentium states a conviction very similar to Luther's:

The holy People of God share also in Christ's prophetic office... The body of the faithful as a whole, anointed as they are by the Holy One (cf. Jn. 2:20, 17) cannot err in matters of belief. Thanks to a supernatural sense of faith which characterizes the People as a whole, it manifests this unerring quality when, "from the bishops down to the last member of the laity," it shows universal agreement in matters of faith and morals. (12)

Thus Luther and Vatican II seem to be alike in their teaching on the inerrancy of the Christian people as a whole in the matters of their belief.

⁴⁴ L.W. 40, pp. 31-33.

⁴⁵ Cf. supra pp. 13-14.

(f) The Demarcation of Functions

The last point of similarity is the reservation of priestly functions for the appointed or the ordained priests.

Luther restricts the exercise of the functions of the priesthood to the officially called and appointed ministers. In the Freedom of a Christian, it is said:

Although we are equally priests, we cannot all publically minister and teach. We ought not to do so even if we could.⁴⁶

And in the Babylonian Captivity of the Church he writes:

...we are all equally priests, that is to say, we have the same power in respect to word and sacraments. However, no one may make use of this power except by the consent of the community or by the call of a superior. (For what is the common property of all, no individual may arrogate to himself, unless he is called.)⁴⁷

Luther gives further explanation in his treatise Concerning the Ministry:

It is of the common rights of Christians that we have been speaking. For since we have proved all of these things to be the common property of all Christians, no one individual can arise by his own authority and arrogate to himself alone what belongs to all. ...Otherwise, there might be shameful confusion among the people of God. ...For it is one thing

⁴⁶ L.W. 31, p. 356.

⁴⁷ L.W. 36, p. 116.

to exercise a right publically; another to use it in time of emergency. Publically one may not exercise a right without consent of the whole body or of the Church. In time of emergency each may use it as he deems best.⁴⁸

Hence, Luther, in fact reserves the actual priestly ministry for the appointed ministers.

Vatican II makes a demarcation of the functions of priesthood not by restriction but by division. Lumen Gentium states:

These faithful are by baptism made one body with Christ and are established among the people of God. They are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and Kingly functions of Christ. They carry out their own part in the mission of the whole Christian people with respect to the Church and the world. (31)⁴⁹

When Lumen Gentium uses the expression "in their own way" and "their own part" evidently it implies, that there are other ways of sharing the priesthood of Christ and other parts in the mission of the Church. They are the "other ways" and the "other parts", in fact, set apart for the ordained priests.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ L.W. 40, p. 34.

⁴⁹ Italics are mine.

⁵⁰ Lumen Gentium has a lengthy chapter II which deals with the ordained ministers in the Church and their functions. It is after setting forth the functions of the hierarchy, that the constitution turns its attention to speak about the functions of the priesthood of the faithful.

Thus both Luther and Vatican II make demarcation regarding the functions of the priesthood and keep reservations for the appointed or the ordained ministers.

So, as far as we have compared the teachings of Luther and Vatican II on the priesthood of all believers, we have seen their convergence in different points. They agree completely in their starting point, that the priesthood of all believers is a participation in the priesthood of Christ and that it originates in baptism. They substantially agree in describing the functions of the priesthood, and they are factually similar in setting apart the actual ministerial services reserved for the specially appointed or the ordained ministers.

Cyril Eastwood, along with Paul Dabin (the two significant contributors in this area) agree with the conclusion at which we have arrived. Quoting Paul Dabin, Eastwood states: "Protestants also regard the Royal Priesthood as a functional participation in the triple office of Christ."⁵¹

But the continuation of Eastwood's remarks run thus:

Yet the Christian's role in Catholic theory is largely passive because of his dependence upon the various functions of the hierarchy.⁵²

⁵¹Cyril Eastwood, The Royal Priesthood of the Faithful (London: The Epworth Press, 1963), p. 154.

⁵²Ibid., p. 154-155.

This remark that the Catholic view of the functional participation is largely passive and that it is dependent upon the various functions of the hierarchy, can no longer be held valid in the light of Vatican II. For the Council, as we explained above, assures the faithful of their active participation in Christ's triple office "in their own way" - different from that of the clergy - and entrusts them to "carry out their own part".

Lumen Gentium specifies the active role of the laity:

Now the laity are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can she become the salt of the earth... Further laymen have the capacity to be deputed by the hierarchy to exercise certain church functions for a spiritual purpose. (33)

Thus, as worshipers whose every deed is holy, the laity consecrate the world itself to God. (34)

They will better prepare the field of the world for the seed of the Word of God. At the same time they will open wider the Church's doors, through which the message of peace can enter the world. (37)

Thus Lumen Gentium is liberal in stressing the active role of the laity in the Church.⁵³

⁵³As a result of this stress there are new institutions such as Diocesan Councils and Parish Councils in which "familiar dialogue" can be carried on between the laity and their pastors.

Against Eastwood's remark that the Christians' role is dependent on the special priesthood of the hierarchy, Walter Abbott comments:

The lay apostolate according to some earlier conceptions had been limited to the co-operation of the laity in the apostolic tasks proper to the hierarchy. The present document (Lumen Gentium), as well as the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, make it clear that while laymen may laudably assist in the hierarchical apostolate as collaborators, the term "lay apostolate" refers primarily to apostolic tasks pertaining to the laity as such.⁵⁴

Lumen Gentium points out the independent role of the laity by virtue of their call by God:

They are called there by God so that by exercising their proper function and being led by the spirit of the gospel they can work for the sanctification of the world from within, in the manner of leaven.... The layman is closely involved in temporal affairs of every sort. It is therefore his special task to illumine and organize these affairs in such a way that they may always start out, develop, and persist according to Christ's mind,... (31)

Here and throughout the constitution Lumen Gentium, pains are taken to dispel the common misconception that the laity are in all respects subject to, and dependent upon, the clergy. On the contrary, the Constitution teaches that there is a mutual relationship of support between the laity and clergy.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Abbott, op. cit., p. 59, footnote 167. Italics are mine.

⁵⁵ See Ibid., p. 53, footnote 165.

So Eastwood's remarks that the laity's functional role is largely passive and that it is dependent upon the functions of the hierarchy, is not so correct in the sense that the laymen's role is always subject to and dependent upon the functional role of the hierarchy. What we can assert is that each has its own role and their roles are related; that relationship is one of mutual support according to the teachings of Vatican II. It is at this point that the teachings of Vatican II on the priesthood of all believers differ from the views of Luther on the matter.

III. The Differentiating Factor: The Relation Between the Priesthood of all Believers and the Role of the Clergy

So far in this study we have observed various points of similarities, that exist between Luther and Vatican II in their teachings on the priesthood of all believers. Now, we will examine the differentiating points.

We have seen that Luther and Vatican II agree perfectly that all believers are priests, sharing the priesthood of Christ, and that all believers have priestly functions. Also we saw that there is a demarcation for the priestly functions of the believers: Luther sets apart some chosen and appointed ones, as the actual functionaries, whom he preferred to call "ministers". Vatican II makes

the demarcation, setting apart certain functions for the ones, who are traditionally called the ordained priests, or the hierarchy.⁵⁶ The role of Luther's "ministers" and Roman Catholic "priests" is what is usually called the ministry in the Church.

We are not treating the ministry here. What concerns us, in this thesis, is to find out how Luther and Vatican II relate the priesthood of all believers to the role of the clergy or the ministers.

For Luther, there is only one priesthood in the Church: that is, the priesthood of all believers. There is "no other priesthood", says Luther, "than that which the laity⁵⁷ possesses".⁵⁸ That means, there is no special priesthood for the ministers. The priesthood that the ministers possess is just the priesthood of all believers: nothing more. The priestly functions which they do are the

⁵⁶Including both Luther's "appointed ministers" and Roman's "ordained priests" I will be using a common term "clergy" or "ministerial priests", and their role as "ministry" to distinguish it from the priesthood of all believers.

⁵⁷Vatican II uses the term laity to mean all the baptized believers except those who are in holy orders (priests or otherwise called clergy) (Lumen Gentium 31). Luther also uses the term laity here in the same sense as Vatican II, to mean all the believers except those who are the ministers or otherwise called the clergy.

⁵⁸L.W. 40, p. 34.

very same functions which all believers could do; nothing more or nothing different.

Luther declares:

Here we take our stand: there is no other Word of God than that which is given all Christians to proclaim. There is no other baptis^t than the one which any Christian can bestow. There is no other remembrance of the Lord's Supper than that which any Christian can observe and which Christ has instituted. There is no other kind of sin than that which any Christian can bind or loose. There is no other sacrifice than of the body of every Christian. No one but a Christian can pray. No one but a Christian may judge of doctrine. These make the priestly and royal office.⁵⁹

If it is so, there arises the question: What is the need of a special ministry? Luther gives the answer that it is for the sake of order among the people of God:

Otherwise, there might be shameful confusion among the people of God, and a kind of Babylon in the Church, where everything should be done in order, as the Apostle teaches (1 Cor. 14:40).⁶⁰

And so, in fact, "those whom we call priests are really ministers...chosen by us. They fulfill their office in our name. The priesthood is nothing but a ministry."⁶¹
 "On this account," says Luther, "I think it follows that we neither can nor ought to give the name priest to those

⁵⁹L.W. 40, pp. 34-35.

⁶⁰L.W. 40, p. 34.

⁶¹L.W. 36, p. 113.

who are in charge of Word and sacrament among the people."⁶²
 According to B. A. Gerrish, Luther's claim, here, is that
 in being anointed to the common priesthood, Christians
 have committed to the ministers the duty of proclaiming
 God's Word.⁶³

Therefore the ministers actually are the appointed
 functionaries of the priesthood of all believers. This is
 how Luther relates priesthood and ministry according to his
 writings of the years 1520 and 1523.

In his works of 1520, The Freedom of a Christian,
The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, and An Appeal to the
Ruling Class of German Nationality, he sharply criticizes
 and attacks the Roman sacrament of ordination. He wants
 then to do away with the distinction between clergy and
 laity. In 1523 Luther confronts the problem: how can a
 congregation acquire ministers when there is no bishop
 available to ordain in the traditional manner. He answers
 the question for the congregation at Leisning, in Saxony,
 "that a Christian gathering or congregation has the right
 and power to judge all teaching, and to call, appoint and
 dismiss teachers, established and proved from Scripture".⁶⁴

⁶²L.W. 40, p. 35.

⁶³See B. A. Gerrish, "Priesthood and Ministry in the
 Theology of Luther", Church History, XXXIV (1965), p. 406.

⁶⁴Weimarer Ausgabe, ed., Luther's Works, II, 403-416,
 cited in B. A. Gerrish, op. cit., p. 406.

To support his argument he quotes 1 Cor. 14:30 explaining that Paul bids any Christian in case of emergency to stand up without a call. In the same year Luther repeats the argument to the Hussite Church in Bohemia. But in 1532 in his letter, On the Sneaks and Furtive Preachers, addressed to a Saxon magistrate, he deals with the opposite situation. In order to check the growing band of eager, self-made preachers, Luther revises his earlier interpretation on 1 Cor. 14:30. Here Luther's interpretation is that Paul was not inviting just any Christian to speak, but only the authorized prophets, when he said: "If a revelation is made to another sitting by, let the first be silent". Otherwise any drunk from the tavern might chime in... Hence Luther takes his stand on the divinely instituted parish system. The use of the term "layman" and "clergy" also reappears in this context and the priesthood of all believers plays here no role.⁶⁵

Thus there is a problem in understanding Luther as he relates priesthood and ministry differently in different situations.

There arises the question whether, for Luther, the special ministry rests on the common priesthood or on a direct divine institution. There are two ways of inter-

⁶⁵ See B. A. Gerrich, op. cit., pp. 406-407.

pretation; one which emphasizes the common priesthood as the foundation of special ministry and the other which emphasizes a direct-divine institution of the special ministry. The former holds that the congregation has a certain priority over the ministry both in time and rank. Against this, the latter argues that the existence of congregation itself depends on the ministerial proclamation, so that the ministry is prior to the common priesthood in time and rank.⁶⁶

An adequate answer to this question strictly pertains to a study of the ministry which is beyond the scope of this thesis.⁶⁷ My purpose here is just to point out that there is such a problem, and so, Luther is not clear enough in his theology in correlating the priesthood and ministry.

Now, in the teachings of Vatican II, on the other hand, ministry is a ministerial priesthood. Through the sacrament of orders, some Christians are singled out to exercise a special ministry among a priestly people, a

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 403.

⁶⁷However, based on the subject matter of this thesis one answer can be suggested thus: the ministry does not issue from the common priesthood as though it derives its authorization from the congregation. For Luther, the exercise of the ministerial functions rests on divine authority, not on "the will, commission, or consent" of the people. See B. A. Gerrish, op. cit., pp. 408-409.

ministry constituted by a new, a special way of sharing in the priesthood of Christ. The priesthood conferred by the sacrament of orders is called the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood: it is related to the baptismal priesthood of all believers precisely as service. This hierarchical priesthood is to serve the Christian people in such a way that they may exercise their own baptismal priesthood more intensely, i.e., that Christians become more effective teachers and worshippers and serve the kingdom with greater power.⁶⁸ One of the Council speeches enumerates the relations which Christ set up between the universal priesthood and the ministerial priesthood. They are:

1. To enable the layman to fulfill his priestly, prophetic and kingly office, Jesus Christ gave them the right to be supported, taught and ruled by the officers of the sacred hierarchy.
2. The High Priest himself works in the priestly ministry of the hierarchy so that the layman may have access to the eucharistic sacrifice and to the sacraments through the prophetic ministry entrusted to the Hierarchy.
3. Jesus Christ opens to the layman a sure path to an authentic knowledge and a deeper investiga-

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See Gregory Baum, "The Ministerial Priesthood", The Ecumenist, IV (1965), p. 5.

tion of the truth of the Gospel through the kingly ministry of the sacred Hierarchy.

4. Jesus Christ does not leave laymen orphans in their extremely difficult task of renewing all things in Christ but returns to give them courage and joy.⁶⁹

Joseph Marique points out that St. Paul in this matter makes a clear-cut distinction in 1 Cor. 3:9: "For we are God's helpers: you are God's tillage, God's building."⁷⁰ Lumen Gentium clearly states the relation:

Though they differ from one another in essence and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are nonetheless interrelated. Each of them in its own special way is a participation in the one priesthood of Christ. The ministerial priest by the sacred power he enjoys, molds and rules the priestly people. Acting in person of Christ, he brings about the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and offers it to God in the name of all the people. For their part, the faithful join in the offering of the Eucharist by virtue of their royal priesthood. (10)

A commentary of the above text is given recently by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education in Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis. It states:

⁶⁹ See Baile Joseph de Smedt, "The Priesthood of all the Believers", in Congar, Küng and O'Hanlon, Council Speeches of Vatican II, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1964), p. 27.

⁷⁰ See Joseph Marique, The Priesthood of the Faithful, (New York: Paulist Press, 1962), p. 22.

In different ways the various members of the Church share in that one same priesthood of Christ; the general, or common priesthood of the faithful constitutes a certain simple degree of this sharing, the faithful who through baptism and the anointing of the Holy Spirit "receive consecration as a spiritual house, a holy priesthood. It is their task, in every employment, to offer the spiritual sacrifices of a Christian man" (Lumen Gentium, 10). Priests share in the priesthood of Christ in a different way....

"In virtue of the sacrament of order, they are consecrated in the likeness of Christ, high and eternal priest (cf. Heb. 5:1-10; 7:24; 9:11-28), as genuine priests of the New Testament, for the work of preaching the gospel, tending the faithful, and celebrating divine worship" (Lumen Gentium, 23). For this reason, therefore, the

ministerial priesthood of priests surpasses the general priesthood of the faithful, since through it some in the Body of the Church are assimilated to Christ the Head, and are promoted "to serve Christ, their Master, Priest and King, and to share his ministry...." (Presbyterorum Ordinis, 1)

"There is an essential difference between the faithfuls' common priesthood and the priesthood of the ministry or the hierarchy, and not just a difference of degree.

Nevertheless, there is an ordered relation between them: one and the other has its special way of sharing the single priesthood of Christ" (Lumen Gentium, 10).

...Every priest (ministerial priest), however, is taken from among the people of God in order to be appointed on behalf of the same people. Though by the sacrament of order they exercise the office of father and teacher, "they too, like the faithful, are our Lord's disciples, and are called by God's grace to share his kingdom. For they are brothers among brothers with all who have been reborn in the font of baptism. They are likewise members of the

one same Body of Christ which all Christians are called to build up" (Presbyterorum Ordinis, 9).⁷¹

Thus the common priesthood of all the baptized provides the basis for, and requires for its completion, the ministerial priesthood of the ordained clergy.⁷² St. Augustine aptly applies both kinds of priesthood to himself: "For you I am a bishop but with you I am a Christian. The former is a title of duty; the latter, one of grace. The former is a danger; the latter, is salvation".⁷³

Nyles Bourke gives his reflections on this point in the light of Vatican II thus:

If there is a difference between the ministerial and the common priesthood and the difference consists in the former's having a peculiar relation to the priestly work of Christ, the Holy One of God, then within the sacred people of God there are those who in respect to their office have a holiness which sets them apart from other Christians, just as the fundamental Christian consecration, baptism, sets all the baptized apart from the rest of men as the "holy nation, God's own people".

Obviously, the priest's consecration is not

⁷¹ Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis (Rome: Vatican Polyglot Press, 1970), pp. 13-15. Notes in the brackets are mine. Presbyterorum Ordinis is the name of the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, cited above, Abbott, pp. 532-580.

⁷² Abbott, p. 27, footnote 30.

⁷³ St. Augustine, "Serm.," 340, 1: cited in Walter Abbott, op. cit., p. 59.

meant to raise a barrier between him and his fellow Christians any more than the consecration of the Christian is meant to raise a barrier between him and his fellow men.⁷⁴

The interrelationship between the two kinds of priesthood is kept up in their functions too, in the teachings of Vatican II. The priestly functions prescribed for each are the same only categorically. Actually they are the different portions of the same function. The manner of functioning also is different so that both the baptismal priesthood and ministerial priesthood can be active at the same time without overlapping each other's area or function and they do complement each other. This is why Lumen Gentium says: "They are in their own way" - not the same way as the ministerial priests "made sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ". And again, "they carry out their own part" - not the same part as that of the ordained priests - "in the mission of the whole Christian people". (31)

Now, to sum up, we can locate the difference between Luther and Vatican II in relating the priesthood of all believers to the role of the ministry, in their diverse conceptions of the ministry. They differ in determining the theological status of the ministerial priests. For

⁷⁴ Hyles E. Bourke, "The Catholic Priest: Man of God for Others" in The Priest Today and Tomorrow, (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1969), p. 15.

Luther; as we said above, the ministers are mere functionaries of the priesthood of all believers, something like hands for the body; for Vatican II the ministerial priests are ordinaries, like the head to the body. Head has a coordinating capacity which the hands have not.

In Luther's teaching the functional participation in the triple office of Christ is through a single existential relationship which is entered into by faith. It is not subjected to or related to any priesthood save that of Christ.

According to the view of Vatican II the functional participation in the priesthood of Christ is entered on by a process of gradation, namely by sacramental incorporation. It keeps a healthy relation with the ministerial priesthood in such a way that both kinds of priesthood support each other in exercising their functions and the ministerial priesthood complements the priesthood of the faithful. They differ in grade and in essence. But both are active. Their united energies are put forth for the building up of the Church.

An illustration from Luther will help us to understand the relation which he places between the priesthood of all believers and the role of the ministers.

When a minister is chosen "it is as

though ten brothers, all Kings' sons and equal heirs, were to choose one of themselves to rule the inheritance for them all.... They would all be kings and equal in power though one of them would be charged with the duty of ruling." Similarly, in the Christian Church, while all are called to be priests, some are particularly called to be ministers or pastors.⁷⁵

Therefore the ministers are representatives of the people. The ministers' priesthood is the same as that of the faithful. There is no difference in grade or in essence as it is said in the teachings of Vatican II. Lumen Gentium stresses also a power of the sacrament of orders:

By the power⁷⁶ of the sacrament of orders, in the image of Christ, the eternal high priest. They are consecrated to preach the Gospel, shepherd the faithful and celebrate the divine worship. (28)

Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis says about the power of the sacrament of orders thus:

⁷⁵G. Rupp, Luther's Progress to the Diet of Worms, p. 83, cited in Cyril Eastwood, The Royal Priesthood of the Faithful (London: The Epworth Press, (1963), p. 231.

⁷⁶Lumen Gentium does speak of the "power of the sacrament of orders" (10 and 18), but there is no formal definition of what this potestas is. There is no need to conceive of it as an ontic change of the person ordained. It is sufficient to see it as an authorization to hold an office and to perform specific ecclesial functions. (See Karl Rahner, LTK-Konzilskommentar, 1, pp. 211f.), cited in Harry J. McSorley, "Protestant Eucharistic Reality and Lack of Orders", The Ecumenist 5 (1967), p. 69.

By this power the priestly or hierarchic ministry differs from the general priesthood of the faithful not only in degree but essentially. For though, the faithful can and must have some part in the task of spreading the Gospel and in pastoral duties, only the man who has received the sacred order of priesthood can fully exercise the sacramental ministry, above all that of the Eucharist, from which the other ministries derive, and to which they are directed.⁷⁷

Thus the ordained priests, for Vatican II, are heralds of the Word, celebrants of the sacramental liturgy and shepherds and leaders among the people.

So, in short, the very basic difference between Luther and Vatican II is that Luther denies the sacramentality of the order and Vatican II holds it.

⁷⁷ Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis,
op. cit., pp. 16-17.

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing pages we have endeavoured to find out what is the priesthood of all believers, examining the writings of Luther and the documents of Vatican II.

Cyril Eastwood summarizes Luther's position as follows:

Because Christians share in Christ's High Priestly Ministry, they are all priests - yet they are not so for their own sake, but for others. Every Christian may offer the sacrifice of himself, may pray and preach, may take upon himself the responsibilities which belong to him as a member of the congregation. All this he may do because none of those things belong to the ministry (i.e. in the restricted sense) as a right. Priesthood belongs to Christ, and Christians possess it by their baptism and their faith, i.e. by sharing in what belongs to Christ. This priesthood is inward and spiritual and there is no other priesthood in the New Testament. The ordained priesthood is a necessity and is God's gift to the Church through the Church. The minister is first and foremost a member of the universal priesthood; his calling is confirmed by the congregation and charged with special duties. At his ordination he is publically recognized, proclaimed and commissioned by the whole Church, and in this way he becomes in St. Paul's phrase "servant of all" (1 Cor. 9).¹

Faul Dabin gives a summary of the Catholic stance thus:

¹Cyril Eastwood, The Priesthood of All Believers (London: Epworth Press, 1960), pp. 45-46.

The Royal Priesthood is a functional participation, both individual and collective, ... in the triple office of Christ as King, Priest, and Prophet: entered on by Baptismal incorporation into Christ; perfected in Confirmation and symbolized by the charismata; identifiable with the sacramental character of the Christian; admitting him to perform various acts of worship and cult; creating for him various moral and religious obligations: all without prejudice to the special priesthood of the hierarchy within the Body.²

If we compare the contents of those statements of either side they seem to agree except in the matter of the special priesthood of the hierarchy.

What Eastwood wrote in 1960 explaining the meaning of the priesthood of all believers, reflects the spirit of Vatican II:

The priesthood of all believers is to be understood as a spiritual privilege, a moral obligation and a personal vocation. The spiritual privilege is freedom of access to the presence of God; this implies a moral responsibility to the corporate fellowship of the Church through which the believer has learned of his spiritual privilege. It also carries with it the responsibility of regarding his secular vocation as the sphere in which his priesthood is exercised.³

²Paul Dabin, Le Sacerdoce Royal Des Fideles (Paris: 1960), p. 61 cited in Eastwood, The Royal Priesthood of the Faithful (London: The Epworth Press, 1963), p. 153. The phrase "The Royal Priesthood" and "The Priesthood of all Believers" are usually interchangeable; the former being prominent before the Reformation, the latter after it. See ibid., p. 1.

³Cyril Eastwood, The Priesthood of All Believers, op. cit., p. 80.

Considering the exposition of the priesthood of all believers as such, we see that Luther and Vatican II are similar. They are alike in setting the foundation of the doctrine in Christ's priesthood; in teaching that the faithful begin to participate in that priesthood of Christ by baptism; and in interpreting the functions of the priesthood.

They differ in correlating the priesthood and ministry as a result of their diverse conceptions of the role of the ministry in the Church. For Luther, there is only one priesthood in the Church, i.e., the priesthood of all believers; ministry is the official functionary of that priesthood. Whether Luther fits the ministry within or without the priesthood of all believers is not clear.

Eastwood gives the following conclusion:

The Ministry is a gift of Christ to the Church and is therefore not of human but of divine origin. It is set within the universal priesthood and in no sense above it. It is for the Church in the sense that all ministers are called to serve, not to rule.⁴

If the ministry is not of human but of divine origin, how can it be set within the universal priesthood is not clear in Luther's exposition.

⁴ Cyril Eastwood, The Priesthood of All Believers (London: Epworth Press, 1960), p. 246. To rule is to serve is an often emphasized phrase in the documents of Vatican II.

For Vatican II, of course, there is the priesthood of all believers; besides that, ministry is a priesthood too. This ministerial priesthood is in no way subject to the priesthood of all believers. Both kinds of priesthood in the Church are explained as the incorporation into the priesthood of Christ as a result of three sacraments, namely, baptism, confirmation and order. Baptism and confirmation constitute the priesthood of all believers making the believers members of Christ, the priest. Order confers the ministerial priesthood, making the ordained ministers share the power with the Headship of Christ, the Priest. Both the believers' priesthood and the ministerial priesthood are interrelated as the latter complements the former. Both are true and authentic, but essentially different as they are analogical realizations of their relationship with Christ.

Eastwood comes very close to this conclusion when he makes the following statement:

Since the ministries which serve faith, and those which serve love, take their origin in the same source, they possess the same dignity and are different aspects of the same priesthood.⁵

Vatican II seems to have advanced a step further than Luther in exposing the doctrine. That development is

⁵Ibid., p. 246.

the fact that it correlates the priesthood of all believers with the priesthood of the ministerial priests avoiding the ambiguity that occurs in Luther's explanation.

Gregory Baum gives an assessment of that development of Vatican II. He clarifies how it effects the ministerial priests' relation with the faithful. He says: we understand the ministerial priesthood as a share in Christ's office of teaching, sanctifying and leading men. The ministerial priest is first of all a man among men, a brother among brothers, as Jesus himself was, with a special service or function to perform. He is appointed to announce the Gospel. He is a missionary. In the liturgy, his words render present the living Word of God in the community. In this sense he is the father of all other Christians. But he is always a listener before he is a teacher. He teaches the Christian message and the doctrine of the Church. More than that, he must also teach men to look upon the present world and its problems in the light of the Gospel. To do this, the priest has no ready-made formulas. Only by being in dialogue with the people, by learning from their experience and striving together with them for a greater Christian understanding of human life will he be faithful to his office of teacher. Since the Spirit guides the Church through all her members, priest and people must be

united as a family in conversation so that the priest may exercise his teaching mission. The ordination to the ministerial priesthood, therefore, does not sever the priest from the people; on the contrary, he and they become closely united as brothers and friends. Appointing him as shepherd or leader among men, he is sent, as was Christ, to reconcile and unite men into a single family, wherever he is, he must be a creator of community. He serves Christ and encounters him in his brothers.⁶

The Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches praises that "the decision of Vatican II to put the Chapter on the People of God in Lumen Gentium before that on the Hierarchy is significant."⁷

Albert C. Cutler, in his Response to Lumen Gentium states that "the notion of the laity as the presence of the Church in the world (Chapter IV) restores yet another biblical emphasis upon the general priesthood of all believers (as constituted by their baptism and confirmation)."⁸

It is interesting to notice that the theology of

⁶See Gregory Baum, "The Ministerial Priesthood", The Ecumenist, IV (1965), p. 6.

⁷The Meaning of Ordination, A Study paper of the Faith and Order Commission (1969), p. 6.

⁸Albert C. Cutler, "A Response" in Abbott, op. cit., p. 104.

the priesthood of all believers has been wedded to liturgical actions in the renewed liturgy of Vatican II. The truths inherent in the doctrine have been incorporated in the liturgical practices.

Eastwood notices such changes:

It is our contention that in these developments in Catholic thought and practice - the participation of priest and people in the Mass, the adoption of the basilican position, the use of the vernacular worship, and the granting of the cup to the laity - the priesthood of all believers is realized.⁹

Jaroslav Pelikan, as a Reformation scholar, appreciates the centrality of Scripture, restoration of preaching and other liturgical changes. He says that they "are bound to evoke the enthusiastic approval of everyone who believes that the Reformation was the work of the Holy Spirit." He states further:

There is much in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy for which Christians who stand in the heritage of the Reformation ought to be grateful. In fact, several of the fundamental principles represent the acceptance, however belated, of the liturgical program set forth by the Reformers: The priesthood of all believers (14); the requirement "that the faithful take part knowingly, actively, and fruitfully...."¹⁰

⁹Cyril Eastwood, The Royal Priesthood of the Faithful, op. cit., pp. 152-153.

¹⁰Jaroslav Pelikan, "A Response" in Abbott, op. cit., pp. 130-132.

Finally he hopes that if the teachings of Vatican II are translated into action "it will indeed, as the Council Fathers hope, contribute to the unity of all who believe in Christ."¹¹

In the final analysis, the concluding assertion of the World Council of Churches that "more appears to join us than what separates us in problems as well as basics"¹² is our conclusion too.

There is only one basic problem which is the crucial question between Luther and Vatican II in their teachings on the priesthood of all believers. That is in correlating the priesthood of all believers and the role of the ministry. In fact, the point at issue is the sacramentality of the ministerial priesthood. Luther denies it: Vatican II holds it. It could be settled in ecumenical dialogue which is in progress. There is hope because of the new conceptions of the sacramentality.¹³

¹¹ Ibid., p. 182.

¹² Meaning of Ordination, op. cit., p. 32.

¹³ For example F. J. Van Beeck says: Validity of a sacrament can be understood as a "juridical claim to ecclesiastical recognition...the finishing touch" of every normal sacramental celebration. F. J. Van Beeck, "Towards an Ecumenical Understanding of the Sacraments", Journal of Ecumenical Studies, 3 (1966), p. 63.

Van Beeck calls attention to the fact-acknowledged by Vatican Council II - that Protestant Churches are Churches in

The fact, that Luther and Vatican II are so similar in their teachings on the priesthood of all believers and that they differ mainly in the way they correlate that priesthood and the ministry, leads me to suggest the following manner of correlation in which, perhaps, they both could find satisfaction. The following are the undisputed datums for me, to begin with.

The priesthood of Christ is absolutely unique. All the faithful share in this one priesthood. There is but one priest, Christ; one priesthood, Christ's. The faithful are incorporated into that Priest and share in that priesthood.

some real sense. And "where there is Church, there is sacrament". Van Beeck, op. cit., p. 73. Both cited in Harry J. McSorley, "Protestant Eucharistic Reality and Lack of Orders", The Ecumenist, 5 (1969), pp. 69-70.

The Vatican Council II, Decree on Ecumenism makes a significant statement: The ecclesial Communities separated from us lack that fullness of unity with us.... Nevertheless, when they commemorate the Lord's death and resurrection in the Holy Supper, they profess that it signifies life in communion with Christ and they await His coming in glory. For these reasons, dialogue should be undertaken concerning the true meaning of the Lord's Supper, the other sacraments, and the Church's worship and ministry. (n.22). Abbott, p. 364.

Van Beeck comments on this statement thus: We can find in n. 22 of the Decree on Ecumenism an implication that... holy orders is seen rather in terms of the gifts of grace and of ecclesial authority to serve God's people by leading them in the Eucharistic mystery - the sign and cause of unity - in order and unity. Order and unity are mutually dependent aspects of the Church. See Van Beeck, op. cit., p. 96, cited in Harry J. McSorley, op. cit., p. 74.

The priestly body, then, is all the faithful, who form the body of Christ. All that is certain.

It would, then, seem logical to draw the following conclusion: if, in the Church there exists the so called ministerial priesthood, a priesthood other than that of all the faithful, which is the priesthood of Christ, then it can only be a public function at the service of this priestly people. The ministry of such men is only a service which allows the faithful to express and exercise their priesthood. This is the conclusion at which Luther arrived.

But Christ did not create such ministerial priests. It was the apostles that Christ instituted, and nothing else. The mission of these apostles is to found the Church by preaching the Gospel throughout the whole world. This apostolate is a ministry entered upon by a self commitment and an official appointment for the evangelisation of the world. We could see that, in fact, it is this apostolic ministry that the ministers or the ministerial priests carry out today. Therefore, what is usually called ministry or the ministerial priesthood is nothing other than the apostolate. The term priesthood¹⁴ is inaccurately used

¹⁴In the New Testament only Christ is called a priest (hierereus), and the church as such a royal priesthood or a priestly people; sacerdotal terminology is not used with reference to the leaders and pastors of the church. We have to wait until the beginning of the third century before it is accepted usage to speak of the hierarchy as priests, and

to refer to the ministry which is really the apostolate and so it is confused with the priesthood of all believers. If we continue to use the term ministerial priesthood for the apostolate it is to be understood specially as the ministry of the evangelisation and of redemption of the world - not as the ministry of the priesthood of all believers.

The Church was rooted and incorporated in the group of the apostles. The apostles were the Church in her principle, representing not only the future bishops and priests, but also and even first of all the new people which will be called the Church.

then the term is more commonly used of bishops than of presbyters. David H. Power, Ministers of Christ and His Church (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1969), p. 38.

Nyles Bourke states: The New Testament never uses the word hierous, "priest", for any individual with special powers in the church. When using it of Christians, it applies the word, and its correlative hierateuma, "priesthood", to the entire community. For instance, we read in Revelation 1:5f, "To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father,..."; similarly, in Rev. 5:9f, "...from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and hast made them a kingdom and priests to our God..." (cf. also Rev. 20:6). And there is the important text of 1 Peter 2:9, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood (basileion hierateuma), a holy nation, God's own people," which echoes the promise of Exodus 19:5f, "...you shall be to me a kingdom of priests..." Apart from these few instances in which the entire Christian people is called a priesthood and its members priests, the New Testament confines the term "priest" (or "high priest"), except when it speaks of Jewish or pagan priests, to Jesus alone. See Nyles H. Bourke, "The Catholic priest: Man of God for Others" in The Priest Today and Tomorrow, (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1969), p. 4.

Christ gave the apostles no other mission, no other powers, and made no other requirements than the mission and powers that He conferred on the entire Church, and the requirements He made for all the faithful. But in the apostles He concentrated the mission, the powers, and the requirements.

I don't know if one can find in all the Gospels a single word addressed to the apostles as such that is not equally valid for the entire Church.

Christ calls His apostles to Him: "Come, follow me" (Mt. 4:19), shares His secrets with them as friends (Jn. 15:15), and demands that they bear fruit" (Jn.13:16). These same texts are equally valid for the entire Church. She is also called to follow Christ (Mt. 8:34), in the intimacy of His knowledge (Jn. 10:14), and to bear fruit (Jn. 15:1-5).

Even more, the words which announce to the apostles their priestly consecration in the death and the resurrection of Christ: "For them I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth" (Jn. 17:19), also express the consecration of all the faithful. They also, through baptism, share in the same mystery in which the apostles were consecrated. One becomes an apostle and one becomes a Christian by communion in the same mystery.

The powers and the mission conferred on the apostles,

"You will be my witnesses", "Make disciples of all nations", are conferred on the entire Church, which is the witness of Christ and His apostle in the world. The command to celebrate the Eucharist: "Do this in memory of me", obliges the entire Church. "By the sacred anointing of the sick and the prayer of her priests, the whole Church commands those who are ill to the suffering and glorified Lord". (Inuen Gentium II). The power to bind and to loose accorded to Peter and the other apostles (Mt. 16:19; Jn. 20:23) seems, according to another text, to be conferred on the assembly of brothers (Mt. 18:18). For the entire Church receives the Holy Spirit "who is the remission of sins", to her as a whole is confided the dispensations of the Spirit and the remission of sins.¹⁵

We have already learned that Luther and Vatican II agree in the communal aspect of the above mentioned points. Also we know that these are the powers and the mission directly conferred on the apostles. This identity of mission of the apostles and of the whole Church, and this participation in the same powers, can only be explained by a personalization in the apostles of what is common in the Church, by a condensation in their person of the ensemble of the Church, of her duties, and of her powers. The Church is concentrated

¹⁵ See F. X. Durrwell, "The Priest in the Church", Communication, 1 (1967), p. 8.

and polarized in the apostolic group.¹⁶

Therefore, the place of the apostle in the Church is not to be conceived as a part integrated into a whole, or as an element added to the body of the faithful; rather it is the entire Church which is incorporated in a certain number of her faithful, in the apostles.¹⁷

Here, collectivity is conceived as concentrated in a limited group. In this manner we should conceive the relation between the apostolate (the ministerial priesthood) and the priesthood of all believers.

According to the above conception the apostles are not merely the delegates of the assembly, as we are led to think when we look upon the priesthood of ministry as a pure function. The apostolic word precedes the faith of those who will believe in their word. The apostolate (ministerial priesthood) cannot receive its function from

¹⁶ See ibid., p. 9.

¹⁷ See ibid., p. 9. To help us to understand how the apostle is distinguished from and exceeds the others by a greater union to the ensemble, and how the powers common to the entire Church can be polarized in certain faithful, the apostles, we have the example of the apostolic collegiality. All the bishops share the supreme mission and responsibility of the Church and yet this responsibility is personalized in one of them. Hence the emergence of a successor to Peter because of this concentration. This emergence does not separate him from the rest of the episcopal body; rather it plunges him deeper into it, making him the personal possessor of what belongs to the entire body.

the community, from other faithful, because it exists before them¹⁸; the apostolate is a concentration of the reality of the Church and it is primordial.

If the apostolate is not a function added to the common priesthood of all believers, then it follows that the holy order which creates the apostles (bishops, priests, deacons) does not add its effects to those of baptism. The apostolic grace is now a "newness" through ecclesial fullness. For, outside of quantitative realities, the fullness is never arrived at through addition. This fullness is primordial; it is achieved by complete communion with the source in which, up until now, one has only partially communicated. Both, baptism and holy orders are a communion in the same mystery of salvation. Holy Orders should be understood as one starting with Christ, who draws one towards Him, along a path opened by baptism and leading to His final fullness.¹⁹ Therefore, between the laity and the ordained priests there is a difference in the participation in the power of Christ even though, nobody would deny that the grace of baptism carries with it some ministerial aspects. The baptized participates in the priesthood of Christ; the ordained one is assigned to the apostolate also.

¹⁸ See loc. cit.

¹⁹ See ibid., p. 10.

Now it is not necessary to accentuate the differences between the ordained priest and the layman. The Christian people is a united people, in total by mutual communion. We tend to oppose the priesthood and the lay state when we define one by the other, instead of defining both of them by Christ who is the fullness and the ensemble of the Church. In proclaiming the royal priesthood of the people of God, the epistle of St. Peter does not exclude the apostles as such (and their successors) from this people and this dignity. They are first among this people, and their priesthood as well.²⁰

The specific character of the priest does not separate him from the layman; it accentuates the mutual communion. Lumen Gentium says: "For the distinction which the Lord made between sacred ministers and the rest of the people of God entails a unifying purpose". (32)

For the difference is in a concentration of the ecclesial reality, in a greater social role; and a greater social and ministerial role cannot have the effect of separating: it can only unite the priest closer to the people, giving him more the character of a corporate personality.²¹

²⁰ See ibid., Loc. cit.

²¹ See ibid., p. 11.

Also, the apostle becomes, in Christ the man of the apostolic duty of the entire Church, the man par excellence of the ecclesial liturgy, who gathers together the entire people in his prayer. The schema of the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests says about the apostolic mission that "The mission of its very nature comprises teaching and governing as well as cult...."²²

The great apostolic liturgy is the redemption, the evangelisation of the world. The sacraments are integrated into the work of evangelisation. Baptism is celebrated to make disciples of Christ (Mt. 18:19); the Eucharist is celebrated to bring the entire people into the "consecration" of Christ. Penance is to reconcile the sinner with God in Christ. The administration of sacraments, in fact, every activity we are tempted to call priestly is a means among others for the priest (apostle) to accomplish his primordial mission, the evangelisation of the world.²³

This is the reason why the administration of the sacraments has become an ordinary work of the priest (apostle). But that need not be the monopoly of the apostolic mission.

If the apostolate (ministerial priesthood) and the lay state are defined, not by contrast, but by their relation

²² David H. Power, op. cit., p. 145.

²³ See F. X. Durrwell, op. cit., p. 4.

to the whole, it would seem vain to want to put precise limits on the activity belonging to anyone in the Church. A special domain need not be reserved to anybody; each can take part, in different ways, in the total activity of the Church. The entire people, with apostle at its head takes part in the mystery of redemption. The entire Church has the responsibility of preaching the Gospel to the world. Through all her members the Church is a sacrament of Christ's presence in the world, of the incorporation of men into Christ, of the effusion of the Spirit and of the remission of sins.²⁴

Thus in the preceding few pages we have held that the priesthood belongs to all the believers; the ministerial priesthood is nothing other than the apostolate of the Twelve; and that this apostolate is the Christian institution itself, at its source. We have related the priesthood of all believers and the role of the ministry supplanting the term "apostolate" for the ministerial priesthood and applying the principle that collectivity could be conceived as concentrated in a limited group. We have reserved the term priesthood exclusively for the priesthood of all believers as Luther wants it and we have placed the ministry on a pedestal of "apostolate" giving its distinction in essence

²⁴ Ibid., p. 11.

and grade as Vatican II holds it. In suggesting such a relationship we have not differed in the fundamentals either from Luther or from Vatican II. Therefore, I hope, it should have more ecumenical significance.

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