The Eucharistic Locus of the Presbyterate in Aquinas and Zizioulas: A Proposal for a Theology of the Priesthood

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ABSTRACT:

The contemporary revival of Eucharistic ecclesiology has occurred alongside a new understanding of the episcopacy as a distinct grade of holy orders. Both of these developments make possible a new synthetic understanding of the presbyterate, building on classical theological approaches to orders that incorporate both of these perspectives. In this essay, I will attempt to show how the theology of the presbyterate articulated by Thomas Aquinas might help supplement and be supplemented by that of John Zizioulas. The synthesis I propose has the merit of corresponding with much of the classical approach to orders, while advancing a new thesis on the Eucharistic role of the presbyterate that establishes a clearer connection between contemporary ecclesiology and the theology of holy orders.

KEYWORDS:

Holy orders, presbyterate, episcopacy, Eucharist, *communio* ecclesiology

Of the theological developments at the Second Vatican Council, the articulation of a distinct theology of the episcopacy is among the most significant. In resolving the disputed question regarding the sacramental character of the ordination of bishops, centuries of doctrinal development regarding the episcopal character found their culmination.[[1]](#footnote-1) In the post-conciliar period, one of the most noteworthy theological achievements has been the development of a Eucharistic ecclesiology.[[2]](#footnote-2) What has been neglected in the midst of both of these developments is a coherent theology of the presbyterate which incorporates and reconciles both of these perspectives. After the conciliar developments, many aspects of traditional theology on the subject were put in question, further endangered by the uncertain results of historical-critical biblical and positive theology, which often undermined traditional positions on the presbyterate.[[3]](#footnote-3) The nature of the presbyterate was unclear, and a certain kind of theological crisis ensued.

Theologians attempting to develop a theology of the presbyterate that corresponded to the developments of the council, especially as contained in the scant theological material relevant to the presbyterate in *Lumen Gentium* and *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, often focused on the presbyterate as sharing in the threefold office of Christ as priest, prophet, and king. This aimed to mirror language from the conciliar documents. Such a theory remains a dominant motif in recent work on the presbyterate as well.[[4]](#footnote-4) Nevertheless, the conciliar documents themselves provide no distinct theological approach which facilitates reconciling the insights of a Eucharistic ecclesiology to the sacramental character of holy orders. Thus, while themes such as the three-fold office remain relevant, the theology of the presbyterate continues to exhibit lacunae in comparison with both theologies of the episcopate and diaconate, and continues to raise problems in clearly distinguishing the ministerial from the universal or common priesthood of the baptized.[[5]](#footnote-5)

John Zizioulas (1931–) has made inroads in linking a clear theology of holy orders with the constitution of the Church resulting from the Eucharist, but has focused almost entirely on the role of the episcopate. In this essay, I will attempt to show how the theology of the presbyterate articulated by Thomas Aquinas might help supplement and be supplemented by that of Zizioulas. The contemporary notion that the ways in which Eucharistic roles normatively establish the relationality and *communio* of the Church can, however, be explicitly used to ground the sacramental nature of holy orders: particularly, the specific way in which a presbyter is able to celebrate the Eucharist, and others in the Church cannot, can be taken as the source of the distinctive character of the presbyterate. This theology has the merit of corresponding with much of traditional theory while remaining at the heart of contemporary ecclesiology and teaching concerning the presbyterate, helping elucidate a clearer connection between contemporary ecclesiology and holy orders. After offering a reconciliation of these theologies, I will begin to respond to some objections, illustrating the worth of this theory for contemporary theology of holy orders.

**1. EUCHARISTIC ECCLESIOLOGY**

Both of the theological figures I will contrast are well-known among contemporary scholars, and both come from radically different backgrounds both theologically and historically; in the discussion here, however, I will prescind from many questions of historical context to consider systematic implications of their sacramental theology of holy orders.[[6]](#footnote-6) It is helpful for this reason to begin with the thought of John Zizioulas, nearer to our own day and more immersed in contemporary theological discussions. Where St. Thomas works from within the tradition of Peter Lombard and Augustine, Zizioulas’s ecclesiological insights, coming from the Orthodox tradition, derive in part from the work of Fr. Nicholas Afanasiev (1893–1966).[[7]](#footnote-7)

The ecclesiology developed by Afanasiev parallels a recovery of Eucharistic theology in the Western Church, expressed in the famous declaration of Henri de Lubac that, “the Eucharist builds the Church, and the Church makes the Eucharist.”[[8]](#footnote-8) Afanasiev, attempting to reconcile Western and Eastern approaches to ecclesiology, focused on the Eucharist as the locus of unity. The Eucharistic assembly is itself the source of the being of the Catholic Church, establishing all constituent relationships of communion in the relationship of the members to the Eucharistic sacrifice—including the ordained priesthood. This ecclesiology emphasizes the hierarchical element only indirectly, as the Eucharist requires a hierarchical presider (ideally a bishop), giving priority to the local church as the primary instantiation or realization of the Church universal.[[9]](#footnote-9) Despite this, Afanasiev was significantly receptive to Western papal claims, while hostile to conciliarism as a foreign import into Christianity. The difficulty with his theology is its particularism, tending toward congregationalism. Consequently, Afanasiev’s ecclesiology, while influential, did not adequately represent Catholic or Orthodox ecclesiological realities, both of which involve a more heavily hierarchical and universal element in how they envision ecclesiological communion.

Zizioulas set out to correct these deficiencies, while following in the main the same intuition of Eucharistic ecclesiology that guided the work of Afanasiev. Zizioulas avoids tendencies toward congregationalism which might be present in the work of prior Orthodox theologians like Afanasiev, instead emphasizing the primary role of the bishop in the celebration of the local Eucharist. Highlighting the way the bishop functions within the Eucharistic liturgy points to structures of communion broader than the local assembly—in fact, hierarchical, trans-local—which are immanent to each local celebration of the liturgy.[[10]](#footnote-10) Zizioulas’s position is elaborated in *Eucharist, Bishop, Church,* where he attempts to illustrate, using both historical and systematic considerations, the role of the bishop in the early Church as constitutive of celebrations of the Eucharist and the unity of the Church.[[11]](#footnote-11) He begins by noting as an ecclesiological presupposition two principles: first, that the Church should be primarily understood as the Body of Christ—a mystical, Christological body into which believers are incorporated—and, second, that this incorporation occurs in its primary form in the Eucharist (even as baptism marks the temporally first incorporation, the Church continues to be incorporated and has its goal in the completion of initiation at the Eucharist[[12]](#footnote-12)). This is not to say that the Eucharist is the only vehicle for unity, but that it exemplifies a paradigmatic and a central place that has ontological priority in the Church’s life.[[13]](#footnote-13)

Zizioulas’s theology of holy orders focuses heavily upon the role of the bishop as the guarantor of an orthodox and canonical Eucharistic assembly. Holy orders has a clear connection to the Eucharist—it is one of the few sacraments never to be divorced from the Eucharistic context in its transmission.[[14]](#footnote-14) He sees the aforementioned ecclesiological principles expressed in two ways in the early Church, which have implications for orders; first, the Eucharist was understood to be “the Church”—the assembly of the Eucharist—and, second, that all orders found expression and context within the Eucharist.[[15]](#footnote-15) Specifically, the bishop was constituted as the celebrant at the Eucharist *par excellence—*so much that, in fact, the earliest documentary evidence shows him as primarily a liturgical president, surrounded by deacons and presbyters.[[16]](#footnote-16) Zizioulas extrapolates that the emergence of the monepiscopacy was an organic development in light of the unity of the Eucharist—one bishop means one Eucharistic assembly in a particular locale. The consequences for ecclesiology are clear: the unity of the Eucharistic assembly is maintained through a canonical bishop in communion with other bishops, the local diocese (as the place of the Eucharistic assembly) has ontological priority over the universal Church, and, critical for our purposes, the bishop’s leadership in the Church essentially flows from his status as divinely-constituted primary or ordinary celebrant at the Divine Liturgy.[[17]](#footnote-17) Zizioulas is clear in his ecclesiological reasoning, much of which has already been discussed by other authors. But there are problematic aspects in his understanding of the role of the universal Church in this theory, as the local Eucharist is identified heavily with the Church. Zizioulas sees the bishop, and holy orders more generally, as ontological relationships within the Church, so that both ministerial and “common” priesthood involve relationship toward Christ in the liturgy. So, for example, because there is no universal Eucharist, there is no corresponding universal ecclesial structure; there is only communion between bishops, expressed in liturgical commemorations of the canonical bishop, metropolitan or patriarch.[[18]](#footnote-18)

Zizioulas’s theology of holy orders is implicit in other ecclesiological reflections, but the main contours are clear. The Eucharist constitutes the Church, and holy orders are divinely and sacramentally established, “vertically” originated relationships that constitute ministers in relationship to the Church via a relationship to the Eucharist. Where this theory of holy orders becomes particularly problematic is in its theology of the presbyterate. Zizioulas’s theology focuses on the *bishop* as celebrant of the Eucharist, and, following Alexander Schmemann, sees the rise of presbyteral celebrations of the Eucharist as an aberration.[[19]](#footnote-19) The deacon poses fewer problems in this theory, as he forms a link between priesthood and laity, unable to offer sacrifice directly and consecrate the Eucharist, but able as intermediary to receive the gifts of the faithful.[[20]](#footnote-20) The priest, however, cannot be constituted by his role as celebrant of the Eucharist—this would leave no distinction between him and the bishop (because the latter is the unique celebrant). Attempting to follow the lead of the *Apostolic Tradition*, Zizioulas sees the presbyter as originally a teacher and counselor, with no right to offer the Eucharist initially other than as a (ceremonial) concelebrant.[[21]](#footnote-21) The presbyter eventually came to offer the Eucharist in exceptional circumstances, but not as his primary function. Later, the rise of parishes made this seem the fundamental duty or role of presbyters and confused the theological basis for their order.[[22]](#footnote-22) The bishop, by contrast, became a teacher and leader when, in fact, his office was *not* to teach but to celebrate the liturgy.[[23]](#footnote-23)

This nevertheless raises two distinct problems. First, the ability of the presbyter to celebrate the Eucharist *at all* remains unexplained. If his role was merely as a teacher and administrator of the Church, we would not want to claim that Eucharist celebrated by presbyters is invalid (and the Eucharist of a bishop the only valid liturgy!). On the other hand, if the grace of the presbyteral order has no intrinsic relationship to the Eucharist, and he was allowed to celebrate the Eucharist by *fiat* of the bishop*,* this would undermine the whole rationale for requiring sacramental consecration as a priest to celebrate the Eucharist. Why would, then, a deacon or qualified lay person not be able to celebrate the Eucharist? Without an “intrinsic” connection between presbyteral ordination and the Eucharist, the presbyter cannot be adequately distinguished from the bishop in any meaningful way—either they are both properly liturgical celebrants, or there must be different grounds for their distinct orders. Second, it seems problematic to ignore administration and teaching as integral to the episcopal charism. In fact, as Zizioulas himself remarks, the bishop is the guarantor of orthodoxy and the only one who was originally able to give the Eucharistic homily.[[24]](#footnote-24) If that is the case, it seems teaching remains critical to our understanding of the bishop and cannot be divorced as a purely ancillary function.

**2. THE THOMISTIC APPROACH TO HOLY ORDERS**

The theological contributions of St. Thomas Aquinas, I propose, offer the potential to resolve these outstanding issues in the theology of Zizioulas. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to attempt to sift through various interpretations of Aquinas’s ecclesiology or his sacramentology, I will show how Thomas’s theology of holy orders provides reflections that can be used to extend Zizioulas’s account of presbyterate and provide a more satisfactory theological picture. While coming from a distinct historical context, Aquinas runs into similar problems in describing the differences between the presbyterate and episcopacy, although in exactly the opposite direction to that of Zizioulas. Because Aquinas regards roles in the Eucharist as constitutive of holy orders, Aquinas cannot accommodate a *further* role to the bishop beyond the power common to priest and bishop in consecrating the Eucharist. However, Thomas’s theology poses some textual problems for the contemporary reader: he never finished a mature treatise on holy orders, and the theology on this topic present in the “Supplement” to the *Summa Theologiae* is not representative of his mature thinking (as culled from his earliest works in the *Commentary on the Sentences*). His later writings may illustrate a development in Aquinas’s thought, where he might have come to hold that the episcopacy does constitute a truly different order from the presbyterate, but this is unclear.[[25]](#footnote-25) In the following, I will present elements from Thomas’s theory of holy orders, treating it as fundamentally incomplete and focusing on his rationale for the existence of holy orders as presented in a prominent subset of his works (the *Summa Theologiae* and *Summa contra Gentiles*), without speculating on any latent developments that might be present in other writings.

Aquinas’s theology of the Eucharist carries modern-sounding ecclesiological overtones, paralleling the high role Zizioulas would attribute to the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the unique sacramental representation of the sacrifice of Christ made once upon the cross, rendered present by the priest’s words, and applied to the souls of the faithful in each Mass.[[26]](#footnote-26) It is the highest sacrament because it contains *Christum* *ipsum passum*—Christ himself as suffering—and so is the source of all the grace of the other sacraments.[[27]](#footnote-27) Consequently, within the sacramental economy itself, every other sacrament is ordered toward participation in the Eucharist.[[28]](#footnote-28) This has ecclesiological implications as well, as the divine worship of the Church finds its summit in the Eucharist, and this same sacrament has as its effect the infusion of the virtue of charity and the corresponding unity among all the faithful in Christ.[[29]](#footnote-29) So far, the role Aquinas assigns to the Eucharist within the sacramental economy echoes the role of the Eucharist in the theology of Zizioulas. This picture also resonates with contemporary Catholic magisterial teaching quite clearly; *Lumen Gentium* affirms this truth in its famous statement that “the Eucharistic sacrifice [is] the fount and apex of the whole Christian life.”[[30]](#footnote-30)

Aquinas’s account of the sacramental grace of the consecration given by holy orders is similar to that of Zizioulas, as the character of holy orders establishes a relationship between the minister and the faithful insofar as the minister is ordered toward celebrating the liturgy.[[31]](#footnote-31) In Thomas’s theology, the end or purpose of the sacramental life of the Church is the Eucharist, and, as holy orders are given to “order” the Church and constitute her in light of her purpose, they exist in light of that end.[[32]](#footnote-32) Holy orders thereby are ordered toward a fuller participation in the Eucharistic life that constitutes the Church—they make the Mass possible and advance believers toward their final resting place in heaven through the symbolic realities of the Church’s liturgy. The ministers are instrumental causes of the grace given to the Church by God in the sacraments and they are cooperators with Him in its distribution.[[33]](#footnote-33) Each order is consequently distinguished by the relationship it has toward dispensing the sacraments or preparing the faithful for participation in them, which sacramentally bestows in the higher orders (priesthood and diaconate) an indelible spiritual configuration to the priesthood of Christ in an ontological “character.”[[34]](#footnote-34) Aquinas gives an elaborate derivation of each of the seven traditional orders by their relationship to the Eucharist, illustrated by the different “instruments” which they received at ordination.[[35]](#footnote-35)

In that same article, Aquinas notes that one should not differentiate orders according to powers over the other sacraments, as the graces of the other sacraments flow from what is contained in the Eucharist.[[36]](#footnote-36) We can use this feature of his account to respond to criticisms of a Eucharistic-centered concept of the priesthood; instead of offering a purely “cultic” model that fails to correspond either to pastoral-didactic aspects of ministry or to the historical situation in the early Church, both Aquinas and Zizioulas see the ministry as exemplified in Eucharistic relationships which “found” the Church’s structures. Aquinas can hold that it is precisely the sacrifice at the heart of the Eucharist which accomplishes ecclesial unity and so functions as “reparative love” in the Church.[[37]](#footnote-37) While Aquinas makes the nature of the pastoral office more explicit in his commentaries on St. Paul’s pastoral epistles, the Orthodox theologian Calivas has likewise, beginning from Zizioulas’s model, offered a four-fold delineation of the pastoral office into worship (as source) followed by preaching, catechizing, and charitable activity.[[38]](#footnote-38) Similarly, Aquinas, in line with how Zizioulas attempts to do so, understands other pastoral functions such as preaching to follow from the priest’s Eucharistic role.[[39]](#footnote-39) The Eucharistic model of priesthood endorsed by both theologians considered here attempts to isolate the fundamental relationship that establishes the priesthood, and not just its exclusive sphere of activity in cultic/liturgical functions. So, for both theologians, they attempt to avoid, by a wider concept of “Eucharist,” the pitfall of thinking of priesthood in the context of a “private Mass” in isolation from the faithful.[[40]](#footnote-40) Aquinas is explicit that the Eucharist is the sacrament of ecclesial unity, which involves the entire priestly people of God.[[41]](#footnote-41)

Despite these strengths, Aquinas’s theology of priesthood runs into more significant problems when it comes to offering a clear theological rationale for the episcopacy. Unlike Zizioulas, who, utilizing modern liturgical and historical studies, can highlight the role of the bishop in the early Church, Aquinas was operating from a tradition that did not have a clearly defined theory of the episcopacy. Many other medieval theologians denied its sacramental character entirely, where Aquinas himself attempts by contrast to hold a moderate position.[[42]](#footnote-42) He argued, in the *Summa Theologiae*, that the episcopacy had no additional power over the “Real Body” of Christ in the Eucharist—no additional power to consecrate—and so was not a separate sacramental order. He concedes it is an “order,” but only analogously meant as a higher authority in the “Mystical Body” and as a “state of perfection” akin to monastic life.[[43]](#footnote-43) The episcopacy consequently occupies a problematic position in that he maintains that only a bishop can ordain, but that there is no unique sacramental character to establish this relationship. Only later does he possibly realize it need be a really separate sacramental order, but it is unclear if he reasoned to any unique character in the more mature writings. Louis Billot, a Thomist writing before the Second Vatican Council, defended precisely this thesis, holding that it would be unthinkable that the episcopacy would be a distinct order, as this would entail that they consecrate the Eucharist more than the presbyterate.[[44]](#footnote-44)

**3. THE SYNTHETIC PROPOSAL**

The strength of the position that both Zizioulas and Aquinas hold in common is that it connects holy orders very explicitly in its theological rationale to that of contemporary Eucharistic ecclesiology and offers a way of conceiving holy orders that is both Eucharistic (in line with traditional theology), but also more expansive than a mere cultic vision of priesthood. This also corrects the view of some contemporary theologians who, holding a similar ecclesial vision, tend to hold that the priest is a sign or “representative” of ecclesial community, whether universal or local (although most often the latter), so that presidency at the Eucharist follows their leadership in the community. While the priest is not merely functional (as in “presbyterian” theories) but ontological, the fundamental relationship is that of *community* representation.[[45]](#footnote-45) By contrast, problems arise with these theories because the notion that the priest acts only to represent the people, and that his power arises only from that role, is explicitly ruled out by Pius XII’s *Mediator Dei*;[[46]](#footnote-46) instead, the priest acts in the person of Christ (as affirmed later in *Lumen Gentium*, no. 28).

In the controversy over women’s ordination, the Church’s rejection of the possibility of women priests also seems to require a priority of Christic representation and not merely that of the community.[[47]](#footnote-47) Further, the recent decision as to the invalidity of baptisms performed in the name of the community come to a similar conclusion as to the role of the priest as representing Christ the Head, rather than the community.[[48]](#footnote-48) As Welch has argued, such an emphasis on the priest representing the transcendent Christ avoids an “ecclesial Pelagianism” where the Body creates its own sacraments and leadership.[[49]](#footnote-49) The priest thus “represents” what the Body receives from Christ the Head. There is no need to oppose the priest’s role as representing Christ as Head, however, from representing the Church, because there is no theological need to divorce the priesthood from the Body as an independent entity. Rather, headship (with the priesthood as “representational” headship) is inherently relational, especially as seen through the lens of the Eucharistic theology of the presbyterate which I think can be derived from both Aquinas and Zizioulas. Consequently, while the priesthood, participating in that of Christ, may create the possibility of Eucharist for the community, it does not mean that the community is an exterior modification or accidental feature.[[50]](#footnote-50) This mirrors the ecclesiological truth expressed in Joseph Ratzinger’s priority of the universal Church; for Ratzinger, the unity of the Church is “received from without,” because it results from a participation in Christ’s own unity with the Father. In sum, Christ’s Headship is the source of the Church’s unity.[[51]](#footnote-51) Thus, one can affirm a primacy of “representation” in the Eucharistic theologies of orders presented here, and one that perhaps transcends current stalemates on how we should interpret the relationship of “representation”.

Further, *Lumen Gentium* (no. 28) and *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (nos. 2, 5) both support the vision given in Zizioulas and Aquinas of a Eucharistic priesthood, as they identify the priesthood as finding its primary locus or expression in the Eucharistic celebration. While doing so, the modern documents help emphasize what Zizioulas and Aquinas affirm in a wider concept of Eucharistic ministry, holding together elements of the priesthood in the sharing in a threefold *munera* of consecration as priest, prophet, and king.[[52]](#footnote-52) The Eucharistic focus also highlights the priestly ministry of the presbyter as ministry to a specific local church and to the Church Universal—no Eucharist is a universal Eucharist, but a particular assembly of the people of God, even as each local Eucharist is celebrated in communion with all other local churches (symbolized by, e.g., commemorations of other hierarchs).[[53]](#footnote-53) Finally, both can agree with contemporary ecclesiology that, if the Church gains being from its Eucharistic celebration, all authority in the Mystical Body flows from a new relation to the Eucharist—both are intimately linked.[[54]](#footnote-54) The contemporary magisterium has reaffirmed this link in *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* which, quoting a prior apostolic letter of the same John Paul II, stated that “the Eucharist ‘is the principal and central *raison d’être*of the sacrament of priesthood, which effectively came into being at the moment of the institution of the Eucharist.’”[[55]](#footnote-55)

Where the positions of Zizioulas and Aquinas can be of use to each other is precisely in clarifying the differing Eucharistic nature of episcopal and presbyteral ministry. They approach from different angles, but encounter the same problem: if one identifies the ability to celebrate the Eucharist as the unique function of either presbyter or bishop, the other’s function cannot be differentiated adequately. However, because of the way each begins in a different perspective, I think their theories can be synthesized into a more comprehensive insight. With both theologians affirming a relationship to the Eucharist as constitutive of holy orders, a possible solution lies in differentiating the *way* in which Eucharistic sacrifice is offered by presbyter or bishop, even as both have equal power to consecrate the Eucharist.

On this synthetic picture I am advancing, the difference in order between episcopacy and presbyterium is correlated to a difference in kind of sacrificial offering—the bishop gathers together and offers the Eucharistic sacrifice “within” separated liturgical celebrations headed by presbyters in his diocese or area of jurisdiction, and, in conjunction, each presbyter offers a Eucharistic sacrifice “with” a particular bishop. In essence, the bishop functions as an ontological basis for the unity of the Eucharistic sacrifice of a particular people, gathering together the sacrifice of a particular section of the people of God, whether immediately or mediately through his assistant priests.

On the other hand, the presbyter is essentially constituted as a “concelebrant” of a bishop’s Eucharist. Correlatively, the relationship of the bishop to the local church is one of unity among Eucharists, and so that teaching and governing is manifested and sealed in ministry at the altar.[[56]](#footnote-56) The presbyterate is, correspondingly, jointly representative of Christ as Head and of the bishop, and its task is to extend the bishop’s liturgy and teaching into the wider community, gathering all into unity, and exercising the three-fold *munera* in a limited capacity. Following Zizioulas, we can affirm that it is the bishop’s task to offer the Eucharistic sacrifice for a particular locale and to be the “primary celebrant” *there*; following Thomas, the presbyterate is ordered equally toward the Eucharist but essentially as *concelebrant* of some bishop, and therefore ordered to evangelization and ministry in a diocese alongside that bishop. The bishop has a priority flowing from that liturgical presidency in evangelization, pastoral work, and preaching—he acquires even a marital relationship of perfection to his diocese— but is also an ontological principle of unity as a sacramental order above that of the presbyterate.

The second facet of my presentation will involve briefly addressing what seem to be difficulties consequent upon this account. The chief difficulty in accepting this view undoubtedly is something of an argument from silence. It seems odd to argue that there is a real difference in presiding at the Eucharist and sacrificial offering, as the theme has not clearly been treated by prior theologians. Alongside this difficulty come more serious ones which follow in light of the nature of Eucharistic sacrifice. Does one need to hold that there is a separate logical moment of offering within the Eucharistic prayer alongside the words of institution? Is there no sacrifice when a presbyter offers the sacrifice out of communion from a bishop? Finally, connected with the nature of holy orders itself, are those ordinations to the presbyterate/diaconate strictly invalid when one is not being ordained for an office in a particular local church (i.e., “absolute” ordinations)? I will shortly address each of these in turn, offering an outline of responses to historical and systematic considerations, but I hope to show that these questions, while needing to be fully addressed elsewhere, are not fatal objections to the distinction I offer.

*a. Historical Evidence for the Proposed Distinction*

The chief difficulty, as I noted, seems to be that this systematic distinction between presbyterate and episcopacy has never been made—an argument from silence in the tradition on this particular distinction. However, I contend that much of both traditional language about the episcopacy, especially in the East, and contemporary magisterial teaching affirms this distinction (albeit implicitly). While I cannot engage in an historical study of how this view exists in many places latent in patristic thought, I can offer some suggestions for research and highlights from some varied periods.

One of the most prominent places in which one can find indications of such a concept is in the writings of St. Ignatius of Antioch. His famous letter to the Ephesians, in its fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters, endorses the idea that the Church is not truly gathered around the altar except when united with the bishop. The same is implicit in his other calls to unity with the bishop, as in those to the Magnesians, Philadelphians and Trallians. The most explicit is in his letter to the Smyrneans, where he says, “Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop. Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist, which is [administered] either by the bishop, or by one to whom he has entrusted it.”[[57]](#footnote-57) St. Irenaeus of Lyon is another representative figure of this strand of early thinking, seeing the unity of the Church and its offering as finding its basis in the ministry of the bishop.[[58]](#footnote-58) The same is echoed in the writings of St. Cyprian of Carthage.[[59]](#footnote-59) While many figures in the early Church provide grounds for this distinction in explicit statements about the role of the bishop in the local church, we also find many writers who, like St. Clement of Rome, invoke Old Testament typology that alludes implicitly to different ways that participants offer the Eucharistic sacrifice.[[60]](#footnote-60) The distinction, then, between ways that different offices or persons in the Church offer the Eucharist is a widespread one, even when not invoked to distinguish the episcopacy from the presbyterate.

Later writings follow up on this basic intuition. Outstanding among these are the writings of Pseudo-Dionysus the Areopagite who, perhaps as a representative of Syrian theology, understands the bishop as the consummation and perfecter of holy orders. This place as a summit position involves gathering together and completing all that is done in lower orders.[[61]](#footnote-61) Dionysus is also very explicit in placing the Eucharist as the act *par excellence* of the hierarch, and that act which most especially gathers together the people who are offered.[[62]](#footnote-62) It is at least tantalizing to note that we find even St. Augustine linking side-by-side the heretical denial of a distinction between episcopacy and presbyteral orders and of the sacrificial efficacy of the Mass.[[63]](#footnote-63) One finds further explicit support in early Church orders*.* Taking the *Apostolic Tradition* as an exemplar, it is noteworthy that the office of the bishop is the only one who merits the title of “high priest,” and who is explicitly mentioned as one who offers the gifts of the Holy Church.[[64]](#footnote-64) By contrast, while a recognized concelebrant who offers the gifts with the bishop, the ordination prayer proper to presbyters highlights the gift of “counsel.”[[65]](#footnote-65) It similarly notes that the presbyter has “the power of this alone, that he may receive; but he does not have power to give,” and this is given as the reason the presbyter does not lay on hands in the ordination of the diaconate— thus, similarly, the presbyter “seals” at ordinations of fellow presbyters, but only the bishop properly “ordains.”[[66]](#footnote-66) The canonical codex of the Orthodox Church, let alone the Latin, both continue to witness to these distinctions as well. But it would be tedious and beyond the scope of this essay to give an overview of sacramental formulae, canons, and sacramental theology of the Fathers; it suffices to show that there is ample material in the early Church to serve as potential justification for the distinction.

More relevant, perhaps for liturgical theology in particular, would be whether Catholic magisterial teaching in the modern period has either supported or intimated the distinction between presbyter and bishop on the lines I have suggested of sacrificial offering. As noted before, the connection of the priesthood to the Eucharist is clear and continuous, needing no special proof; Vatican II only continued the common teaching.[[67]](#footnote-67) But what is important about the magisterial teaching on this subject is that the distinction between the orders of episcopate and presbyterate was only recently made explicit. The development of a doctrinal consensus on the distinct sacramental character of the episcopacy was virtually affirmed at the Council of Trent, which taught that bishops are part of the divinely instituted hierarchy, that they are superior to priests, that they have the ability to ordain and confirm, and that they have a power not common to priests.[[68]](#footnote-68) But the council left the question open, as it refrained from deciding between rival theological schools at the time. The *Roman Catechism* (issued after the Council of Trent) relegates the order of “bishop” to an addendum on holy orders that treats of these other ranks as ranks of “dignity,” alongside “archbishop,” “patriarch,” and “pope.”[[69]](#footnote-69) There is in the immediate post-Tridentine era no clear reflection on the distinction between orders that commands universal assent. St. Robert Bellarmine is one of the clearest and most forcefully in favor of the sacramentality of the episcopate,[[70]](#footnote-70) and it was only post-Bellarmine that this teaching gradually gained universal consensus.

In the modern period, the magisterium made more definite pronouncements on the distinction between orders that affirmed the sacramentality of the episcopacy, but in general any claims as to the uniqueness of the episcopacy remained only implicit in these documents.[[71]](#footnote-71) As a consequence, even into the contemporary period, different opinions were to be found; Louis Billot, mentioned earlier, was representative of a strand in Thomism that continued to affirm the traditional thesis that the episcopacy was not a distinct sacramental order.[[72]](#footnote-72) Only with Vatican II did there arrive on the scene explicit reflection in magisterial teaching. The presbyterate is explicitly connected to the episcopacy, not simply because presbyters receive their “mission” from their bishop, but because they are sharers in the same “office,” “ministry,” and “consecration.”[[73]](#footnote-73) They form one priesthood with their bishop and this requires hierarchical communion with them on the part of presbyters.[[74]](#footnote-74) There is no language of participating in the same sacrifice or offering the sacrifice of the Eucharist distinctly, but the claims are bold in affirming some internal relationship stemming from the character of the orders themselves. The bishop gathers the local church “through the Gospel and the Eucharist in the Holy Spirit.”[[75]](#footnote-75) Priestly ministry is to gather the local church together with their bishop—a task connected with the offering of the Eucharist by which “in a certain way they make [the bishop] present in every congregation.”[[76]](#footnote-76) Similarly, even the notion of “jurisdiction” needed for priestly acts (like penance)[[77]](#footnote-77) is traced back not to merely a legal delineation but, as *Lumen Gentium*, no.21 affirms, directly from the order of bishops considered as a sacramental order. While there is nowhere an explicit theory of offering the Eucharistic sacrifice as “concelebrants” of a bishop’s local Eucharist, the theological presuppositions could easily support that theory.

*b. Drawing Analogical Parallels*

While a distinct mention of a difference in the offering of sacrifice between presbyteral and episcopal orders is nowhere explicit, the most promising way to find this implicit in Catholic doctrinal tradition is by way of an *analogia fidei*. Edward Schillebeeckx offers a number of historical studies to show that in the early Church, the whole local church was seen as concelebrating the Eucharist together, despite making an (invalid) inference from this to universal presidency.[[78]](#footnote-78) Much of the theology of the Liturgical Movement tried to demonstrate that, while the kind of participation is distinct from the ministerial priesthood, the lay faithful really “offer” the Mass and its sacrifice. It is in the context of this that the fullest account of a united “sacrificial offering” *through* the ministry of another is explicated. *Mediator Dei*, the encyclical of Pius XII issued at the height of the classical Liturgical Movement, explicitly deals with the question of the sacrifice offered by the laity and explains that it is an offering *through* the ministry of the priest, but no less a real oblation on the part of the people.[[79]](#footnote-79) Specifically, he exhorts that the faithful “together with [Christ] and through Him let them make their oblation, and in union with Him let them offer up themselves (*atque una cum ipso et per ipsum offerant, unaque cum eo se devoveant*).”[[80]](#footnote-80) Pius XII does not think that the role of the lay faithful in offering of the sacrifice, then, undermines their distinctive apostolic role or confuses it with that of the ordained priesthood. As he notes, the lay faithful offer the Eucharist “by the hands of the priest” and not because “they perform a visible liturgical rite.”[[81]](#footnote-81) Rather, this real participation in offering the Eucharistic liturgy grounds the involvement of the laity in their proper function, bringing about the exterior Eucharistic unity of the Church (i.e., the *apostolate* of the laity).[[82]](#footnote-82) Thus, the concept of offering “by union with” or “by means of” is not an obscure or otherwise theologically unknown concept. Nor does this involvement undermine the unity of the Eucharistic oblation. Despite all the different potential persons involved in distinct roles of offering the Eucharistic sacrifice—viz., bishops, priests, deacons, and the laity—there is only one sacrifice:

… the people unite their hearts in praise, impetration, expiation and thanksgiving with prayers or intention of the priest, even of the High Priest himself, so that in the one and same offering of the victim and according to a visible sacerdotal rite, they may be presented to God the Father.[[83]](#footnote-83)

While the limits of this article do not allow for a thorough examination of liturgical and canonical evidence, there are some distinct testimonies to this theology whereby each Christian offers in their own distinct capacity. For example, the diaconate can be said to have a distinct “offering” role in the Eucharist. In the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom (celebrated by both Catholics and Orthodox), deacons are referred to in many English translations as “concelebrants” (e.g., in a dialogue after the Great Entrance).[[84]](#footnote-84) Naturally, this usage is not technical (“fellow minister” might perhaps be more accurate as a loose translation), but the intuition is present in that liturgical tradition between different kinds or grades of “concelebrant” broadly speaking, preserving the unique role of the priesthood. It is precisely this distinction in orders that is expressed hierarchically in each of the different ways a given grade of orders participates in the liturgy. This is true both of an Eastern hierarchical Divine Liturgy when a bishop is present, just as in the older rite of pontifical Mass in the West, where each order participates in a distinct capacity and role as assisting in the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice (such distinction is blurred slightly in the newer rite by reason of fewer rubrics and fewer required assistants to the bishop, but is still visible[[85]](#footnote-85)). In the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, the deacon assists in the offering of the chalice, reciting as well the prayer “Offerimus tibi, Domine, calicem salutaris …” As far back as *Ordo Romanus* I, we find the archdeacon assisting in a similar way in the offertory and having a similar provenance over the chalice.[[86]](#footnote-86) That the deacon has a special relationship to the Eucharistic vessels is witnessed as far back as the synod of Laodicea (between 343 and 381): “Subdeacons shall not have a place in the *diaconicum*, nor are they to touch the sacred vessels.”[[87]](#footnote-87) In fairly clear terms, the deacon participates in Eucharistic sacrifice according to his capacity as a natural consequence of being one of the higher *ordines*.

By this *analogia fidei* both in regard to the diaconate and lay faithful, one is led to consider that, if the presbyterate and episcopacy are distinct *ordines*, they must have different “offering” roles at the Eucharist. Correspondingly, as witnessed by the early Church, the presbyter concelebrates at hierarchical functions alongside his bishop and the intuition remains that the Eucharist celebrated elsewhere remains the bishop’s liturgy (e.g., the *fermentum* in Rome).[[88]](#footnote-88) The Byzantine practice of having an episcopal throne in each sanctuary illustrates that truth iconically. It is not a far step from the current historical and magisterial evidence to grounding the distinction between the episcopacy and presbyterate in their Eucharistic roles.

**4. RESPONSES TO DIFFICULTIES WITH THE PROPOSAL**

To conclude the argument for such a distinction, I want to discuss (albeit very concisely) some consequences of this position. The first is that it seems one finds difficulty reconciling this theory with the traditional Catholic view within sacramental theology that sacrifice is offered in the Mass at the moment of the recitation of the institution narrative—the consecration. We certainly cannot claim that either a priest or bishop consecrates the Eucharist “more” than the other. Nevertheless, one of the best upshots of my proposal is that it prompts a genuine theological development in distinguishing logical moments within the Mass itself between consecration and oblation. This is to say we can distinguish two different sacramental actions: the consecration, corresponding to the words of institution, and the oblation, corresponding to the prayers of offering said after the consecration.[[89]](#footnote-89) On my proposal, no difference exists in what a priest or bishop do when consecrating the sacred species, but they *are* performing different acts when it comes to offering the sacrifice. It is not as if priests and bishops are offering distinct kinds of Masses, but the offering accomplished by each order is a distinct *mode* of offering the one Eucharistic sacrifice. The idea that there are distinct modalities of offering that sacrifice finds an analogy in distinctions between an ordinary and a delegated vicar in the realm of jurisdiction. The bishop offers the sacrifice of Christ properly in virtue of his order, in his ordinary capacity as the head of a local church, whereas a priest always offers the sacrifice, not in virtue of his own order, but as a participant in the Eucharistic offering of his bishop. This is to say that the priest is always offering *qua* a concelebrant of the bishop’s liturgy, although a bishop offers the Eucharistic sacrifice in his own stead by divine institution, corresponding to the way that bishops succeed to the apostles by divine institution.[[90]](#footnote-90)

Second, we might ask what happens when a presbyter celebrates in a situation like schism. Catholic theology clearly affirms that, given an intention to do what the Church does, the sacrament is consecrated and so the Eucharistic act makes present the Body and Blood of Christ.[[91]](#footnote-91) But does it affirm that the priest “validly” offers the Eucharistic sacrifice? Suffice to say that, while the data is complicated, one can find resources to affirm that the priest does not offer the Eucharistic sacrifice although he might validly confect the elements.[[92]](#footnote-92) I think this actually has a great deal of support in Tradition and helps make sense of the view of the Fathers who deny the efficacy of sacraments outside of ecclesial communion. Aquinas offers a comment on this situation and seems to side with the view that these priests do *not* offer a true sacrifice. While it requires more comment that I can offer here, Thomas claims that these priests consecrate, but that they do not receive the “fruit of the sacrifice”—namely, the “spiritual sacrifice.”[[93]](#footnote-93) He then explains in a response to an objection that they offer true sacrifice with the truth of the sacrament, but not with the truth of the fruit (of the sacrifice).[[94]](#footnote-94) The fruit of the sacrifice, for Aquinas, is ultimately unity with the Church which, for someone separated *de facto* from it, cannot in any way be accomplished.[[95]](#footnote-95) Thus the distinction between confecting and offering effectively already has at least a basis in Catholic theology.

Finally, we might ask whether, on a proposal where every presbyter is a “concelebrant” at a bishop’s liturgy and offers the sacrifice mediately through him, the ordination of a presbyter, or at least his offering of the Eucharist, were to be invalid if that priest were not incardinated into a diocese? On this picture, however, there is no reason ordination would fail to impart a sacramental character in the case of a priest who is not ordained for a local church.[[96]](#footnote-96) Nevertheless, it remains a condition of the proposal that this character would not be *effective* in allowing that priest to offer the Eucharistic sacrifice without some further element of communion with a local bishop. Analogous cases appear in the sacrament of penance. It does not follow that if the priestly character gives one the capacity to forgive sins that one can do so *effectively* without communion with a local church (i.e., without jurisdiction, via incardination and a grant of faculties).[[97]](#footnote-97) Similarly, one could affirm that, without this communion, the presbyter cannot *effectively* offer the sacrifice in such a way that this sacrifice “forms” the local church. Instead, he retains the power to merely confect the sacramental species but without offering true and spiritual sacrifice for the people (it remains fruitless). Religious priests who are not incardinated in a particular diocese nevertheless belong to their institutes of consecrated life which, by canon law, are necessarily subordinated to a local diocesan bishop (with that bishop as their highest superior) or to the Roman Pontiff.[[98]](#footnote-98) When celebrating the liturgy without faculties in a particular local diocese, one could understand that these religious priests are participating in the sacrificial offering of the bishop who is their proper superior and with whom they retain communion under law.[[99]](#footnote-99) On this proposal, consequently, only those priests who are transient or unattached (a status prohibited in canon law) would fail to fruitfully offer the Eucharistic sacrifice, given their lack of communion with a bishop, even if their priestly character allows them to confect the sacred species.[[100]](#footnote-100)

In the end, such a theology of the presbyterate helps maintain the traditional understanding of the presbyterate as oriented toward Eucharistic ministry, and as an office of ministry in a local church, without a myopic cultic understanding of that role. This can help ground a spirituality of the presbyterate in a jointly and inseparably Eucharistic-pastoral ministry. In today’s theological environment, recalling the Eucharistic nature of the priesthood and reorienting our spirituality and discussion in this direction is of paramount importance. Much of recent scholarship has committed itself to what I believe have been lopsided accounts of “ministry” in the Church that begin from a universalized notion of it or some sociological concept related thereto, with a vague biblical basis in Jesus’ own “ministry,” and attempt to infer a roughly congregationalist account of ministers as they should exist. The obstacle being, of course, that Catholic theology and spirituality has always understood its own institution of holy orders in a radically different way. However, criticisms of an overly cultic ideal of the Catholic priesthood have, at times, been well-grounded. A Eucharistic notion of the Church and a consequently Eucharistic notion of the priesthood, understood correctly and in their historical context, can help us make sense of the priesthood as both “different in kind” from the baptismal priesthood, as well as being a ministry of service to the broader People of God.

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1. See Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* (November 21, 1964) no.21. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. There is a veritable proliferation of works attempting to pursue a “Eucharistic ecclesiology,” even from an ecumenical perspective. For an introduction to the approach, see Paul McPartlan, *Sacrament of Salvation: An Introduction to Eucharistic Ecclesiology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995). For a specific examination of Vatican II’s contribution, see id., “Ressourcement, Vatican II, and Eucharistic Ecclesiology,” in *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology*, ed. Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 392–404. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See Joseph Ratzinger, *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today,* trans. Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996) 105–110. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See Lawrence Welch, “For the Church and Within the Church,” in *The Thomist* 65 (2001) 613–637, at 625. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See Susan K. Wood, “The Sacramentality of Episcopal Consecration,”in *Theological Studies* 51 (1990) 479–496, at480–481; David Coffey, “The Common and the Ordained Priesthood,” in *Theological Studies* 58(1997) 209–236. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. It would take us too far afield, for the purposes of this essay, to engage in a deeper historical-contextual analysis of each author, so I will abstract from some of those considerations in order to focus more clearly on their theological conclusions. The aim here is thus primarily systematic: to outline a new possibility in conceiving the relations between the episcopacy and the presbyterate that safeguards traditional theological claims alongside contemporary ecclesiological positions, and to illustrate the implications such a theory would have on other areas of theological speculation. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See Nicholas Afanasiev, *Trapeza Gospodnia* [“Lord’s Supper”] (Paris: YMCA Press, 1952); *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Vitaly Permiakov (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Henri de Lubac, *The Splendor of the Church*, trans. Michael Mason (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986) 134. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See Aidan Nichols, *Light from the East: Authors and Themes in Orthodox Theology* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1999) 125–126. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. See Radu Bordeianu, “Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue: Retrieving Eucharistic Ecclesiology,” in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 44 (2009) 239–265. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. See John Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, trans. Elizabeth Theokritoff (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The common Eastern practice is to baptize, chrismate, and communicate infants with the Eucharist in one liturgical event, and in this structure the Eucharist serves as the completion of the initiation of the infant. Nevertheless, the broader significance is that incorporation of believers at every Eucharist remains a completion of what their baptism had begun. In other words, celebration of the Eucharist perfects our Christian life. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. See Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 16–17. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. See ibid., 18–19. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See ibid., 61–62. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. See ibid., 65–67. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. See ibid., 107–128. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. See Richard DeClue, “Eucharistic Ecclesiologies of Locality and Universality in John Zizioulas and Joseph Ratzinger” in *Nova et Vetera* 12 (2014) 77-103, at 80–82, 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. See Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 198–217. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. See John Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics,* trans. Douglas H. Knight (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 147. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. This is to say that the presbyter did not act as a co-consecrator of the Eucharist, but was vested and seated in choir during the celebration. See Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 203–204. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. See ibid., 209–211. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. See Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, 146–147. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. See Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 204. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. See Ulrich Horst, *Bischöfe und Ordensleute: Cura principalis animarum und via perfectionis in der Ekklesiologie des hl. Thomas von Aquin* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1999) 76–77; Thomas Aquinas, *Commentaries on St. Paul’s Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon,* trans. Chrysostom Baer (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’ Press, 2007) 34–35, 159–160. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Bruce Marshall, “The Whole Mystery of our Salvation,” in *Rediscovering Aquinas and the Sacraments: Studies in Sacramental Theology,* ed. Levering and Dauphinais(Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2009) 39–64, at39–41. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Ibid., 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* [ST], III, q. 63, a. 6, resp.; q. 65, a. 3. The works of Aquinas are cited according to the editions made available on the Corpus Thomisticum internet site of the University of Navarre: [www.corpusthomisticum.org](http://www.corpusthomisticum.org). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. ST, III, q. 79, a. 1, resp. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 11. A similar claim was anticipated by Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (December 4, 1963) no.10. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. ST, III, q. 65, a. 3, resp. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, IV, 74, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. See ST, Supp., q. 34, a. 1, resp. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. See ST, Supp., q. 35, a. 2, resp. and ad. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. See ST, Supp., q. 37, a. 2, resp. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. See ST, Supp., q. 37, a. 2, ad. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. See John Joy, “Saint Thomas Aquinas’s Theology of Sacrifice: Toward a Renewed Conception of the Sacred Priesthood,” in *Seminary* *Journal* 19 (2013) 71–85, at 75, 81. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. See Alkiviadis C. Calivas, “The Presbyter and the Essential Activities of the Church,” in *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 56 (2011) 27–54, at 28, 48–49. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. See Aidan Nichols, *Holy Order: Apostolic Priesthood from the New Testament to the Second Vatican Council* (Dublin: Veritas, 1999)85. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. See Jean-Pierre Torrell, *A Priestly People: Baptismal Priesthood and Priestly Ministry,* trans. P. Heinegg (New York: Paulist Press, 2013) 124–126. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. See ST, III, q. 82, a. 2, ad. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. See Nichols, *Holy Order*, 84–85. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. See ST, Supp., q. 40, a. 5, resp. and ad 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. See Louis Billot, *De ecclesiae sacramentis: Commentarius in tertiam partem S. Thomae, Tomus posterior: Complectens quaestiones de poenitentia extrema unctione, ordine et matrimonio*, 8th ed.(Rome: Pontifica Universitas Gregoriana, 1947) 259–261. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. See Susan Wood, “Priestly Identity: Sacrament of the Ecclesial Community,” in *Worship* 69 (1995) 109–127. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. See Pius XII, Encyclical Letter on the Sacred Liturgy *Mediator Dei* (November 20, 1947) no. 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. See Gerhard Ludwig Müller, *Priesthood and Diaconate: The Recipient of the Sacrament of Holy Orders from the Perspective of Creation Theology and Christology,* trans. Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002) 180–181. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Responses to questions proposed on the validity of Baptism conferred with the formula “We baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” and Doctrinal note on the modification of the sacramental formula of Baptism (June 24, 2020), available at<http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2020/08/06/0406/00923.html>. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Lawrence Welch, “Priestly Identity Reconsidered: A Reply to Susan Wood,” in *Worship* 70 (1996) 307–319, at 314–315. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. See Welch, “For the Church and Within the Church,” 630–631. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. See DeClue, “Eucharistic Ecclesiologies,” 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. See Nichols, *Holy Order,* 132–133. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. See Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 79–81. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. See Wood, “Sacramentality of Episcopal Consecration,” 487. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter on the Eucharist and its Relationship to the Church *Ecclesia* *de* *Eucharistia* (April 17, 2003) no. 31, quoting from Apostolic Letter on the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist *Dominicae* *Cenae* (February 24, 1980) no. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. See Nicholas Denysenko, “Primacy, Synodality, and Collegiality in Orthodoxy,” in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 48 (2013) 20–44, at 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, 8; English translation by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1: The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885) 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. See Irenaeus of Lyon, *Against Heresies*, III, 3 and IV, 26, in ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. See John D. Laurance, “Le président de l’Eucharistie selon Cyprien de Carthage,” *Maison Dieu,* no. 154 (1983) 151–165. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Clement of Rome, *Letter to the Corinthians*, 40,1, in *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, ed. Heinrich Denzinger and Peter Hünermann, 43rd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012) [DH] 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. See Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, chapters V and VI,in *Corpus Dionysiacum,* trans. Enrico Turolla (Milan: La Vita Felice, 2014)201–234, esp. 205–207. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. See ibid., chapter III, 170–172. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Augustine, *De Haeresibus*, 53: Liguori G. Müller, *The De Haeresibus of Saint Augustine*, A Translation with an Introduction and Commentary, Catholic University of America Patristic Studies 90 (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 1956) 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. *Apostolic Tradition*, 3, in Paul Bradshaw, Maxwell E. Johnson and L. Edward Philips, *The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary,* Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002) 30–31. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Ibid., 7, 56–57. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Ibid., 8, 60–62, esp. section 7 in the Latin edition. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (December 7, 1965) no. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Council of Trent, Session 23, *Doctrine and Canons on the Sacrament of Orders* (July 15, 1563), c. 4 and cans. 6–7: DH 1767–1770 and 1776–1777. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. *Catechism of the Council of Trent for Parish Priests,* trans. John A. McHugh and Charles J. Callan (New York: Joseph F. Wagner, 1923) 332–333. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. See Robert Bellarmine, *Disputationes de controversiis christianae fidei,* Editio secunda (Ingolstadt: David Sartorius, 1591); electronic edition: Saale Halle: Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, 2011) liber I, caput V, coll. 1524–1528. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. See Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Order *Sacramentum Ordinis* (November 30, 1947) nos. 4–5. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. See Billot, *De ecclesiae sacramentis*, vol. II, 259–261. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, nos. 1–2. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. See ibid., nos. 7–8. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church *Christus* *Dominus* (October 28, 1965) no. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 5, citing, in turn, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. See ibid., no. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Edward Schillebeeckx, *Ministry: Leadership in the Community of Jesus Christ,* trans. J. Bowden (New York: Crossroad, 1981)48–50. While his inference to a universal presidency at the Eucharist is a fallacious one, the concept of “concelebration” among all Christians is, however, valid, although it needs be clarified by a distinction in *ordines* and their roles at the Eucharist which was equally part of that early ecclesial consciousness. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. See *Mediator Dei,* nos. 92–93. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Ibid., no. 80. Latin original from *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 39 (1947) 552. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Ibid., no. 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. See ibid., nos. 103–104. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. *Mediator Dei,* no. 93: “… idcirco quod sua vota laudis, impetrationis, expiationis gratiarumque actionis una cum votis seu mentis intentione sacerdotis, immo Summi ipsius Sacerdotis, eo fine coniungit, ut eadem in ipsa victimae oblatione, externo quoque sacerdotis ritu, Deo Patri exhibeantur” (*Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 39 [1947] 556). [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. See *Hieratikon: Liturgy Book for Priest and Deacon*, ed. Hieromonk Herman and Vitaly Permiakov (South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon’s Monastery Press, 2017) vol. II, 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. It is worth noting, however, that the form of the Mass taken as normative for the reform was not the pontifical Mass, but the sung Mass or *Missa cantata*. See Annibale Bugnini*, La riforma liturgica*, Nuova edizione, Bibliotheca Ephemerides Liturgicae: Subsidia 30 (Rome: C.L.V.—Edizioni Liturgiche, 1997) 338. The pontifical Mass is consequently much simplified on these lines, but retains the basic principle that distinct grades of orders have distinct Eucharistic roles. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. *Ordo Romanus* I, 79–84: ed. Michel Andrieu, *Les Ordines Romani du haut moyen âge,.II: Les textes (Ordines I–XIII)*, Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense 23 (Louvain: Peeters, 1948) 93–94. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Synod of Laodicea, canon 21: Lawrence J. Johnson, *Worship in the Early Church: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, 4 vol. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009) vol. II, 301 (no. 1973). [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. See John F. Baldovin, “The Fermentum at Rome in the Fifth Century: A Reconsideration,” in *Worship* 79 (2005) 38–53. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. It seems to me the distinction between the different moments of prayer (institution and oblation prayers) makes for a natural division in when these different acts of consecration and offering are accomplished. The proposal is, however, compatible with the view that oblation and consecration are both accomplished by reciting the institution narrative, as long as one held that there are were two logically distinct acts occurring while one is reciting those words. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. See Code of Canon Law, can. 375 §1: “Bishops, who by divine institution succeed to the place of the Apostles through the Holy Spirit who has been given to them, are constituted pastors in the Church, so that they are teachers of doctrine, priests of sacred worship, and ministers of governance.” See also *Lumen Gentium,* no. 24: “Bishops, as successors of the apostles, receive from the Lord, to whom was given all power in heaven and on earth, the mission to teach all nations and to preach the Gospel to every creature ….” [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. See, e.g., Council of Trent, Session 7, *Decree on the Sacraments* (March 3, 1547) can. 12: DH 1612. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. See Innocent III, Letter *Eius exemplo* to the Archbishop of Tarragona (December 18, 1208): DH 793. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. ST, III, q. 82, a. 7, resp.: “Et ideo fructum sacrificii non percipiunt, quod est sacrificium spirituale.” [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. ST, III, q. 82, a. 7, ad. 1: “... non recte extra Ecclesiam sacrificium offertur. Unde extra Ecclesiam non potest esse spirituale sacrificium, quod est verum veritate fructus, licet sit verum veritate sacramenti ....” See also ad. 3: “sed quia est ab Ecclesiae unitate separatus, orationes eius efficaciam non habent.” [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. See ST, III, q. 82, a. 9, ad. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. On the indelibility of the sacramental character given in Orders, see, e.g. Council of Trent, Session 23, *Doctrine and Canons on the Sacrament of Orders* (July 15, 1563), c. 4 and can. 4: DH 1767–1770 and 1774. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. See, e.g. Council of Trent, Session 14, *Doctrine on the Sacrament of Penance* (November 25, 1551), c. 7: DH 1686-1688. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. See Code of Canon Law, cann. 590, 591, 593, and 594. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Of course, in all of these areas, there are more than one logical possibility to reconcile such a theory with Catholic dogma; if the magisterium so clarifies as to rule out the possibility of one of these solutions, I do not think the theory itself need be discarded. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. See Code of Canon Law, can. 265. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)